

The Numerical Features of the Book of Deuteronomy

A New Approach to its Compositional Structure

Please read the [General Introduction](#)

Part VI 29,1-30,20 Concluding Prophetic Peroration (Revised)

Part VI is not only the counterpart of Part II (4,1-49) in the symmetric menorah pattern of the book, but it also constitutes the central component of the 7 speeches of Moses addressed to 'All Israel', where it occupies pride of place at the centre of the heptad (for particulars, see [Part I](#)):

1	1,1-4,40	אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל-כל-ישראל
2	5,1-26,19	ויקרא משה אל-כל-ישראל ויאמר אלהם
3	27,9-10 + 28,1-68	וידבר משה והכהנים הלויים אל כל-ישראל לאמר
4	29,1-30,20	ויקרא משה אל-כל-ישראל ויאמר אלהם
5	31,2-6	וילך משה וידבר את-הדברים האלה אל-כל-ישראל ויאמר אלהם
6	31,7-8	ויקרא משה ליהושע ויאמר אליו לעיני כל-ישראל
7	32,45-47	ויכל משה לדבר את-כל-הדברים האלה אל-כל-ישראל ויאמר אלהם

Like Part V (27-28) Part VI divides into two sections (29 and 30) which constitute an inextricable unity as is evident from their **765** (45x17) words and from the unifying string of **17** occurrences of the key-phrase יהוה אלהיך (29,11a.11b; 30,1.2.3a.3b.4.5.6a.6b.7.9.10a.10b.16a.16b.20) – see Observation 9 in [Part III](#) and Observation 7 in [Part V](#). Moreover, they constitute an *uninterrupted* address by Moses, which is organized in a menorah pattern – see Observation 3 below. And finally, each section has **7** occurrences of the key-word היום, 'today' (29,3.9.11.12.14a.14b.17 and 30,2.8.11.15.16.18.19).

Section 1 29,1-28 Moses asserts that the covenant is binding on future generations

Section 2 30,1-20 Moses has hope for the future, provided that Israel returns to YHWH

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Vs	Texts	Words	Letters	יהוה	Sum words	Contents
1	Dt 29,1	22+	86	1	22	§1 29,1-8 Observe YHWH's commandments! Moses reminds the Israelites of all that YHWH did in Egypt (which they still do not realize) and of all that he did for them in the Wilderness. They ought to realize that he is their God: 85 (5x17) words.
2	Dt 29,2	9+	41		31	
3	Dt 29,3	13+	49	2	44	
4	Dt 29,4	14+	59		58	
5	Dt 29,5	13+	48	3	71	
6	Dt 29,6	14=85(5x17)	59		85	
7	Dt 29,7	10	45		95	
8	Dt 29,8	13	52		108 (52a+56b) P	
9	Dt 29,9	14	65	4	122	§2 29,9-14 Israel enters into YHWH's covenant
10	Dt 29,10	11	43		133	
11	Dt 29,11	11	47	5-6	144	The covenant is also for those who are not yet here: not yet here: 17 words.
12	Dt 29,12	19	77		163	
13	Dt 29,13	11	41		174	
14	Dt 29,14	17	59	7	191/83	
15	Dt 29,15	15+	57		206	§3 29,15-20 Beware of the danger of idolatry! Moses refers to the fact that the Israelites have seen with their own eyes the detestable idols of the indigenous peoples. They should not serve these gods, for YHWH will not pardon them if they do!
16	Dt 29,16	11=26	43		217	
17	Dt 29,17	30+	97	8	247	
18	Dt 29,18	21=51(3x17)	81		268	
19	Dt 29,19	26+	91	9-11	294	
20	Dt 29,20	13/39	57	12	307/116 78a+38b	
21	Dt 29,21	23	94	13	330	§4 29,21-28 The punishment for idolatry is exile The fact that YHWH devastated the land in his anger should make the Israelites understand that their present misfortune must entirely be attributed to their apostasy. That is why YHWH has driven them into exile! 29,1-27 finalized and sealed by 425 (25x17) words. Hidden things are for God; the revealed are for us.
22	Dt 29,22	24	90	14	354	
23	Dt 29,23	15+	50	15	369	
24	Dt 29,24	16+	60	16	385	
25	Dt 29,25	13+	55		398	
26	Dt 29,26	13+	49	17	411	
27	Dt 29,27	14+	56	18	425 (25x17)	
28	Dt 29,28	14=85(5x17)	61	19	439/132 S	

Observation 1 Section 1 is a compositional entity in its own right, being neatly delimited by the well-known device for inclusion by having **85 (5x17)** words at the beginning (29,1-6) and strikingly also **85** words at the end (29,23-28). It is made up of 439 words, but remarkably enough, vs 1-27 have **425 (25x17)** words. This means that the entire text is governed by the number **17** except the 14-word enigmatic verse 28, which thereby receives extra emphasis.

Observation 2 Since this chapter is concerned with the *covenant*, it is not surprising to find that the key-word *ברית*, ‘covenant’, occurs in a string of **7** (28,69a.69b; 29,8.11.13.20.24) The string starts already in 28,69, which forms a bridge between Part V and Part VI (see the introduction to [Part V](#)). This string links 28,29 to Chapter 29 despite the fact that it is structurally part of Chapter 28.

Observation 3 In terms of content and with the help of layout markers we can divide the text into **7** paragraphs, with 29,21-28 at the centre in pride of place whereby it is extra focused on:

§1	29,1-8	Moses urges the Israelites to observe YHWH’s commandments	108 words	P
§2	29,9-14	He assists the people to enter into YHWH’s covenant	83 words	
§3	29,15-20	He warns them against the danger of idolatry	116 words	
§4	29,21-28	Moses fortells the exile as punishment for breaking the covenant	132 words	S
§5	30,1-10	He assures the people that YHWH is prepared to forgive them	165 words	P
§6	30,11-14	He asserts that the Torah is not out of reach but right in their midst	51 (3x17)	S
§7	30,15-20	Moses sets the choice between life and death before them	110 (10x11) words	P

What meets the eye immediately is that it is only §6 that is especially highlighted by being made up of a multiple of **17** words. This is not surprising seeing the fundamental assertion that the Torah is not out of reach for the people, but right in their midst.

Section 2 30-1-20 Moses has hope for the future, provided that Israel returns to YHWH

Vs	Texts	Words	Letters	יהוה	Sum words	Contents
29	Dt 30,1	22	88	20	461	§5 <u>30,1-10</u> YHWH is prepared to forgive If the Israelites would return to YHWH, he will restore their fortunes and gather them from the four corners of the world and bring them home: 17 + 26 words. YHWH will turn these curses against their foes and then the Israelites will keep his laws: 26 words.
30	Dt 30,2	17	65	21	478	
31	Dt 30,3	15+	60	22-23	493	
32	Dt 30,4	11=26	44	24	504	
33	Dt 30,5	12	56	25	516	
34	Dt 30,6	18	67	26-27	534	
35	Dt 30,7	13+	49	28	547	
36	Dt 30,8	13=26	51	29	560	
37	Dt 30,9	23	94	30-31	583	
38	Dt 30,10	21	85	32-33	604/165 P	
39	Dt 30,11	14+	49		618	§6 <u>30,11-14</u> The Torah is not out of reach: 51 words. It is not too remote, not in heaven, nor beyond the sea, but in your mouth and in your heart, ready to be kept!
40	Dt 30,12	13+	53		631	
41	Dt 30,13	16+	58		647	
42	Dt 30,14	8=51(3x17)	32		655/51 S	
43	Dt 30,15	12+	43		667	§7 <u>30,15-20</u> The choice between life and death Moses lays life and good, death and evil before the Israelites: if they would love YHWH and conform to his ways, they will live and he will bless them. Therefore, they must choose life!: 85 (5x17) words.
44	Dt 30,16	25+	109	34-35	692	
45	Dt 30,17	10+	48		702	
46	Dt 30,18	19+	69		721	
47	Dt 30,19	19=85(5x17)	83		740	
48	Dt 30,20	25	100	36-37	765/110 words P	
20	30,1-20	326	3015	18x	326	Note the ‘verbosity’ in v 20 in order to achieve exactly 765 (45x17) and 12614 (742x17) words! 507 = 13x39 that is 13x the YHWH-èchad formula!
48	29,1-30,20	765	6896	37x	765 (45x17)	
836	1,1-30,20	12614	48465	507x	12614 (742x17)	

Observation 4 In terms of its **765 (45x17)** words Part VI is in its entirety is governed by the number **17**. The outer boundary of Part VI coincides with the boundary of the book as a whole until this point (30,20), which has **12614 (742x17)** words. Chapters 1-30 are finalized and additionally sealed by the **507 (13x39)** instances of the Name. This particular number of instances were deliberately chosen in order to express the crucial confession that YHWH is One. The number **39** contains the YHWH ‘echad formula: **26 + 13**. For a similar preliminary rounding off and sealing of part of the book, see Observation 8 in [Part V](#).

Observation 5 Since Section 2 is concerned with Moses' call on the Israelites to *return* to YHWH, a string of **7** occurrences of the root שׁוּב, 'return', underlines his appeal : 30,1b.2a.3a.3b.8a.9b.10b. This is in line with the use of **7** occurrences of בְּרִית, 'covenant', in Section 1 – see Observation 2.

Observation 6 For the Divine Speeches in 29-30, see the table at the end of 31-34, because they belong to the third group of **10** Speeches in 27-34. See the **10** Speeches in 1-3 and the **10** in 4-26.

[For Part VII continue to 31-34.](#)