

Until in the Old Testament

Introduction

Until: used as a function word to indicate continuance as of an action or condition to a specified time. (Merriam Webster Dictionary)

Because the title of this article consists of one word and is a bit enigmatic, giving the dictionary definition of “until” up front might be helpful. It's one of those words we use frequently without reflecting on its significance. One way to flesh out not so much the definition but its larger sense is by presenting biblical references with the word “until.” When you read them strung out as in this document you get an idea of how time affects individuals in various circumstances. Implied in virtually all examples is a beginning whose impact is sustained either for a short or extended period of time. Never does an event happen in isolation but within a larger group, even a nation. When you throw God into the mix, a small word as “until” takes on a larger scope of meaning.

This brings up the question, what does the interim period associated with “until” consist of? How long does it last? How do people comport themselves in it while they are waiting? Important questions, to be sure. Since we're dealing with the Bible, there comes to mind God's action in human lives. He introduces the element of timelessness or eternity which gives a different sense to the word “until” compared to our ordinary usage. At the same time “until” can have a negative connotation in that it refers to a time of expectation and incompleteness while awaiting fulfillment. All in all, after reading each example presented here, both Old and New Testaments, we might get some insight into this and see several patterns emerge. One such pattern that has emerged concerns the evening, the beginning of a new day. That is to say, an event takes place during daylight hours, either ends at evening twilight or continues through the night. Thus “until” represents the end of one day and the start of another. Needless to say is that each verse needs to be regarded in the spirit of *lectio divina*, that slow, thoughtful reading of scripture which leads to putting down the text and resting in God's presence.

Please note that some verses need to be read in a larger context for better understanding. While in some instances brief remarks are given with regard to this, they must be brief, otherwise there's the risk of straying from the intent at hand. Of course, anyone can refer to the historical context and expand it accordingly. For the most part the Hebrew word for “until” is *had* (please note that 'till' is variation of *had* and therefore is included) which connotes extension within time and can be rendered as “while,” “so long as” including “to,” “even.” References are in accord with the English translation. Also references to similar words within this document are given.

Reference to each book of the Old Testament will be inserted before each verse number for easier identification when scrolling through the document

While this document deals with the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Apocrypha are listed separately, the second two under the banner “New Testament” and the third under the banner “Old Testament.” Most references of “until” are included, excluding several which are not significant. Citations are from **The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha (RSV)**, 1973.

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Genesis

Gn 3.19: In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Here “bread” or *lechem* can refer to any food which the first man eats after his expulsion from the garden. This laboring for food, absent in Eden, is the most onerous task of them all; without it you can’t live. During this prolonged span—and the first man lived eight hundred years (cf. 8.4)—he was acutely aware of the *'adamah* (cf. 28.15) from which he had been fashioned, tilling it every day as a reminder of his eventual destiny.

Gn 8.5: And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

The Hebrew text reads literally, “the waters were going and lacking (*chasar*).” Such *chasar* of the flood waters continued over an extended period of time which means that Noah and his passengers on the ark were unable to perceive it. Apparently no one was aware of the waters decreasing despite people being on the lookout for dry land because the horizon between sky and sea allowed no way to detect increase or decrease in the water’s depth.

This example of “until”—the very first one in the Bible—brings to mind the one hundred and fifty days (cf. 7.24) the waters prevailed. *Had* leaves to the reader's imagination what had transpired in the ark during that prolonged period of time; not just among the humans but the animals on board. Because *had* is within the context of mountain tops being seen for the first time, it intimates the immense amount of water that had been released.

Gn 8.7: (Noah) sent forth a raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.

Had serves to indicate what Noah did next, namely, to send forth a raven which continued to fly back and forth. The verb for “went to and fro” is *yatsa'* (cf. Rt 1.13) which is used twice reading literally “go forth go forth.” *Had* represents an indefinite period of time for the appearance of dry ground. Here it is attached to the verb *yavash* ('dried up'). The previous section mentioned mountain tops around the time Noah released this raven. In other words, a considerable amount of water had to return through subterranean channels from which it came.

Gn 19.22: Make haste, escape there; for I can do nothing till you arrive there.” Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

“Nothing” is rendered as the negative plus *davar* (cf. 24.33) which commonly translates as word in the sense of an utterance. The Lord cannot speak, if you will, till Lot arrives at Zoar from the imminent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. He has to wait for Lot and his family to make the journey in haste to Zoar in the pre-dawn hours, all the while conscious he is bound to destroy the two cities at dawn. “The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar” [vs. 23].

Gn 21.26: Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, and I have not heard of it until today."

This is the first "common" occurrence of "until," if you will, and mentioned simply because of that fact. Here it is rendered as the word *bilty* which means without, besides or so that not. The context is Abraham complaining about a well of water taken over by the servants of King Abimelech. Apparently these servants had acted on their own. And so this instance of "until" is given to reveal ignorance which remains for information to take its place.

Gn 24.33: Then food was set before him to eat; but he said, "I will not eat until I have told my errand." He said, "Speak on."

The context is the servant of Abraham (his name remains unknown) sent from Canaan to his master's homeland to fetch a wife for Isaac. Although offered food, the servant declines...does not refuse which would go against desert hospitality...because he is intent on his mission. Thus *had* is marked by devotion as well as unrelieved tension, for the servant was under oath to fulfill his obligation. The verb *davar* is used for 'told' from which is derived the noun *davar* (cf. 19.22), 'errand.' Thus speaking and doing are one and the same.

Gn 26.13: And the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy.

The following verse precedes the one at hand thereby forming one sentence: "And Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The Lord blessed him."

The context is Isaac who settled in the land of Gerar under the protection of King Abimelech. Note that the text speaks of Isaac as "the man" instead of his personal name. The verb *gadal* ('became rich,' 1Sam 20.41) literally means "became great" and is used a second time with two mentions of the verb for "became very wealthy," literally, "became great became great." As for "gained more," the verb *halak* (to go; cf. Jos 5.6) occurs twice as with *gadal* (cf. 1Sam 20.41): literally, "going to go." In sum, Isaac's acquisition of wealth straddles two instances in his life as he resided in a foreign land. On one hand, he is well-off whereas on the other, has a keen sense of not being at home.

Gn 27.44: and stay with him a while until your brother's fury turns away.

Words of Rebekah to her son Jacob, advising him to flee to her brother Laban in order to escape Esau's wrath for having been cheated from his birthright. No one knew how long Esau would be angry, certainly enough to kill his brother. However, we get an idea that Esau had a desire for revenge, for "your brother Esau comforts himself by planning to kill you" [vs. 42]. Such comforting consists of constantly tuning over in his mind various plots of revenge, *nacham* (cf. 1Sam 15.35) suggestive of lamenting as well as groaning. Esau's fury or *chemah* (cf. Ezk 24.13) is literally a burning which has to diminish gradually, not all at once. Rebekah realized this clearly which is why she sent Jacob away to Laban. She knew it would be a long time but didn't tell her son, else it would discourage him. The next verse emphasizes this with another example of "until:" "until your brother's anger turns away, and he forgets what you have done to him." Here the noun for anger is *'aph* (cf. Num 32.13) which also means nose and implies breathing through the nose in a heavy, noisy fashion.

Gn 28.15: Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that of which I have spoken to you.

Words spoken by the Lord to Jacob shortly after his vision of angels ascending and descending a ladder which connects heaven with earth. The Lord promises to “keep” Jacob, *shamar* (cf. 12.6) suggestive of close watching as well as bringing him back to “this land” or the land on which the ladder extending into heaven had rested. In this instance *had* suggests that the Lord will leave Jacob, *hazav* (Dt 28.20) once he does what he spoke to him. That speaking seems to refer to vs. 13 with the Lord standing above the ladder and addressing Jacob down below: “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants.” Although Jacob didn't realize it at the time, this giving, an extension of *had*, turns out to be much longer than anticipated. There land is *'erets* whereas in vs. 15 it's *'adamah*. The former is associated more with the identity of a people whereas the latter is more the physical land or earth itself.

Gn 29.8: But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

This verse is by shepherds to Jacob about their not having a sufficient number of men assembled to roll back the protective stone over the local well. Some shepherds must have arrived before others and had to wait for others in order to accomplish the task. They had done it often, and it was common knowledge of how many were required for the job. In sum, this example of *had* deals with a familiar, daily routine done at the end of each day or during the evening hours.

Gn 32.4: "Thus you shall say to my Lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, "I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now."

Words of Jacob to his brother Esau via messenger whom he hasn't seen in a long time and fears retribution for having stolen his birthright. The *had* in this verse can be related to the one in 27.44: “and stay with him a while until your brother's fury turns away.” Surely Jacob must have kept these words of his mother in mind all the time he had been with Laban, trusting that she was right. Now Jacob was about to find out.

Gn 32.24: And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.

Two sentences, if you will, in one verse. The first sets the stage after Jacob had sent his family and entourage safely on ahead before meeting Esau and conveys the sense of impending dread as night was about to fall. Still, Jacob had his mother's words of encouragement mentioned in the previous verse. Once night had fallen, Jacob wrestles with an unknown being, his identity not given, let alone whether he is human, angelic or otherwise. The time when this wrestling match began isn't stated, perhaps as soon as it was completely dark, nor does Jacob seem prepared for it, his mind being fixed on his family's safety vis-a-vis Esau's possible wrath. So if the wrestling began not long after sunset, the two contended throughout the entire night meaning both were exhausted at daybreak.

Gn 33.3: He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

Before Jacob meets his brother face to face, he goes through an elaborate process of self-abasement visible not just to Esau but to his entourage as well as Jacob's family who must have been watching from a safe distance. We don't know what Esau himself was thinking as his brother approached from a distance while bowing seven times before they met. Of course, the number seven is sacred which is why Jacob chose to do this. *Nagash* is the verb for came near which must have been the longest passage of time Jacob had experienced in his life.

Gn 33.14: Let my Lord pass on before his servant, and I will lead on slowly according to the pace of the cattle which are before me and according to the pace of the children until I come to my Lord in Seir.

Words spoken to Esau by Jacob after their meeting turned out to be favorable. Despite Esau's offer of protection for his brother's entourage, Jacob declines it and says the two will meet again in Seir. In other words, the pace of the children and cattle would set the time of arriving there. However, Jacob did not trust Esau and headed to Succoth. Of course, this was taking a chance because Esau had at his disposal a considerable force of armed men.

Gn 34.5: Now Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah; but his sons were with his cattle in the field, so Jacob held his peace until they came.

Charash (cf. Jdg 16.2) is the verb for held (his) peace and fundamentally means to cut into or inscribe. This is a fitting description of the *had* under consideration, namely, Jacob learning about his daughter having been raped. *Had* applies to the coming of Jacob's sons who were out in the field minding cattle. That *had* perhaps was longer than the one noted in 33.3 when Jacob approached his brother Esau, not knowing his reaction.

Gn 38.11: Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till Shelah my son grows up"--for he feared that he would die like his brothers. So Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

It seems that Judah feared the death of his sons resulted from the treachery of Tamar. By remaining in the house of her father, people could keep an eye on her while Shelah grows up. The verb *yashav* (Ex 16.35) is used twice in two different ways: "remain" which implies continuance or duration for a long time and as "dwelt" which reflects this continuance.

Gn 38.17: He answered, "I will send you a kid from the flock." And she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?"

This verse is part of a dialogue between Tamar and Judah, he thinking her to be a harlot and wanting to have sexual relations but not knowing she was his daughter-in-law. However, Tamar demanded a "pledge" or *heravon* which is a word used among traders and here refers to the kid she demanded. Judah agrees and gives Tamar his signet, cord and staff. Vs. 20 has Judah faithful to the pledge but could not find Tamar, this story continuing for the remainder of Chapter Thirty-Nine.

Gn 39.16: Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home.

This incident concerns the wife of the Egyptian who owned Joseph. When she attempted to have sexual relations with Joseph, he fled but not before she had grabbed his garment as evidence that he tried to seduce her. *Nuach* (Dt 3.20) is the verb for “laid up” which fundamentally means to rest or to set down. Thus the image is one of the woman keeping Joseph's garment by her side until her husband returned home. In the meanwhile, she kept gazing at it both longingly and with resentment. She had missed the chance to seduce Joseph and now was bent upon taking vengeance. So the time between Joseph having fled and the man returning home must have passed very slowly. She might have been tempted to contact her husband at work but decided to wait, thereby building up her venomous rage. As for Joseph, he returned home trying to conceal from his face what had happened as he awaited anxiously his fate.

Gn 41.49: And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

As newly appointed by Pharaoh to oversee provisions for the coming famine, Joseph took advantage of seven years of abundance in preparation for seven years of shortage that were to follow immediately. *Tsabar* is the verb for “stored up” which connotes heaping up in abundance, a clear description of what Joseph was doing. There came a point when the abundance of grain resembled the sand of the sea which cannot be “measured,” *saphar* also meaning to write or to inscribe.

Gn 46.34: You shall say, “Your servants have been keepers of cattle from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers” in order that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.

Joseph rehearses these words, if you will, with his brothers that they should speak before Pharaoh. Throughout their entire lives they had dealt with livestock and now had an opportunity to continue in the most coveted part of Egypt for that purpose, Goshen. They would prosper at this since the Egyptians shunned such work as an “abomination” or *tohevah* or unclean. Such is the sense of *had* in this verse, a turning point in the lives of Joseph's brothers. Note use of the word “shepherd” or *roheh*, a term associated with sheep and goats but applies here to cattle.

Gn 49.10: The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until he comes to whom it belongs; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

This verse falls within the larger context of Jacob's blessing of his twelve sons shortly before his death. Mention of scepter and staff suggests that Judah will have priority in governance of the other tribes. A footnote in the **RSV** says that the second part of this verse is obscure and refers to the literal translation as “until Shiloh comes” or “until he comes to Shiloh.” *Yiqhah* is the noun for “obedience” and has one other biblical reference, Prov 30.17: “The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.”

Exodus

Ex 9.18: Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to fall such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now.

Here the Lord is speaking with Moses about the seventh plague to afflict Egypt. “About this time” seems to refer to early in the morning of vs. 13 when the Lord bids Moses to speak with Pharaoh about letting the Israelites depart. As for the hail about to devastate Egypt, nothing like has been witnessed since the day of its founding, *yasad* referring to when the country came into being. However, tying in the impending hail storm with the origin of Egypt which even in Moses’ time was ancient is enough to fill everyone with dread.

Ex 10.26: Our cattle also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the Lord our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there.

The scene is just after the ninth plague, the one of darkness, when Moses requests that the Israelites bring cattle into the desert as offerings to the Lord. Note that this occurs just before the tenth or final plague, death of the first born. When Moses said he didn't know the means by which the people will serve the Lord, without a doubt Pharaoh's suspicion was roused. How could this be? An entire people—and slaves at that—heading off into the desert with no preparation? No small wonder Pharaoh dismissed Moses, being incensed at the importunity of saying “until we arrive there.”

Ex 12.6: and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs in the evening.

This verse deals with the lambs for the very first Passover on the threshold of Israel departing Egypt. The opening words read literally as “it will be to you an ordinance” or *mishmereth*, a word which connotes keeping guard or custody, *shamar* (cf. Gn 28.15) being the verbal root. Apparently this *mishmereth* is a short period of time from the lamb's birth until the fourteenth day as required. At this designated time the entire *qalah* (Lev 16.17) of Israel—the entire nation which is a lot of people according to 12.37—will assemble. As for *qahal*, it is more than a congregation but has a sacred dimension, a gathering for religious purposes as here.

Ex 12.10: And you shall let none of it remain until the morning, anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.

Yatar is the verb for “remain” implying that which is above and beyond what is necessary, here applicable to the remains of the Passover lamb. Such remains—likely the inedible parts—are to be burned before sunrise. That is to say, these remnants must not see the light of day but be destroyed at night, the same night and darkness during which the Lord slew the first born. Note that he himself does this at midnight (cf. 12.29) which means the Israelites had to wait half the night for the Lord to carry out his sentence and wait the other half of the night until he finished.

Ex 12.15: Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses, for if any one eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

Here *had* reflects the time span of seven days during which the Israelites are to eat unleavened bread. It also reflects a certain tension of excommunication when a person eats regular bread which results in being “cut off” from Israel. The verb *karath* (cf. Jdg 4.24) can apply to putting to death as well as making...cutting...a covenant. Note the word for “person” which is *nepesh* (Ps 57.1), literally as soul.

Ex 12.18: In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening you shall eat unleavened bread, and so until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.

The time span is from the fourteenth to the twenty-first of the month or seven days as noted in the previous verse. Again, the idea of evening is stressed, the beginning of a new day, which includes the night about to descend. So as applied to the Passover, the Lord slays the Egyptians, if you will, during the day, day having a broader meaning.

Ex 15.16: Terror and dread fall upon them; because of the greatness of your arm, they are as still as a stone till your people, O Lord, pass by, till the people pass by whom you have purchased.

This verse is from Moses' song of victory after the destruction of pharaoh's army in the Red Sea. Note the contrast between "pass by" and "still" or *havar* (used twice) and *damah* which also means to be quiet. The former applies to the Israelites and the latter to the now dead Egyptians. Upon the Egyptians fell "terror and dread" or *'eymatah* and *pachad* which are part and parcel of *damah*, a further contrast to the double use of *havar* (cf. Ex 33.22). As for the verb "purchased" by the Lord, *qanah* also means to acquire.

Ex 16.19: And Moses said to them, "Let no man leave any of it till the morning.

Reference is to manna which was left on the ground once the morning dew had evaporated meaning that it remained on the ground throughout the day. Moses enjoined the people not to leave the manna overnight or from evening until the "morning" or *boqer* (cf. 23.18), the beginning of a new day, this word suggesting a cleaving away at the night as found in the next reference below. However, as the next verse states, the people disobeyed which caused the manna to go bad.

Ex 16.23: He said to them, "This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy sabbath to the Lord; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay by to be kept till the morning.'"

This verse is preceded by the one before it thereby forming one sentence: "On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers apiece; and when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses."

Because it was the last day of work prior to the sabbath, the people were anxious to have enough manna to last two full days and were given permission to do this, having learned from their greediness demonstrated in 16.19 (more accurately, vs. 20) above. In other words, the people are to prepare the food (the quails are intimated by the word 'boil') before evening, the commencement not just of a new day but of the sabbath itself.

Ex 16.35: And the people of Israel ate the manna forty years till they came to a habitable land; they ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

This verse concludes Chapter Sixteen and begins with the conjunctive \wedge , "so" which often translates as "and." Although many verses begin with this conjunctive, it is especially fitting here to show the extended period of time the Israelites fed upon manna (nothing is said of the quails) which must have gotten boring. Note mention of "habitable land" or an *'erets* (Gn 28.15) which is *yashav* (cf. Gn 38.11)

or one fertile enough to support a population compared with wandering around in the desert. This *'erets* (refers to the association of a people with the physical place) also applies not so much to Canaan (also designated here as *'erets*; cf. Num 35.38) but to its “border” or *qatseh* which also means an end. However, this was not immediately as having stepped over this *qatseh* immediately but after having crossed the Jordan River (cf. Jos 5.12).

Ex 17.12: But Moses' hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat upon it, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; so his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

The scene is Israel battling Amalek in the Sinai wilderness where Moses took “the rod of God” [vs. 9] in his hand, *mateh*, the same rod he used during some of the plagues in Egypt as well as to strike and part the Red Sea. Although this verse and the circumstance does not speak of the *mateh*, it is implied. Both Aaron and Hur supported Moses' hands and therefore his *mateh*, all the while wondering what it was like to have wielded it during those dramatic incidents back in Egypt. So with their support Moses was able to allow the Israelites prevail. Chances are the combatants didn't look at Moses as the Israelites will do later with the serpent mounted on a pole, being too engaged in battle. As for the bronze image, all who looked at it were saved from having been bitten. At the same time Amalek's soldiers must have glanced up at Moses with Aaron and Hur though not knowing what they were doing. Perhaps their distraction contributed to Israel winning. As for the incident at hand, Israel won, but it took a while, sunset. During that time Moses' hands remained “steady” or *'emunah* which is a noun for faith. Thus these words could read literally as “faith until the going of the sun.”

Ex 18.13: On the morrow Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from morning till evening.

Moses undertakes this process of judging (*mishpat*, cf. Num 35.12) the people at his father-in-law Jethro's suggestion and goes at it here for the first time. Moses reserves the most important cases to himself while delegating lesser matters to others. The fact that the people “stood about” (*hamad*, cf. Jos 10.13) Moses the entire day implies that either there was a large amount of serious cases waiting to be settled or that the people had not yet trusted the “able men” [vs. 21]. However, that would be resolved with the passage of time. As for *hamad* relative to Moses, the preposition *hal* is used making the text read literally “upon Moses” which suggests a pressing-in upon him.

Ex 23.18: "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, or let the fat of my feast remain until the morning.

This verse is part of a series of laws, the one at hand not unlike 12.10 where remains of the sacrificial lamb at Passover are not to remain at sunrise. The “feast” is not specified though most likely refers to Passover, *chag* being the noun which can also apply to a sacrifice. The word for “morning” as in 12.10 is *boqer* which literally means the breaking forth of light, the verbal root *baqar* as to cleave by an animal with cloven hooves. This the image is one of streaking, of these streaks of pre-dawn light.

Ex 23.30: Little by little I will drive them out from before you until you are increased and possess the land.

Although the Lord is speaking here, this use of *had* must have disappointed the Israelites, having anticipated a quick, decisive take-over of Canaan. Emphasis upon “little” or *mehat* seems a way the Lord is training the people to overcome this, for if they were able to effect it quickly, just as quickly they would lose their trust in him. The people increasing (*parah* connotes being fertile) can be taken as an indirect way of subduing Canaan. Once a critical mass in the population is reached, if you will, they will simply swell over into Canaan and subject it easily.

Ex 24.14: And he said to the elders, "Tarry here for us until we come to you again; and behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a cause, let him go to them."

These are words spoken by Moses in the company of his brother Aaron and Hur as he is about to ascend Mount Sinai. The verb for “tarry and come again” is *shuv* (cf. Num 35.25) which fundamentally means to return. Already the people had experience with Moses being absent, the last time being with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy elders (cf. vs. 1). Most likely the elders in both instances are the same which must have disappointed them on this second occasion. Everyone involved here, especially Moses, hadn't a clue as to how long the three would be on Sinai's summit. This ascent, however, turned out to be fateful. Upon his return after an extended period ('Moses delayed to come down from the mountain,' 32.1) the people bade Aaron to fashion a golden calf as an object of worship instead of the Lord.

Ex 29.34: And if any of the flesh for the ordination or of the bread remain until the morning, then you shall burn the remainder with fire; it shall not be eaten because it is holy.

This verse is similar to 23.18 with respect to not having any sacrificial remains see the light of day meaning that the event at hand as here takes place the evening before or at twilight. And that event centers around the “ordination” of Aaron and his sons, *milu'ym* applicable to a sacrifice of inauguration with all but one references occurring in the Books of Exodus and Leviticus. The leftover from the ram (cf. vs. 31) is “holy” or *qodesh* (cf. Lev 12.4) meaning it is set apart, and anything set apart cannot exist on its own but must be consumed.

Ex 33.8: Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose up, and every man stood at his tent door and looked after Moses until he had gone into the tent.

The actual time frame here is unknown but is dependent upon how far Moses' own tent was from the tent of meeting. Given his status as leader, chances are it was relatively close with no one else in the immediate vicinity except perhaps his brother, Aaron. Two possibilities here: Moses went to the tent at regular intervals and could have told the people about this beforehand, the reason for them gathering about. Since Moses was a leader and people lived in close proximity with each other as is the case of a camp environment, it was easy to keep track of his movements as well as those of everyone else. *Navat* is the verb for “looked after” which connotes a certain beholding and thus sustained gaze as in the example at hand. Once Moses entered the tent, nothing is said how long he remained there. However, it is there that the Lord speaks with him “face to face as a man speaks with his friend” [vs. 11].

Ex 33.22: and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by;

This ascent to Mount Sinai occurs shortly after Moses had broken the molten calf and now seeks reconciliation between the Lord and Israel for this idolatrous offense. The Lord has his “glory” or *kavod* (literally, that which is heavy) pass by or *havar* (cf. 15.16). The preposition *b-* or “in” is prefaced to the verb reading literally “in passes by” which seems to indicate a more intimate relationship going on here. Following this almost immediately or perhaps simultaneously the Lord “will put” (*sum* implies setting or putting in a permanent place; cf. 2Kg .8.11) Moses in the rock’s “cleft” or *neqarah* which has one other biblical reference, Is 2.21: “to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs from before the terror of the Lord.”

Concomitant with this placing or *sum* is the Lord covering Moses, *sakak* being the only use of this verb in the Bible and used with the (singular) divine hand, left or right not being specified. This *sakak* is in place for an indefinite time which is where “until” comes in. That is to say, until the Lord has “passed by,” the second use of *havar*. This *havar* pertains to the Lord whereas the former *havar* pertains to his glory. In short, we have not indication of how long this divine manifestation takes place because the notion of time for *havar* is of little consequence.

Ex 34.25: "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover be left until the morning.

This verse is similar in tone to both 23.18 and 29.34, that is, with reference to “until the morning.” The passage at hand speaks of sacrificial blood not being offered, *shachat* more specifically meaning to slay (as for sacrifice). If the leaven were offered...raised up as most likely is customary...it would cause the blood to raise or expand as well.

Lun is the verb for “shall be left” which fundamentally means to spend the night. This infers a certain living quality proper to the sacrifice which it had been until recently. In other words, this sacrifice still retains a certain quality of life or representation of it (not a ghost, however). It must be put to rest before the morning. Note the three “I’s:” *lo'-yalyn laboqer* which gives the verse a certain flavor of forward-ness or urgency. The injunction given here pertains to the *chag* or “feast” of the Passover as in 23.18.

Ex 34.34: But whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the people of Israel what he was commanded.

This verse is preceded by the following, thereby forming one extended sentence: “And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.”

The preposition *b-* or “in” is prefaced to the verb *bo'* ('went in') which reads literally “in entered,” indicative of a full entry, if you will, by Moses with regard to the tent of God’s presence. “Before” or *liphney* reads literally as “to the face” followed by the preposition *l-* or “to” prefaced to the verb *davar* ('to speak;' cf. Gn 24.33). Thus note the “double *l'* or *liphney ledaber*. Once inside the tent, Moses removed the “veil” or *masveh* which Moses put it on while in his own tent and walked over to the one belonging to the Lord without bumping into anything or stumbling. People automatically moved out of his way, knowing full well that he could see them.

We have no idea what the Lord and Moses spoke about but surely must have pertained to the recent incident of the golden calf as well as the need to follow the laws given on Mount Sinai. Surely more

than this transpired, for “The Lord used to speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend” [33.11]. Some bystanders may have been tempted to listen in (after all, it was a tent) but knew if they did, dire consequences would follow. And so Moses put on the *masveh* as he left the tent and returned to his own. This time, however, he relayed to the people “what he was commanded.” That is to say, Moses didn't speak about his intimate conversation with the Lord, for that was strictly between two friends.

Ex 34.35: The people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses would put the veil upon his face again until he went in to speak with him.

This verse continues right after the previous one, again dealing with that special “veil” or *masveh* which is confined to these few verses. Its function is to conceal Moses' skin from shining, the verb being *qaran* which here is a participle for “has horns” and is suggestive of flashing rays of light which can be applied to Moses. And so the *masveh* was intended to conceal these flashes of light which emanated from Moses' face, for they weren't a constant radiance.

Moses seems to be conversing with the people about his most recent visit to the Lord's tent or tabernacle during which, it seems, his face broke out into a sudden radiant burst of light requiring it to be concealed. Then he would enter the tent and remove it for familiar conversation. All this intimates a vast difference between such communication and the one relative to the people formulated as laws, etc. Unlike the uninitiated people, a friend of the Lord wouldn't require such strictures. The Lord's intent is ultimately to have everyone communicate with him as Moses.

Ex 40.37: But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not go onward till the day that it was taken up.

The next to the last verse in Exodus is preceded by vs. 36 thereby forming one sentence: “Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would go onward.”

No specific reason is given for the cloud not being taken up though it must have remained so for a number of reasons as protection against foes in the desert. “Day” can refer to an occasion not unlike a *kairos* event or when the Lord deemed it safe for the cloud's protection to be lifted.

Leviticus

Lv 6.9 (5.9 in RSV): Command Aaron and his sons, saying, “This is the law of the burnt offering. The burnt offering shall be on the hearth upon the altar all night until the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it.”

In this verse the Lord is speaking with Moses regarding the “law” or *torah* concerning the “burnt offering” or *holah* which derives from a verbal root meaning to go up, to ascend as with fire and smoke. Note two uses of the preposition *hal-* or “upon:” “heath and altar,” the former being *moqdah* which is a specific part of the altar for the *holah*, the rest presumably having nothing on it. *Moqdah* is the only use of this term in the Bible and seems to be something like a grill placed off to the altar's side once the offering has been made. A burnt offering of any kind can be on fire for a limited period

of time after which it remains on the altar until morning or daybreak. Thus the *moqdah* is in reference to an evening sacrifice. The fire on the altar is to be kept alive, most likely reduced to embers, even though the *holah* is consumed totally.

Lv 7.15: And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offering; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.

A number of verses thus far have the phrase “until morning” with regard to sacrifices and are significant in that they show the importance of the night. And night begins with the evening sacrifice or when the first star makes its appearance at twilight.

Shelem is the noun for “peace offerings” and closely related to *shalom* or peace. It is a sacrifice of “thanksgiving” (*todah*) which means the person offering it has received some kind of favor and wishes to attribute it to the Lord. Before the Lord other people are present which makes this a special kind of public worship. In other words, there’s no such thing as a private offering.

The offering at hand is to be consumed before sunset, that is, on the “day” (*yom*) of the offering, this word having significance not unlike the concept of *kairos*, a special time or event. Eating it may take place morning or afternoon, perhaps extended throughout the entire daylight hours. “Until morning” even may include nighttime which has shades of the Passover.

Lv 8.33: And you shall not go out from the door of the tent of meeting for seven days until the days of your ordination are completed, for it will take seven days to ordain you.

Moses is laying down guidelines for the ordination of priests which started with Aaron and his sons, thereby setting a pattern for future generations. *Mohed* (cf. 16.17) is the “tent of meeting” which has a broader meaning, that is, it includes the notion of congregation as well as season. “Door” is indicative more as opening, and this being a tent, refers to a curtain which could be latched from inside. Once inside the *mohed*, Aaron and his sons could not exit for a full week or seven days, a substantial time of confinement. Since this tent is larger than one for living, a number of other people beside Moses must have been present for the ordination services.

The number “seven” or *sheveh* is sacred and derived from a verbal root meaning to swear an oath. With this in mind, the time span is secondary; *sheveh* could be not unlike *kairos* or that *yom* (‘day’) noted in the last entry, unspecified and more applicable to a sacred event which stands outside space and time.

The actual ordination is described earlier in Chapter Eight which implies that the *sheveh* within the *mohed* is a kind retreat done in silence and has parallel with the time Moses had spent on Mount Sinai. This seems true even though the verse at hand speaks of “seven days to ordain you.”

Lv 11.24: And by these you shall become unclean; whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening.

Reference is to unclean dead animals, the touching of which makes a person similar to them. The verb for “unclean” is *tame'* (cf. 17.15) which also means to pollute. Becoming such is done primarily through touching or *nagah*. However, becoming unclean or polluted is a temporary situation. It lasts

throughout the day or the time of day when the incident occurs and goes away at sunset. If this uncleanness were to last overnight, it would kill the person so afflicted. The same idea is found with respect to evening in quite a few verses: 27, 31, 32, 39 and 40, 46; 15.5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23 and 27.

Lv 12.4: Then she shall continue for thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying; she shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purifying are completed.

Here the Lord speaks to Moses about purification of a woman after childbirth, the verb for “continue” being *yashav* (cf. Ex 16.35) which connotes a sitting down or dwelling and hence a period of waiting. Here it lasts for thirty-three days with respect to the new mother's “purifying” or *taher* (cf. 17.15) which connotes shining or being bright. During this time of approximately one month the woman—and she does have a newly born baby to care for—cannot “touch” (*nagah* as in the previous reference) that which is “hallowed,” *qodesh* (cf. Ex 29.34) being the word which applies to anything set apart or sacred. Similarly, she cannot enter the “sanctuary” or *miqdosh* which derives from the same verbal root as *qodesh*. And so her days of purifying can be taken as a time of recovery from childbirth during which her family and friends attend to her needs.

Lv 16.17: There shall be no man in the tent of meeting when he enters to make atonement in the holy place until he comes out and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel.

Here the “tent of meeting” and “holy place” or *mohed* (cf. 8.33) and *qodesh* are one and the same. Because *qodesh* fundamentally means that which is set apart and therefore is holy (i.e., not profane), the man who makes atonement or *kaphar* (to cover) is parallel to it. That is to say, he is covering himself, if you will, or setting himself apart both by entering and by reason of the *mohed* being *qodesh*. Because this is such a special act, no other person can be present. Nothing is said as to how long he remains in the *mohed/qodesh* nor what he does there. That is of lesser importance than simply being present within it.

Such *kaphar* is more than personal; it is “for his house and all the *qahal* (cf. Ex 12.6) of Israel,” this word having clear religious connotations. While the *qahal* may not be aware of the individual person making *kaphar*, surely they are aware that such activity is transpiring and thereby sustaining their very existence.

Lv 17.15: And every person that eats what dies of itself or what is torn by beasts whether he is a native or a sojourner, shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening; then he shall be clean.

Two types of persons are included...in fact, everyone: “native and sojourner” or *'azreh* and *ger* (cf. 25.40). The former refers to someone who is not transplanted whereas the other is someone living in a country other than his own. This could be an exile forced from home yet decides to take up residence in the land of his captivity because eventually he finds life better there. Both terms are prefaced with the preposition *b-* ('in').

Since consuming an animal that has died or has been torn by beasts is so violent, both types of people—Jews and Gentiles—are forbidden to partake of it. Perhaps it has something to do with the unclean

animals and birds that eat carcasses which have been abandoned. Only washing oneself and one's clothes in water will remove the impurity garnered by eating such remains. Even so, this person will remain "unclean" or *tame'* (cf. 11.24) until sunset. Since this is the beginning of a new day, he will now "be clean" or *taher* (cf. 12.4) which as noted earlier, means to be bright.

Lv 19.6: It shall be eaten the same day you offer it or on the morrow; and anything left over until the third day shall be burned with fire.

Reference is to a sacrifice of peace offerings. A person who has made it has the option of eating the sacrifice either the day he offered it or the next day, that is, without keeping it overnight. Perhaps because this is an offering where some kind of reconciliation has transpired, an extra day is added. The presence of this offering (on the altar) for a total of three days is a reminder of the reconciliation that has just taken place.

Lv 19.13: You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning.

This verse is within the larger context of ordinances about following the Lord which takes up Chapter Nineteen in its entirety. Here two are combined. Wages for someone who had been hired are to be given directly and not held overnight. The verb for "remain" is *lun* (cf. 34.25) which means to spend the night. In the verse at hand, this verb suggests that the wages due are not to reside, if you will, with the person responsible for giving them out.

Lv 22.4: None of the line of Aaron who is a leper or suffers a discharge may eat of the holy things until he is clean. Whoever touches anything that is unclean through contact with the dead or a man who has had an emission of semen.

The first sentence deals with the priesthood inaugurated with Aaron and his sons, that is, the "line" or *zerah* which literally means seed and refers to descendants. *Zuv* is the verb for "suffers a discharge, applying to seminal emission. Such a man...priest...must be purified before eating the "holy things" or *qadosh*. The length of time isn't specified.

The second sentence is incomplete and runs through vs. 7 which reads "shall be unclean until the evening" which again brings up the notion of both the Sabbath and the beginning of a new day with sunset. To have an emission of semen means that the priest's vital line of transmission has been interfered with and must be kept in tact or within the bounds of marriage.

Lv 22.30: It shall be eaten on the same day; you shall leave none of it until morning: I am the Lord.

Reference is to a sacrifice of thanksgiving which is to be consumed on the same day as it is offered, that is, with nothing left over. The immediacy is because of the importance of such a sacrifice. Besides, the Lord himself steps in stating his identity, something not done with other offerings.

Lv 23.14: And you shall eat neither bread nor grain parched or fresh until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The second “until” is not present in the Hebrew text.

Reference is to the offering of first fruits of grain, not sacrificial animals or the like. Such produce from the field is to be eaten on the “same day” or when it is offered to the Lord. That is, *yom* with *hetsem*, the latter also meaning “bone.” The idea seems to be one of immediacy backed up with some force or rigor, allowing for no exception. This type of offering the Lord puts in terms as a “statute” as opposed to the time frame of evening or morning, *chuqah* implying an established time as well as custom. Not only does this apply to future generations but to their dwellings, perhaps implying that each Israelite house is a temple of the Lord in miniature.

Lv 24.12: And they put him in custody till the will of the Lord should be declared to them.

Reference is to the unnamed son of a woman called Shelomith who had been accused of blaspheming the Lord. This man, apparently young, was to be in custody until the Lord's “will” was to be decided, the noun being *py*, literally as “mouth.” Implied is that the Lord is to speak with Moses about the matter after which a decision would be made or better, Moses would carry out what this divine *py* had communicated to him by way of a *davar* or “word.”

Lv 25.22: When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating old produce; until the ninth year, when its produce comes in, you shall eat the old.

This verse speaks of sabbatical years within the jubilee period which is once every fifty years. The remaining verses center around this this special time of reconciliation and forgiveness of debts.

Lv 25.28: But if he has not sufficient means to get it back for himself, then what he sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the year of jubilee; in the jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his property.

The period of time here is quite extensive, just about one' entire life or more, some fifty years. That means the person originally in possession of something as a field taken from someone who couldn't hold on to it for some reason or another pretty much ends up as the owner. If on a rare occasion as the jubilee year he has to relinquish it, this would be the equivalent of giving up what he considers as rightly belonging to himself. His children might not know that his possession is temporary even if extending a long period of time and may put up resistance to carry this out.

Lv 25.40: He shall be with you as a hired servant and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee.

This verse which concerns one's brother who has become poor and has to take desperate measures in order to survive. That is to say, he is to be a “hired servant and sojourner” or *sakyr* and *toshav*. Compare the latter with the more common *ger* (cf. 17.15). *Toshav* seems applicable to someone who has more or less permanent status within a household, not just a person who may be around for a limited period of time. Since a jubilee years occurs once every fifty years, this *sakyr/toshav* can begin serving (*havad* suggests slavery as well) at any time within this span. Regardless, the span is intended to be a lengthy period of time.

Lv 25.50: He shall reckon with him who bought him from the year when he sold himself to him until the year of jubilee, and the price of his release shall be according to the number of years; the time he was with his owner shall be rated as the time of a hired servant.

Refer to vs. 25 when the brother of someone who owns property becomes poor. The person here is to “reckon” with him, *chashav* meaning to think, to meditate or to impute. That is to say, the man who has become poor is compelled to sell himself into slavery until the jubilee year which could range anywhere from one to forty-nine years, perhaps a good bulk of his lifetime. Since ties of blood are involved, this arrangement seems to be a more formal way of protection, not subjugation.

Lv 25.52: If there remain but a few years until the year of jubilee, he shall make a reckoning with him; according to the years of service due from him he shall refund the money for his redemption.

This verse takes into account the fact that the time in between two jubilees is considerable. The verb *chashav* or “make a reckoning” is used as with the last entry. *G'ulah* is “redemption” and often applies to a field or farm.

Lv 27.18: But if he dedicates his field after the jubilee, then the priest shall compute the money-value for it according to the years that remain until the year of jubilee, and a deduction shall be made from your valuation.

Qadash (cf. Jos 7.13) is the verb for “dedicates” and can mean to make holy, to set apart. Here a person had experienced the jubilee, a year of forgiveness with regard to debts, etc, and decides to start afresh. Because a field is a chief source of income, the person who owns it contacts a priest who evaluates its value until the next jubilee. Because that time is approximately fifty years, the field is bound to increase in value. “After the jubilee” seems to mean just what it says: fairly soon after the year long celebration meaning there are forty-nine years left which, if all went well, would involve the owner's son as heir.

Numbers

Nm 6.5: All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the Lord, he shall be holy; he shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long.

This verse concerns a Nazirite (literally, one separated or one consecrated to the Lord) where the noun “separation” (*nezer*) is used with *neder* or “vow.” An external sign of this vow is not to shave one's hair which ties in with the Samson story: “A razor has never come upon my head; for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb” [Jdg 16.17]. “All the days” can intimate a lifetime commitment or from the time a person professes his vow, the nature of which is not given.

“Until” seems to indicate a specific time which isn't mentioned (*yom* or the plural, 'days') when the candidate must be “holy” or *qadosh* (cf. Lev 22.4). The idea of separation in this verb ties in with “separates himself” (*nazar*; see *nezer* or 'separation') concerning *l-* or literally “to the Lord.” This time or *yom* is specific in the sense of being “completed” or *mala'*. The concluding words about letting one's locks grow long are a kind of supplement to drive home the public nature of this particular vow.

Nm 9.12: They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute for the Passover they shall keep it.

Here the Lord is speaking to Moses about the Passover lamb, that it must be eaten while the remains are to be burned (cf. Ex 12.10: 'anything that remains until the morning you shall burn'). As for the original Passover, the smiting of the first born takes place at midnight (cf. Ex 12.29) which suggests that the ritual meal has been eaten anytime between sunset and halfway through the night. The "stature" or *chuqah* implying an established time as well as custom (cf. Num 23.14) is used with the verb *hasah* (cf. Jer 23.20) for "keep" which fundamentally means to make or to do.

No bone of the Passover sacrifice is to be broken which is quoted concerning the death of Jesus: "For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'Not a bone of him shall be broken'" [Jn 19.36].

Nm 9.15: On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony; and at evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning.

"On the day" reads literally as "in (*b-*) the day or *yom*" or being fully present with regard to it. This *yom* is associated with erecting (*qum*, to arise, to stand; Jos 7.13) the "tabernacle" or *mishkan* which also goes by the name of "tent of testimony" or '*ohel haheduth*, the second applicable to a divine precept, law or revelation. Note the difference between *mishkan* (cf. Ps 132.5) and '*ohel*: while both refer to a tent or a moveable dwelling, the former can be more permanent and often refers to the dwelling of God among the Israelites. The latter is the more common word for tent.

The "cloud" or *hanan* was hovering in the background waiting to envelop the (*kasah* or to cover implies putting something on such as clothes) tabernacle and thus was quite visible in the strong desert sunlight. However, the cloud remained as such until evening (again, a possible reference to the beginning of Passover or Sabbath) when it assumed the "appearance" or *mar'eh* (cf. 9.21) of fire, this noun deriving from the common verbal root "to see." Thus the *hanan* (cf 9.21) was visible as a darkish column until the evening twilight when it underwent a transformation into a pillar of fire similar to the one described in Ex 13.21: "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud...and by night in a pillar of fire." The transition occurred precisely when the first star appeared and the next day had begun, religiously speaking.

Nm 9.21: And sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning; and when the cloud was taken up in the morning, they set out, or if it continued for a day and a night, when the cloud was taken up they set out.

Yesh or the verb *yashah* (to be) which can be used as an adverb with the conjunctive *v-* prefaced to it and being rendered here as "and sometimes remained." This applies to the cloud being present from evening until morning or throughout the entire night. That is to say, the *hanan* (cf. 9.15) did not change to the *mar'eh* of fire as in the previous entry, the reason for which isn't given. Such a *hanan* must have appeared even more ominously as it just barely stood out against the pitch black desert nighttime sky. Chances are this *hanan* wasn't stationary but had some kind of swirling motion which produced a sound, again, ominously by reason of the night.

In the morning the *hanan* “was taken up” (*halah*: also can apply to a sacrifice being offered), that is, some divine force lifted it from among the Israelites or more specifically, from the tabernacle. Although the people went on their journey without its presence, memory of it was sufficient to guide them.

Nm 11.20: But a whole month until it comes out at your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you because you have rejected the Lord who is among you and have wept before him saying, “Why did we come forth out of Egypt?”

This verse continues from the previous one (‘You shall not eat one day or two days or five days or ten days or twenty days’) and refers to the quail sent from heaven along with the manna. Vs. 19 mentions not eating this food from one up to twenty days as a preparation, if you will, but for an entire month when the people had stuffed themselves so much that it become “loathsome” or *zara’*, the only use of this word in the Bible. And so greed trumps the Lord whom the people have “rejected” or *ma’as* which implies despising as well and contemning. Such *ma’as* (cf. 2Kg 17.20) is more poignant because of the Lord’s proximity, that is, “among you,” *qerev* being associated with the very midst of something. Despite this intimate presence, the people wept over their greed prompting them to question as to why they had left Egypt.

Nm 12.15: So Miriam was shut up outside the camp seven days; and the people did not set out on the march till Miriam was brought in again.

Miriam was the sister of Moses who, along with Aaron, had challenged his leadership as noted in vs. 2 (Note that her brother Aaron gets off the hook). Because of this she had to be confined outside the camp for seven days, the prescribed length for such matters which meant the people had to bide their time. Surely all kinds of rumors must have made their way around the camp which was intolerable for Moses as well as embarrassing for Aaron.

Nm 14.19: Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, and according as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

Salach is the verb for “pardon” which connotes lightness or a lifting up with regard to the people’s “iniquity” or *havon* (cf. Is 22.14) which Moses begs the Lord to effect. His well known intimacy with the Lord has allowed him to know how far to press the matter, hence the appeal to “steadfast love” or *chesed* (cf. Neh 9.32) which involves desire and ardor made all the more intense by attributing “greatness” to it. Such *chesed* has been manifest through divine forgiveness, the second use of *salach* in vs. 19. Not only that, Moses goes so far as to appeal to the Lord’s memory or from the time he had manifested himself to Moses in Egypt up to this very point.

Nm 14.33: And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years and shall suffer for your faithlessness until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness.

Being a shepherd and hence following sheep implies that the people will be meandering about the desert where food is sparse. They are to do this for a span of forty years, pretty much an entire life time. The children will “suffer” or *nasa’* (literally, to raise up) the “faithlessness” of their parents. The noun here is quite strong—*zenuth*—which literally means whore-like behavior. So to *nasa’* this most shameful behavior implies that the children will have to raise it on high, if you will, as they follow the

meandering of the sheep. This will continue until the very last dead body is exposed in the wilderness. Once that last dead body has decomposed (and fortunately it will do quickly in the desert environment), the children will leave the wilderness for Canaan.

Nm 19.7: Then the priest shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; and the priest shall be unclean until evening.

The context of this verse is the sacrifice of a red heifer outside the camp, that is, for impurity. Immediately after this the priest who has officiated will wash not only his clothes...presumably the sacred vestments...but himself. Despite this ritual cleansing, the priest will remain “unclean” or *tame’* (cf. Lev 17.15) until evening or until the beginning of a new day. Nothing is said as to the time of this sacrifice nor what the priest was supposed to do. Most likely he would make his way to the tent of meeting and remain there knowing his stay wouldn't be for long, that is, until the beginning of a new day or evening.

Nm 19.10: And he who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. And this shall be to the people of Israel and to the stranger who sojourns among them, a perpetual statute.

This verse follows on the heels of the previous entry and applies to an assistant to the priest who had just offered the sacrifice of a red heifer. He too is to undergo the same ritual cleansing and remain unclean until evening. Thus this assistant and the priest are one and the same as far as uncleanness goes though nothing is said of the former entering the camp or what he is to do afterward.

Note that the “stranger” or *ger* (cf. Lev 25.40) is living “among” the Israelites, *betok* which differs from *qerev* in 11.20, connoting the middle of something. Such a person could be an exile or one who has voluntarily associated himself with Israel by reason of the Lord. Regardless, with regard to the offering of the heifer, the *ger* and Israelite are bound by a “statute” *chuqah* which is “perpetual” or *hulam*, that is, a very long time whose duration is uncertain.

Nm 19.21: And it shall be a perpetual statute for them. He who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening.

Reference is to a person who fails to cleanse himself, the penalty being cut off from “the midst of the assembly or *qahal*” [vs. 20]. Against such a person will be a “statute” or *chuqah* which is “perpetual” (*hulam*) as in the last entry. Note the preposition *l-* prefaced to “them” and “statute:” literally, “to them” and “to a statute” which drives home the force of this decree.

The second half of this verse is more lenient as applicable to a person concerning “impurity” or *nidah* which can apply to an abomination, hence its difference from *tame’* as in 19.7 which pertains to being polluted or defiled. Water in the desert is precious, hence the prohibition against sprinkling it or touching it for impurity is akin to an abomination. Nevertheless, it is pardonable once evening has arrived, the commencement of a new day.

Nm 19.22: And whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and any one who touches it shall be unclean until evening.

This verse follows on the heels of the previous one and therefore is similar to it with the idea of uncleanness (*tame'*) mentioned three times. A person who is such transmits his pollution by way of touch, and anyone who touches that object receives the same uncleanness without diminution. However, the onset of evening with the promise of a new day can change all this.

Nm 23.24: Behold, a people! As a lioness it rises up and as a lion it lifts itself; it does not lie down till it devours the prey and drinks the blood of the slain.

This verse forms part of the prophecy of Balaam against Balak, king of Moab, originally intended to be against Israel, and is compared to both a lioness and lion (i.e., male and female; the latter usually does the hunting). Implied is that the lioness kills the prey...Balak...and brings it to the lion to devour its own time and pace.

Nm 32.13: And the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was consumed.

The verb *charah* or "kindles" associated with divine "anger" or '*aph* (cf. Gn 27.44) also means nose. Thus the image is of the Lord breathing forth fire through his nose not unlike some kind of dragon, directed "against" Israel or literally "in (*b-*) Israel." It had such force as to make Israel "wander" or *nuah* which connotes moving to and fro aimlessly. Not just that, this *nuah* lasted forty years until the "generation" or *dor* (age, period or circulation) that had done "evil" or *rah* before the Lord was "consumed" or *tamam* (cf. Dt 31.30) which connotes finishing or bringing to a conclusion.

Nm 32.18: We will not return to our homes until the people of Israel have inherited each his inheritance.

The context is the allotment of land to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh which refuse to inherit the land beyond the Jordan River. In other words, this sets up a potential confrontation waiting for the entire people of Israel to take their respective inheritance. The length of time involved with this "until" remains unspecified and hence full of tension.

Nm 35.12: The cities shall be for you a refuge from the avenger that the man-slayer may not die until he stands before the congregation for judgment.

The cities at hand are for Levites who lacked any tribal inheritance and are designated as places of "refuge," *miqlat* specified for persons...most likely a Levite...who had committed murder. Such a person has the right to a trial before the "congregation" or *hedah* (cf. Jos 25.6) which differs from a *qahal* as in 19.21 by reason of a specific task as in this verse, namely, the giving and hearing of testimony. Such is why "judgment" or *mishpat* is mentioned.

Nm 35.25: And the congregation shall rescue the man-slayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge to which he had fled, and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil.

Both this verse and the next entry are within the context of the cities set aside for the Levites as noted in the verse above and forms an extended sentence starting with vs. 22. As with the previous entry,

the *qahal* plays an important role by rescuing the accused (Levite) murderer, *natsal* suggestive of drawing out and doing it quickly. That is to say, this slayer is drawn out from someone bent on avenging blood that was shed, the verb being *ga'al* which often translates as to redeem.

The *qalah* is to have another role, namely, to “restore” (*shuv*: also as to return; cf. Ex 24.14) him not just any city of “refuge” (*miqlat*) as in 35.12 but to *his* city of refuge. This city may have been allotted to him at his birth or when he assumed full priestly duties as a Levite. However, the guilty person cannot move about freely. Rather, he must remain (*yashav*; cf. Lev 12.4: compare with *shuv*) in it until the high priest's death and a new one comes into office. Mention of holy oil is deliberate, for it serves to wash away as well as anoint in the person of the high priest who stands in for the *qahal* and therefore for the guilty person at hand.

Nm 35.28: For the man must remain in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; but after the death of the high priest the man-slayer may return to the land of his possession.

This verse repeats much of what was said just above. Residing in the city of refuge, of course, is temporary, and while there he would encounter fellow Levites, even some who have been guilty of crimes not unlike his. Upon the high priest's death (the holy oil isn't mentioned but inferred), the Levite guilty of death can return to the land of his “possession” or *'achuzah*. That “and” or *'erets* (cf. Ex 16.35; source of one's identity, more as a nation, compared to the physical ground) is in the Levite's family and cannot be possessed by him though he can reside there and make use of any of its resources.

Deuteronomy

Dt 1.31: And in the wilderness where you have seen how the Lord your God bore you as a man bears his son in all the way that you went until you came to this place.

This verse continues as part of the previous one which runs as follows: “The Lord your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes.”

The small conjunctive *v-* in vs. 31 is important because it shows continuous action on the Lord's part all the way from when the Israelites were in Egypt to the present, that is to say, “in this place” or *maqom* (cf. 9.7) which connotes an abode or habitation. In sum, the Lord will continue his fight on Israel's behalf. The image is almost one of a warrior bearing a child in his arms while at the same time engaged in combat. The “way” or *derek* (cf. 1Sam 15.18) Israel had gone from Egypt was, of course, not so much as long as it was full of delays lasting some forty years.

Dt 2.14: And the time from our leaving Kadesh-barnea until we crossed the brook Zered was thirty-eight years until the entire generation, that is, the men of war, had perished from the camp, as the Lord had sworn to them.

Here the period of thirty-eight years is equivalent to the “entire generation” with respect to warriors. Note that they had perished “from the camp” or literally “from the midst (*qerev*, cf. Jos 7.13) of the camp” which suggests their central position within Israel as a sacred *qahal* or assembly. This had been foretold by the Lord himself, one reference to this being Num 14.29: “In this desert your bodies will fall

—everyone of you twenty years old or more...who has grumbled against me.” And so the “until” at hand covers virtually an entire generation of Israelites or those who had left Egypt.

Vs. 15 continues the theme of “until,” if you will: “For indeed the hand of the Lord was against them, to destroy them from the camp until they had perished.” Again, *qerev* as “from” relative to the camp is mentioned.

Dt 2.29: As the sons of Esau who live in Seir and the Moabites who live in Ar did for me, until I go over the Jordan into the land which the Lord our God gives to us.'

This is a continuation of vs. 28: “You shall sell me food for money that I may eat and give me water for money that I may drink; only let me pass through on foot.”

The context is Moses sending messengers to the king of Heshbon in his desire to ask permission for the Israelites to pass through their land. He mentions the sons of Esau and Moabites who already had done this without incident. Since it is a question of that “land” or *'erets* (cf. Num 35.28) given by the Lord, this transit should be effected as quickly as possible. However, King Sihon refused.

Dt 3.3: So the Lord our God gave into our hand Og also the king of Bashan and all his people; and we smote him until no survivor was left to him.

This verse is to be read in light of the previous entry, that is, the same situation. There must have been a point when Moses knew Og's army was either outside their power (i.e., 'hand') but near to it. Only then did he have insight into the situation and made the attack. “Until” suggests a methodical slaughter made all the more dramatic by the words “to him” or to King Og who suddenly found himself all alone. Towards the end he must have had the same insight as Moses, that is, that his army was delivered into Israel's hand and was powerless to escape it.

Dt 3.20: Until the Lord gives rest to your brethren, as to you, and they also occupy the land which the Lord your God gives them beyond the Jordan; then you shall return every man to his possession which I have given you.

This verse continues from the previous one as follows: “But your wives, your little ones and your cattle (I know that you have many cattle) shall remain in the cities which I have given you.”

The “men of valor” [vs. 18] are to do battle while their family members and cattle are to remain in the safety of cities which had been taken, that is, from kings such as Sihon and Og. Actually Israel had no intent of doing this but was forced to subdue their enemies before crossing the Jordan River. The words in parentheses add a bit of humor, that is, the Lord knew the Israelites had become wealthy, chiefly by despoiling their enemies, wealth being measured by the possession of livestock.

Those remaining in the cities...wives, children and the aged...must have been anxious as they awaited the giving of this “rest” brought about by their husbands, brothers, etc., fighting an unwanted series of battles. *Nuach* (Gn 39.16) is the verb for “gives rest” which fundamentally means to sit down. Applied to the cities, it can suggest their possession or *yarash* which fundamentally means to occupy and is truer to the cause at hand. Once this process of inheriting has taken place, the people are to return ('every man' means everyone without exception) to the “possession” or *yerushah* which the

Lord has given them, this noun being derived from *yarash* (cf. 28.21). The idea seems to be that *yaresh* applies to whatever territory Israel has gained since entering Canaan. After all, Abraham had dwelt in it several centuries before, his memory sustaining Israel in its present difficulties.

Dt 7.20: Moreover the Lord your God will send hornets among them until those who are left and hide themselves from you are destroyed.

Reference is to the inhabitants of Canaan, that is, those who have survived the attack by hornets yet ultimately are “destroyed” or the common verb *avad* which connotes losing oneself or wandering. Even though they have gone into hiding, they will not survive. As they awaited this fate they had to endure people all around them being stung by this plague of hornets.

Dt 7.23: But the Lord your God will give them over to you and throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed.

This verse echoes much of the previous entry. There is an indefinite time gap relative to this “until” or when the Lord hands over the inhabitants of Canaan and casts them into a “confusion” which is great. The noun *mehumah* signifies commotion which fades away gradually until Israel destroys them, *shamad* (cf. Josh 23.15) being the verb which connotes a laying waste. This same sentiment is conveyed in vs. 24 which contains “until.”

Dt 9.7: Remember and do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord.

“Remember and do not forget:” this double injunction is quite severe insofar as the Lord requires Israel to keep in mind constantly how it “provoked” him, *qatsaph* meaning to break out or break forth into anger. Ever since Israel's departure from Egypt, she was “rebellious” or *marah*, a verb which evokes the image of lashing out as with a whip. Such *marah* lasted until the people arrived at this “place” or *maqom* (cf. 1.31) which suggests the border area of Canaan they are about to transform into their own *maqom* or place of residence. In other words, the Lord is warning Israel not to continue this *marah* or rebellious spirit into Canaan which would endanger the entire endeavor thus far.

Dt 9.21: Then I took the sinful thing, the calf which you had made and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small until it was as fine as dust; and I threw the dust of it into the brook that descended out of the mountain.

Moses applies the second person plural to the molten calf ('you have made') as indicting both Aaron and the Israelites. He then destroys it by “grinding,” *tachan* usually associated with a small hand mill which in the case at hand was a laborious process. He chose this long, drawn-out process deliberately while forcing Aaron and the people to watch. Everyone remained silent except for the constant grinding noise which penetrated the quiet desert air. When at last Moses was finished he gathered the gold dust—still it was very valuable as fashioned into something else—and threw it into a brook so no one could retrieve it. This was no ordinary brook but one that flowed from the holy mountain from which Moses recently had descended.

Dt 11.5: And what he did to you in the wilderness until you came to this place.

A short verse beginning with vs. 2 and continuing through vs. 7 with the important command “consider” or *yadah* (cf. Jos 23.13) which means to know in the intimate sense made all the more pertinent by “this day” or right here and now. In the two verse which follow (3 and 4) Moses speaks of how the Lord had rescued the Israelites from Egypt and carries over this imperative to *yadah* into more recent events, that is, the wilderness in which they found themselves. More specifically, Moses calls the holy mountain “this place” or *maqom* (cf. 9.7) which is not unlike “this day” of vs. 2.

Dt 16.4: No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days; nor shall any of the flesh which you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain all night until morning.

This verse is in reference to the celebration of the Passover. Leaven has to be removed not just from homes but from “all your territory” or *gevulah* which fundamentally means a border. Such a word was to a certain degree tenuous because recently Israel come into Canaan and wasn't certain as where to establish any borders. Thus *gevulah* has a more localized sense or centered around various settlements compared with the entire land area that eventually would become Israel. By eliminating leaven for a total of seven days—seven being a sacred number as the six days of creation and one day of divine rest—that land that belonged to Israel was participate in the original Passover or departure from Egypt in haste.

As for the remainder of any sacrifice at the beginning of Passover, it is not to remain until the next day but is be burned although that is not stated here explicitly. Again, “until” is used as a connective of sorts between evening and morning or the end of one day and the beginning of another.

Dt 22.2: And if he is not near you or if you do not know him, you shall bring it home to your house, and it shall be with you until your brother seeks it; then you shall restore it to him.

This verse is in conjunction with “your brother's ox or his sheep” [vs. 1] which had gone astray. While this person is out looking for his lost sheep, the one who finds it is to keep it. Practically speaking, until the person gets word of it and happens to come across the missing sheep. Such animals were marked, so it was easy to identify to whom it belonged.

Dt 28.20: The Lord will send upon you curses, confusion and frustration in all that you undertake to do until you are destroyed and perish quickly on account of the evil of your doings because you have forsaken me.

Here “until” represents the connection between three types of maledictions and what the people of Israel undertakes which is rendered as *bekal-mishlach yadak* or literally as “in all your hand sends.” The three-fold calamity seems to be taking place up to the point when Israel is destroyed and perishes...not just that but when is quick effect because of the evil that had done. Such evil, of course, is tied in with having “forsaken” (*hazav* connotes letting go, to loosen) the Lord.

Dt 28.21: The Lord will make the pestilence cleave to you until he has consumed you off the land which you are entering to take possession of it.

Because this verse follows on the heels of the previous one, the same threat of total annihilation is hanging over Israel, *kalah* (cf. 1Sam 15.18) as “consumed” meaning to bring to a full end with respect to

'*adamah* (cf. Gn 28.15) or "land." This word usually is applied to the physical place compared with '*erets* which involves national identity. The threat at hand also applies to the next verse, making three of four examples of "until" in a row. This full removal, if you will, is emphasized by two prepositions acting as one, *mehal* or literally "from upon" (the land). It is taking place the exact same time Israel is entering this land to possess it, *yarash* (cf. Dt 3.20) being the verb.

Dt 28.22: The Lord will smite you with consumption and with fever, inflammation and fiery heat and with drought and with blasting and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.

Seven plagues, as it were, are rolled into one which shall "pursue" Israel, *radaph* meaning to put to flight as well as to persecute. While being so prosecuted, chances are the people would welcome death. This is the fourth example of "until" with respect to the people's wicked behavior, that is to say, rainfall will become powder and dust, the exact opposed of life-giving rain.

Dt 28.45: All these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you till you are destroyed because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded you.

The curses are not actual but potential, that is, they go back to vs. 15 ('If you will not obey the voice of the Lord'). Note only will these "curses" or *qelalah* come upon the Israelites, but two other actions will follow immediately: 1) the curses will "pursue" them, *radaph* (cf. 28.22) also meaning to persecute as noted in that reference and 2) They will "overtake" the people, *nasag* (connotes attaining) them until their destruction. The image is that the people will feel this threefold approach of the curses creeping up one by one to their final ruin. What brought this about was their failure to both to "obey and keep" or *shamah* and *shamar* (cf. Ex 12.6) first the Lord's voice and then his commandments and statutes, all three essentially being one and the same.

Dt 28.48: Therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and in want of all things; and he will put a yoke of iron upon your neck, until he has destroyed you.

This verse forms part of the preceding one which is as follows: "Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things."

Note the contrast between two uses of the verb *havad*, to serve: the Lord and to serve enemies. Failure to do the first leads to the second. As with several verses cited already, there is a time gap between when an affliction comes and the death of the person or nation so afflicted. In the case at hand, it is a yoke of iron upon Israel's neck until the Lord destroys her. The same pretty much applies with vs. 51, 52 and 61.

Dt 31.30: Then Moses spoke the words of this song until they were finished in the ears of all the assembly of Israel.

Note the verb *davar* (cf. Ex 34.34) or "spoke" with regard to the "song" or *shyr* instead of a verb pertaining to singing. *Davar* could include the act of singing and involves the communication of something noteworthy which is what we have through 32.43. The verb *tamam* (cf. Num 32.13) as "finished" means to bring to a conclusion which pertains here towards the end of the Book of

Deuteronomy, a less than flattering picture of Israel but completely realistic which gives it special credence. And so to the Israelites listening to Moses this must have been among the longest “untils” they have experienced.

Joshua

Js 1.15: Until the Lord gives rest to your brethren as well as to you, and they also take possession of the land which the Lord your God is giving them; then you shall return to the land of your possession, and shall possess it, the land which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise."

Vs. 14 precedes the verse at hand and forms one extended sentence: “Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan; but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brethren and shall help them.”

Women and children are not to cross the Jordan River, only the “men of valor.” Note the added words, “among you” which intimates others who are not so qualified; the same applies to “before your brethren.” They had to remain with the women and children as guardians, else they’d be vulnerable to attack. With this in mind, the “until” at hand is indefinite or more precisely, is dependent upon the Lord who “gives rest” or *nuach* (cf. Dt 3.20) a verb applicable to settling down or sitting. Such *nuach* applies to both “your brethren” (the women, children and their protectors) along with “you” or the warriors.

The task of the men of valor is to possess or *yarash* the land which the Lord “is giving” or *noten*. Note the active sense of the verb...neither past nor future but a giving which takes place in the present. Nothing is said as to how this *yarash* (cf. Dt 28.21) is to take place. However, the “brethren and you” are to return to the land of their possession and “shall possess it.” Most likely this is a way of saying that yes, Israel had been in the land of Canaan all the way back to Abraham, that is prior to their four hundred plus years in Egypt, and were waiting to repossess it after all these centuries. Note that the verse at hand has Moses giving Israel this land although he was forbidden to enter it (cf. Dt 32.52).

Js 2.16: And she said to them, "Go into the hills lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days until the pursuers have returned; then afterward you may go your way.

This verb pertains to Rahab the harlot who had welcomed spies into her home in Jericho, that is, men whom Joshua sent to reconnoiter the land before attempting to conquer it. She urged them to escape in order that their pursuers do not “meet” them, *pagah* fundamentally meaning to strike upon, this verb having a sudden and rather forceful air about it. The Israelite spies had no idea how long these men from Jericho would pursue them though it turned out to be three days (cf. vs. 22).

Js 3.17: And while all Israel were passing over on dry ground, the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

This verse is the last of Chapter Three where Israel is called a “nation” or *goy* (cf. 5.6), a term often applied to peoples other than Israel but not always the case. Obviously crossing the Jordan River imaged the Red Sea crossing with few if any of the original participants being alive. That passage was done in haste because the Egyptian army was on their heels. On the other hand, crossing the Jordan was done more leisurely and with great expectation that at last Israel was going to inherit...rather, re-inherit...the land promised to Abraham. Nevertheless, Israel made haste as each person caught glimpse that strange sight of their priests holding the ark dead center in the Jordan River. And these priests couldn't help but be somewhat nervous as they watched the people moving along, urging them not to stop so as to get the passage over as quickly as possible. They had to stand there without moving which, despite divine intervention, was a rather harrowing experience.

Js 4.23: For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea which he dried up for us until we passed over, (vs. 24) so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty; that you may fear the Lord your God forever.

Here Joshua communicates to the people that the Lord had been responsible for the recent miraculous crossing of the Jordan River. Although Israel knew their crossing mirrored that of the Red Sea, the Lord felt it necessary to intervene and remind them, hence the two “untils:” one for the Red Sea and one for the Jordan River. Past experience (let alone any in the future) has shown that their memories were quite short. We get an idea from this verse that the Lord was sustaining or continuing drying the Jordan “until” all Israel made it safely to the other side. Since the priests were standing all the while in the riverbed holding the ark, this sustaining took place from there and reached out to both banks of the river.

Vs. 24 is added because it flows directly from vs. 23 and shows the true purpose of this event, that all peoples acknowledge this event and that Israel may fear the Lord “forever” which is rendered as *kal-hayamym* or literally “all days.”

Js 5.1: When all the kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan to the west and all the kings of the Canaanites that were by the sea heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their heart melted, and there was no longer any spirit in them, because of the people of Israel.

The previous verse mentions how peoples in the surrounding area got wind of Israel crossing the Jordan River, and we have the first account of news of that event having been spread abroad. Note the close connection between kings and their subjects. They heard of the event from first-hand witnesses and transmitted it immediately to their respect peoples. In other words, the transmission was practically instantaneous and filled everyone with both fear and wonder at this miracle. How could anyone miss so many people were walking headlong into the Jordan River? So when these eye witnesses informed the kings, their hearts melted followed immediately with their subjects. If there was no longer any “spirit” or *ruach* (cf. 1Sam 19.23) in the hearts of the kings, naturally the same would apply to their subjects.

5.6: For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness till all the nation, the men of war that came forth out of Egypt, perished because they did not hearken to the voice of the Lord; to them

the Lord swore that he would not let them see the land which the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Emphasis here is upon walking (the common verb *halak*, to go; cf. Gn 26.13) throughout the Sinai wilderness for forty years, that is to say, it implies a certain aimlessness and lack of direction. It was necessary, if you will, for the Israelites to do this until the entire “nation” (*goy*, cf. 3.17) had perished along with their warriors, the verb being *tamam* (cf. Dt 31.30) which intimates a coming to completion. Failure to listen to the Lord's “voice” or *qol* is the reason, the preposition *b-* being prefaced to this noun reading literally, “in the voice.” Thus those who had been born in the wilderness were the ones who would see the “land” (*'erets*, cf. Dt 28.21) promised to them. Still, that remained problematic since they had been raised by their immediate predecessors and most likely were affected by their behavior.

Js 5.8: When the circumcising of all the nation was done, they remained in their places in the camp till they were healed.

This verse comes shortly after the dire warning of the previous entry, of the generation which had left Egypt not following the Lord along with the new generation which had been affected by them...in other words, their parents. Hopefully this sign of circumcision would relieve the younger generation of any residual influence. In fact, in the next verse the Lord says to Joshua that “I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” This “reproach” or *cherpah* which implies scorn and contempt the Egyptians had towards Israel as reports of their apparently aimless wandering in the Sinai wilderness filtered back to them. To have it rolled (*galal*) away is significant in that this reproach, like a heavy stone that had been weighing upon the Israelites for forty years, finally rolled down hill away from them.

Js 6.10: But Joshua commanded the people, "You shall not shout or let your voice be heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth until the day I bid you shout; then you shall shout.

The context is Joshua and Israel before the city of Jericho just before it had been destroyed. He bids the people to remain silent in two ways: not to “shout” (*ruah*; also as to suffer evil, perhaps from the tendency to cry out when it happens) nor to allow any “word” (*davar* [cf. Lev 24.12] as expression, not unlike *logos*) to leave their mouths. Joshua alone knows how long the people are to restrain themselves which must have been difficult since they had no idea as to the length of time. Finally Joshua will command Israel to “shout” or *ruah* meaning that the people are in a high state of alert awaiting Joshua to address them.

Js 7.6: Then Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust upon their heads.

The context of this verse and the next is Israel failing to have captured the city of Ai. The defeat must have happened in the morning, perhaps commencing before twilight, with the rout having occurred quickly. That means Joshua laid prostrate on the ground the bulk of the day as an example to the people, the elders having joined him in this penitential act. Throughout this time they remained totally silent. Note the similarity between the two words “face and before” or *pany* and *lipney*, the latter being derived from the former. In other words, there's a tendency to hide one's face when some catastrophe has occurred.

Js 7.13: Up, sanctify the people and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the Lord, God of Israel, "There are devoted things in the midst of you, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you..?'

Joshua bids Israel to "sanctify" itself, *qadash* (cf. Lev 27.18) also meaning to separate, the procedure not being specified but most likely ritual acts as in the Book of Leviticus though that too isn't terribly clear. Regardless, the general idea is that the people are to separate themselves from normal, everyday behavior and refrain from conventional activities. This *qadash* is to take place the day before the next step, the time most likely being in the evening, at the beginning of a new day which has been mentioned often thus far.

"Devoted things" or *cherem* derives from a verbal root meaning to prohibit as well as to destroy..and not just destroy but to do so utterly. Such *cherem* are not simply in the camp but *qerev* (cf. Dt 2.14) or in the people's "midst," their very center as though *cherem* were at the heart of the camp which in this instance infers the presence of the ark of the Lord could be in danger of being supplanted.

Note two uses of the verb *qum* (to stand, arise; cf. Num 9.15): Joshua's initial command, "up," and Israel's inability to "stand" before her enemies. This inability to *qum* which suggests ongoing movement is thwarted. Only by taking away the *cherem* can it resume.

Js 8.6: And they will come out after us, till we have drawn them away from the city; for they will say, 'They are fleeing from us, as before.' So we will flee from them.

This verse comes in between the previous two verses as well as the one which follows it thereby forming one extended sentence: Vss. 4 & 5: "And he commanded them, 'Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind it; do not go very far from the city but hold yourselves all in readiness; and I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. And when they come out against us as before, we shall flee before them.'" Vs. 7: "then you shall rise up from the ambush and seize the city; for the Lord your God will give it into your hand."

Nataq is the verb for "have drawn away" and implies a tearing up, suggesting Joshua's determination to succeed after the earlier frustrated attempt at taking the city. The *nataq* he puts into action is described in the next few verses, that is, an ambush which resulted in total victory. Joshua slew all the inhabitants and its king which formed a second kind of *nataq* concerning the memory of Achan. This man had stolen some of the booty apparently from the earlier destruction of Jericho, having caused the first assault against Ai to fail (cf. Chapter Seven).

Js 8.22: And the others came forth from the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side; and Israel smote them until there was left none that survived or escaped.

The occasion is the second assault upon Ai which proves successful after the *cherem* of the previous entry had been destroyed along with those Israelites responsible for having brought it into the camp. The instance of this "until" must have been satisfying for Joshua as well as the Israelites, for they made their second attack with full confidence of achieving success. At the same time they couldn't but have some residual doubt as intimated by this use of "until."

Js 8.26: For Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

The goal, of course, is *charam* of Ai, this being the root of *cherem* in the 7.13 entry, “devoted things.” The verb means both to consecrate as well as to extirpate, the two being inextricably linked. So to effect this, Joshua had to stretch out (*natah* connotes extending as well as spreading) his hand with a javelin which he maintained not unlike Moses who extended his staff while Israel fought against the Amalekites (cf. Ex 17.8+). However, Joshua required no one to stay his hand. Note that he did this until he effected Ai’s annihilation, he alone being mentioned though the text involves those under his command.

Js 8.29: And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening; and at the going down of the sun Joshua commanded, and they took his body down from the tree and cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city and raised over it a great heap of stones which stands there to this day.

Mention of evening suggests that Joshua had captured the king of Ai sometime in the course of the day. Actually the attack began early, for the king “made haste and went out early” [8.14] meaning that the defeat could have been accomplished well before noon. And so the king’s body remained hanging on the tree until evening or before the beginning of a new day. The name of this king isn’t given which can be a way of insulting him as well as the inhabitants of Ai. Note that the text reads literally “until the time of the evening.” Joshua buried the king’s body in the evening twilight specified here as the sun going down or when there was sufficient light for this task. In the meantime the victorious Israelites were able to witness this spectacle which was intended to give them courage for future engagements.

Js 10.13: And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the nation took vengeance on their enemies.

Reference is to Joshua’s victory over the five kings when both sun and moon did not move in their respective courses. The verb for “stood still” applies to the former, that is, *damam* which connotes being silent or astonished. The verb for “stayed” is *hamad* which means to stand. In other words, Israel “took vengeance” or *naqam* upon these five kings for something like a twenty-four hour period. Presumably the moon was full and equal in brightness to the sun, so the transition from day to night was irrelevant. Since frequent references have been made to the evening as the beginning of a new day, in the case at hand this did not apply, for the time period was one full day, if you will. So once Israel had achieved its victory, the normal courses of sun and moon resumed.

Js 10.20: When Joshua and the men of Israel had finished slaying them with a very great slaughter until they were wiped out and when the remnant which remained of them had entered into the fortified cities.

This verse continues into the following one: “all the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah; not a man moved his tongue against any of the people of Israel.” Several other similar verses follow in the Book of Joshua with respect to the destruction of people as connected with the word “until” but are not listed.

Reference is to the armies of the five kings whom Joshua had captured earlier and were kept in a cave. While there, they certainly knew the fate awaiting them as they heard the commotion just outside. *Nakah* is the verb for “slaying” used in conjunction with a “slaughter” *makah* (from the verbal root *nakah*) which was “very” great, the adverb *me’od* referring to anything that is done in excess. *Tamam* translates as “wiped out” and is found in Dt. 31.30 above as having come to a conclusion.

The “until” at hand also applies to the “remnant” or *saryd* who took refuge in their fortified cities, the verb *sarad* or “remained” being the verbal root of this noun. Despite Ai’s destruction, some of the people under the five kings escaped being slaughtered. Israel didn’t lay siege to these cities, Ai and the capture of five kings being sufficient. Hopefully those locked up in the fortified cities eventually would fade away. Hence as vs. 21 recounts, Israel returned to Joshua “safe” or literally “in peace” or *shalom* [cf. Lev 7.15]. With the defeat of Ai and the five kings in captivity, no one dare challenge Israel.

Js 20.6: And he shall remain in that city until he has stood before the congregation for judgment until the death of him who is high priest at the time: then the slayer may go again to his own town and his own home, to the town from which he fled.

This verse pertains to cities of refuge for those who have killed someone accidentally, havens from those bent upon vengeance killing. Note the double “untils,” if you will. Presumably evidence of the accidental killing must have been available, hence the person responsible would not have been admitted to the city. This is known even before he is before the “congregation” or *hedah* (cf. Num 35.12) which seems to have a more precise function in comparison to the more solemn or religiously oriented *qahal*. In other words, the *hedah* is for purposes of “judgment” or *mishpat* [cf. Num 35.12]. However, such *mishpat* doesn’t take place immediately and could be put off for a considerable length of time from when the person involved came to the city of refuge, that is to say, until the death of the high priest who most likely has permanent residence in Jerusalem. Only upon this rare occasion can the slayer return to his native town and home.

Js 20.9: These were the cities designated for all the people of Israel and for the stranger sojourning among them, that any one who killed a person without intent could flee there so that he might not die by the hand of the avenger of blood till he stood before the congregation.

Vss. 7 and 8 list the “cities of refuge” (vs. 2), *miqlat* which derives from the verbal root *qalat*, to contract, draw near. Note that both the Israelites and “stranger” (*ger*, cf. Num 19.10) are included here with respect to an unintentional killing, *shegagah* being the noun for “intent” which implies a fault. Thus an Israelite or stranger could take refuge in one of these places until his case is decided before the “congregation” or *hedah* as noted in the previous entry.

Js 23.13: Know assuredly that the Lord your God will not continue to drive out these nations before you; but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a scourge on your sides and thorns in your eyes till you perish from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you.

This verse is preceded by the following, thereby forming one sentence: “For if you turn back and join the remnant of these nations left here among you and make marriages with them, so that you marry their women and they yours.”

The possibility of inter-marriage with those nations whom the Lord told to eliminate would make the Israelites just like them. The expression “know assuredly” comes off as a stern warning rendered by double use of the verb *yadah* (cf. Dt 11.5) which means intimate knowledge. The Lord knows already that such “nations” or *goy* (cf. 5.6) will entice and then trap the Israelite in both inter-marriage followed by worship of their gods. It will result in perishing from the “land” or *'adamah* (cf. Dt 28.21) in which they now found themselves as given directly by the Lord. One motive that restrains the Lord is Israel's faithfulness to its traditions throughout four hundred years of residing in Egypt, no small feat.

Js 23.15: But just as all the good things which the Lord your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the evil things until he has destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you.

The context is Joshua's final admonitions to the Israelites who could not help but recall when Moses was in the same situation. Note the verb *davar* (cf. Dt 31.30) for “promised” as well as for “fulfilled,” the root of the noun *davar* for all good “things” or the noun *davar* (cf. Jos 6.10). Here it applies to that which is both good and evil. This verb applies to speaking in the sense of communicating compared with the more common *'amar* or talking in general. The latter *davar* (the evil one) lays in the future as a possibility Israel would chose. If so, the Lord will destroy (*shamad*, cf. 2Kg 10.17) connotes laying waste as in Dt 7.23) Israel specifically from the good “land” or *'adamah* (cf. 23.13) which he has given, this noun pertaining to the physical earth itself compared with the more national identity of *'erets* (cf. 5.6).

This verse continues into the next which runs as follows: “if you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God which he commanded you and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land which he has given to you.” Note that *'erets* translates as “land” compared with *'adamah* of the previous verse. In other words, two different words for two different ways of expressing a specific place-where, both working hand-in-hand and not one or the other.

Judges

Jdg 3.25: And they waited till they were utterly at a loss; but when he still did not open the doors of the roof chamber, they took the key and opened them; and there lay their Lord dead on the floor.

Reference is to Ehud ('the Lord raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud,' vs. 15) who had just slain Eglon, king of Moab. The king's servants waited outside the toilet for their king to emerge, but Ehud had slain him. *Bosh* is the verb to be “utterly at a loss” and fundamentally means to be ashamed which was the case at hand since the servants failed to protect their king. Nothing is said of their fate which most likely resulted in execution.

Jdg 4.21: But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple till it went down into the ground as he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died.

Obviously a vivid and gory verse making anyone who reads it squeamish with this use of until. That is to say, it involves the slow and bloody wait while Jael was pounding the tent peg into Sisera. The short sentence "So he died" is, of course, an understatement with some humor about it.

Jdg 4.24: And the hand of the people of Israel bore harder and harder on Jabin the king of Canaan until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

This is the last verse of Chapter Twenty-Four which recounts the prophetess Deborah's victory over Sisera. Just as troublesome was Jabin who ruled Canaan or the totality of the land which Israel was still in the process of possessing or re-possessing from the days of Abraham. *Qashah* is the adjective for "harder" which in this instance ties in with the common verb *halak* (cf. Jos 5.6), to go. Israel didn't make an all-out assault on Jabin and his armies but wore them down gradually yet relentlessly. *Karath* is the verb for "destroyed" which fundamentally means to cut off, hence the total amputation, if you will, of the head (Jabin) after which the body (Canaanites) will surely follow.

Jdg 5.7: The peasantry ceased in Israel, they ceased until you arose, Deborah, arose as a mother is Israel.

Perazon is the noun for "peasantry" which refers to villages compared with cities. They "ceased" to exist in Israel, *chadal* being the verb connoting to forsake or desist. This process was fairly sudden due to the vulnerability of being unprotected from raids by Canaanites who wanted Israel expelled from its land. After all, the Canaanites considered the Israelites as pretenders to a land their ancestors once inhabited. As for the *chadal* just mentioned, it continued until everyone in the countryside entered the larger cities for protection. That is to say, it continued until Deborah "arose" or *qum* (cf. Jos 7.13) as prophetess. This verb intimates hope and potential victory after the embarrassing withdrawal or fading away by the peasantry, that is, their *chadal*. Not only did Deborah rise but did so as a mother to Israel or literally, "in Israel."

Jdg 6.18: Do not depart from here, I pray you, until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you." And he said, "I will stay till you return."

Words of Gideon to the Lord who, in this context, is distinct from the angel who had appeared to him in vs. 12. The Lord enters the picture in vs. 14: "And the Lord turned to him," *panah* suggestive of direct intervention right after Gideon made a complaint to the angel about divine inaction. In the verse at hand, the time between Gideon speaking with the Lord and returning with a present was by no means short. That is to say, it took considerable time to prepare a kid and unleavened cakes. Also note the similarity of sound and form of the verbs "stay and return," *yashav* and *shuv* (both in Num 35.25). There's a certain gentle humor in all this as the Lord waits upon Gideon who worked as quickly as possible but was constrained by obvious reasons of preparing the offering. While fussing about, he couldn't help but steal a glance to see if the Lord hadn't left. And so the "until" of this verse is far longer than we may tend to think.

Jdg 16.2: The Gazites were told, "Samson has come here," and they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They kept quiet all night, saying, "Let us wait till the light of the morning; then we will kill him."

Reference is to the Philistines who sought to capture Samson in Gaza while he was seeing a harlot. Apparently some of those involved in the plot were too hasty in their desire to capture Samson, so others bade them to keep quiet or *charash* (cf. Gn 34.5) throughout the night until dawn. Obviously it was difficult and hence a long night for them all as they waited for Samson.

Jdg 16.3: But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts and pulled them up, barand all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is before Hebron.

Those conspiring to capture Samson noted in the last entry (and last verse) expected they would have to spent the entire night waiting for him. However, Samson got wind of their presence, rose at midnight and apparently killed them.

Jdg 16.13: And Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies; tell me how you might be bound." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and make it tight with the pin, then I shall become weak and be like any other man."

These words of frustration by Delilah come after her two attempts to deceive Samson at the behest of the Philistines. You'd think by now Samson would catch on, but he continues to love Delilah. He could have had some other reason for staying with her such as taking vengeance against the Philistines. However, Samson failed to consider Delilah's dogged persistence (cf. vs. 16). *Talal* is the verb for "mocked" used with the preposition *b-* reading literally, "mocked in me" which makes it more forceful.

Jdg 18.1 In those days there was no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking for itself an inheritance to dwell in; for until then no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had fallen to them.

The words "in those days" hint at a growing desire among the Israelites for a king "to govern us like all the nations" [1Sam 8.5] which is followed in the second sentence with regard to the tribe of the Danites. A footnote to the RSV says that pressure from the Philistines and Amorites made it impossible for this tribe to hang on to its original territorial allotment. The "until" at hand involves Dan's lack of inheritance *betok* the tribes of Israel or literally "in the very midst of the tribes of Israel." And so the Danites migrated to the north under pressure from the Philistines. Their situation was pitiful in that they had lacked inheritance and thus claim to land of promise which, if they didn't get it, would lead to their gradual erosion and extinction.

Jdg 18.30: And the Danites set up the graven image for themselves; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses, and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land.

During its emigration to the north, the tribe of Dan steals the priest of Micah and images recounted in the chapter at hand. Apparently Jonathan, the grandson of Moses and by this lineage was directly connected to Israel's great deliverer, was a priest of this cult. Their service, considered an abomination to the rest of the Israelites, continued until the "captivity" of the land which is the verb *galah* (cf. Is 22.14) also means to uncover. Although worship of pagan images and the Lord was an ongoing problem, the issue seems centered more on capturing the "land" or *'erets*...far more than physical real

estate...which can be taken as a re-capture of it, hearkening all the way back to Abraham, a fact mentioned in other contexts.

Jdg 19.30: And all who saw it said, "Such a thing has never happened or been seen from the day that the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt until this day; consider it, take counsel and speak."

Reference is to a Levite who slew his concubine, having divided her into twelve parts, each for the twelve tribes of Israel. Such an abomination had not been seen since Israel left Egypt until "this day" or until this very moment. This includes forty years in the Sinai wilderness followed by the period of judges and not long before Israel's misdirected request for a king. Those who witnessed this decided to "take counsel" or *huts*, one of two biblical references (cf. 8.10) from which the common noun *hetsah* is derived.

Jdg 20.23: And the people of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until the evening; and they inquired of the Lord, "Shall we again draw near to battle against our brethren the Benjaminites?" And the Lord said, "Go up against them."

The going up mentioned here most likely refers to the sacred place at Bethel in vs. 18. It was a spontaneous ascent or gathering most likely coupled with sacrificial offerings. Chances are just about everyone streamed to Bethel since they had assembled there the same day when they wept "before the Lord." In other words, they had gathered relatively early and spent the day weeping before the Lord which most likely refers to some kind of temple. After having spent time in this repentant mode, the people "inquired" or *sha'al* of the Lord, literally, "inquired in (*b-*) the Lord." This took place at evening, the beginning of a new day and a fine time to make such an inquiry. The Lord responded favorably and most likely immediately not just to one representative of the Israelites but to all the people who came to Bethel.

Jdg 20.26: Then all the people of Israel, the whole army, went up and came to Bethel and wept; they sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

This verse follows on the heels of the last entry and lacks the conjunctive *v-* which is in the Hebrew text, "and the whole army." In other words, this time the Israelites were prepared fully to take military action against the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin had inflicted a loss of eighteen thousand men on Israel (cf. vs. 25) despite the Lord having counseled taking action against that single tribe. What was on top of the minds of the Israelites was "why?" Still, they did not forsake the Lord. After all, they were engaged in an internal struggle, a kind of civil war, which had to be resolved else the Philistines would gladly step in and drive out all twelve tribes.

Vs. 26 adds fasting to the weeping this as in the last entry. Note the similarity of sound between "sitting" and "there," *yashav* (cf. 6.18) and *sham*, indicative of the people not going anywhere until they received counsel from the Lord. This time is explicit mention of offering sacrifices whereas it is lacking in the previous verse. As it turns out (after an editorial note of sorts is inserted saying that the ark of the Lord was at Bethel), Israel set an ambush and "the Lord defeated Benjamin before Israel" [vs. 35].

Jdg 21.2: And the people came to Bethel and sat there till evening before God, and they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly.

This verse is similar to the last entry or reference to the Israelites who were upset at the rape of a woman by the Benjaminites recounted in 19.22+. They assembled at Bethel and likewise “sat” there (*yashav*; cf. 20.26) only here it is until evening or the beginning of a new day. Their lamentation as noted lasted throughout the night thereby spanning two days.

Ruth

Rt 1.13: Would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone forth against me.”

This verse is preceded by the following even though as in other instances one verse is comprised of one or more shorter ones. I.e., both verses comprise one unit, if you will: “Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons.”

This verse contains two rhetorical questions in rapid succession by Naomi to her two daughters Orpah and Ruth with respect to their marrying in comparison to her being a widow. She doesn’t wish her personal bitterness (*mar*) be transferred to them by the Lord’s hand not just being upon her but continually as the verb *yatsa’* (cf. Gn 8.7; ‘has gone forth’) intimates.

Rt 1.19: So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi?”

“Two of them” or Ruth and Naomi who left the country of Moab (directly east of the Dead Sea) for Bethlehem, not a terribly long distance, even on foot. Both women were very devoted to each other as vs. 16 reveals: “where you die I will die.” Thus the conversation between them must have been very intense, almost not paying attention to the journey they were undergoing, making this “until” a barely perceptible moment in time as well as space. In fact, they didn’t pay attention to the commotion their presence raised when arriving in Bethlehem, *hum* being the verb which connotes being disturbed. Such a disturbance was more intense by reason of the small, close-knit society of the town. It seems the women were more stirred, asking if they truly had seen Naomi which in fact they did. In other words, the question is more along the lines of “What is she doing here?”

Rt 2.7: She said, “Pray, let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.” So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now without resting even for a moment.

Ruth is addressing both Boaz and his servant or work boss with regard to the barley harvest. She was so happy to be back home in Bethlehem, this joy being expressed in her eagerness to glean barley in the field. It’s easy to imagine the *hum* noted in the last entry spilling over into how the people perceived their former neighbor working so diligently.

The second sentence could be put in the mouth of Boaz's servant who was impressed by Ruth's work from "early morning" or *boqer* (cf. Ex 23.18) which means the break of day. The verbal root is interesting—to cleave in the sense of open—and hence applicable to the cleaving of animals with cloven hooves. In other words, *boqer* suggests a cleaving away at the night to allow day take its place.

The verb for "resting" is *yashav* (cf. Jdg 21.2) which more fundamentally means to sit and here is used with the noun *bayth* or house (not in the English translation). Thus it reads "resting in the house" which could mean a shack erected temporarily against the sun for workers to take a break. In other words, Ruth worked continually throughout the day, even during the hottest time, without taking a break. This is also conveyed in vs. 17: "So she gleaned in the field until evening; then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley."

Rt 2.21: And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my servants till they have finished all my harvest.'"

The reason for sticking close to Boaz's servants is for protection because out in the field from sunrise to sunset some workers may attempt to molest Ruth. *Davaq* (cf. 2.23) is the verb which means to cleave, adhere almost like glue.

Rt 2.23: So she kept close to the maidens of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests; and she lived with her mother-in-law.

If the last entry intimates the zeal which Ruth brought to the barley harvest as an expression of being back home, this verse demonstrates that she sustained it over an extended period of time. This includes the wheat harvest, the two harvests surely overlapping to some degree which means even more intense work. *Davaq* (cf. 2.21) is the verb for "kept close" which is a cleaving to, a kind of gluing made all the more intense by the preposition *b-* (in) or literally "kept close in the maidens." The close relationship spoken above between Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi remains continues at the same intense level reflected in Ruth's zeal for her work.

Rt 3.3: Wash therefore and anoint yourself and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

Words of Naomi to Ruth as how to comport herself in order to make a good impression upon Boaz, not necessarily making herself sexually attractive. Being a mother-in-law, this is the type of practical advice Ruth was privileged to get. Naomi was familiar with Boaz's habit of relaxing at the end of a hard day during the barley and wheat harvests, intimating that he was prone to becoming drunk but not in a wanton sort of way. *Yadah* is the verb for "make (yourself) known" and implies intimate knowledge." Naomi elaborates upon this, that Ruth is to stick close by Boaz but remain partly in the shadow, if you will.

Rt 3.13: Remain this night and in the morning if he will do the part of the next of kin for you, well; let him do it; but if he is not willing to do the part of the next of kin for you, then, as the Lord lives, I will do the part of the next of kin for you. Lie down until the morning.

The sense of this verse carries over into vs. 14 with another “until:” “So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another; and he said, “Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.”

Although Boaz was surprised to find Ruth nearby, he is shocked which perhaps is due to having drunk his fill of wine before going to bed. He explains his role with regard to marriage in a matter-of-fact way, very simple and encouraging given the circumstances. Once finished with this, Boaz simply bids Ruth to go back to sleep in the same position at his feet. Undoubtedly both must have not gotten much sleep the rest of the night.

Rt 3:18: She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today."

More practical, hands-on advice which Ruth is lucky to receive from a mother-in-law who knows how men think and operate. *Yashav* is the verb for “wait” which means to sit down. Surely for Ruth this is difficult but necessary. Naomi knows that Boaz, being a man, will not “rest” until he can determine legally whether or not Ruth can be his wife. The verb here shows precisely the state of Boaz' mind or more accurately, the lack of it, *shaqat* or to be tranquil. Thus for Ruth to *yashav* and Boaz to be *shaqat* is next to impossible but indicative that the matter at hand is moving quickly to a resolution.

First Samuel

1Sam 1:23: Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only, may the Lord establish his word." So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him.

Elkanah is responding to a request from his wife Hannah who wishes her newly born son to “appear in the presence of the Lord and abide there forever” [vs. 22]. His compliance may come from the ill treatment Hannah had been experiencing at the hand of his other wife, Peninah. She had taunted Hannah for not having given birth to a child, and despite Elkanah's love, seemed insensitive to this conflict. Now Hannah had approximately six months to wean her infant son for service in the temple of Shiloh. Elkanah's only request was that she do this in accord with the divine “word” or *davar*, that is, word as expression. That six month period must have been the fastest in Hannah's life, knowing that in a matter of months she would relinquish her first born.

1Sam 3:15: Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.

This verse comes after the threefold visitation of the Lord to Samuel which Eli the priest at Shiloh was at first reluctant to believe. In the third and final visitation the Lord told Samuel that he would take vengeance upon Eli's two sons who had abused their priestly role. After that frightful news, Samuel found it impossible to sleep as he glanced over to Eli sound asleep and oblivious as to what is about to happen. In other words, Samuel got a sudden and harsh awakening to the role of prophet he was about to assume.

Finally after laying in the temple not being able to communicate this dreadful news, Samuel got up and opened the temple door, flooding the place with light. As for “morning” or *boqer*, cf. Rt 2.7. *Mar’ah* is the noun for “vision” derived from the common verbal root to see. Samuel knew he'd have to communicate this seeing to the elderly Eli, especially away from the presence of his two sons. Finally and much to his relief Eli responded “It is the Lord” [vs. 18].

1Sam 9.13: As soon as you enter the city, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat; for the people will not eat till he comes since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those eat who are invited. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately.

These are words from young maidens drawing water. Because they were accustomed to do this on a regular basis, they were quick to observe people coming and going. Not only that, they offered Saul and his servant information about Samuel’s habit of blessing and offering sacrifice when he came to their town. The image here is the entire town assembled on the high place gathered around Samuel with the sacrifice prepared. The only thing left for him is to go up to the high place and offer the sacrifice after which the people could eat. Their food was part of this sacrifice though perhaps not enough to satisfy the entire town, only portions of it to sanctify the rest of their food.

1Sam 9.24: So the cook took up the leg and the upper portion and set them before Saul; and Samuel said, "See, what was kept is set before you. Eat; because it was kept for you until the hour appointed that you might eat with the guests."

The scene is Samuel's first encounter with Saul whom the Lord informed would be king (cf. vs. 17). Apparently Samuel had instructed the cook of his household to prepare the best cut of meat for his guest, saying to Saul that it had been “kept” for him, *shamar* (cf. Dt 28.45) being the verb which connotes a guarding. Here it is used with the noun *mohed*, “hour appointed” which can also apply to a festival. The one who had done the *shamar*, of course, is Samuel.

1Sam 10.8: And you shall go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I am coming to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait until I come to you and show you what you shall do."

This verse takes place shortly after Samuel anoints Saul as king. The number seven is traditionally sacred and doesn't necessarily apply to the passage of time commonly understood. Samuel is shrewd enough to choose this time with an air of the sacred about it as a means to allow Saul to reflect on what had just occurred. Surely all kind of thoughts were rushing through Saul's mind about how to act as king even though at this stage it wasn't made known publicly. In the meantime Saul prophesied among a group of prophets and Samuel summoned the people to inform...rather, warn...them about rule by a king instead of the Lord (cf. vs. 19). Then the new king was chosen by lot which seems in conflict with Samuel's recent anointing of Saul. However, the casting of lots is done as a public gesture, Samuel knowing that it would go to Saul who, in the meanwhile, had hide himself, not a good omen. Now Samuel could tell not only what Saul is to do as king but the people as well (cf. vs. 25).

1Sam 11.11: And on the morrow Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch and cut down the Ammonites until the heat of the day; and those who survived were scattered so that no two of them were left together.

This verse applies to the incident when Nahash the Ammonite threatened to gouge out the right eyes of the Israelites before subjecting them. It is the first time Saul was able to prove himself as king and effect a victory. The verb *shamar* (cf. 9.24) is the root for “watch” as applicable here to the “morning” or *boqer* (cf. 1Sam 3.15), that is generally between two and six o'clock. It seems that all three companies headed for the “midst” of the Ammonite camp, *betok* (cf. Judg 18.1) meaning its very center from which it spread out. It is also a testimony to Saul's leadership that all three companies were able to penetrate this far. Once there, they were able to “cut down” the Ammonites, *nakah* (cf. Jos 10.20) meaning to smite in a sudden fashion. This kept up from just before dawn through the morning and into the early afternoon, a considerably long time or when it became too hot to continue. Mention of “scatter” or *puts* connotes a breaking into pieces which, keeping in mind the sense of *betok* as kind of the center of a wheel, suggests that this scattering began *betok* the camp and spread to its periphery.

1Sam 12.2: And now, behold, the king walks before you; and I am old and gray, and behold, my sons are with you; and I have walked before you from my youth until this day.

This verse shows the transition of governance from the judges to the kingship, Samuel giving a farewell address of sorts although he will continue to influence events, including the anointing of Saul's successor, David. Samuel takes an upbeat note as he should but knows that the situation is otherwise. His two sons Joel and Abijah (cf. 8.1-3) turned out to be as bad as those of Eli, the priest of Shiloh who had been his mentor. At the same time Samuel was just as oblivious to their wrongdoing as Eli.

Note the two walkings, present and past tenses: the king or Saul who is fresh off his victory against Nahash and Samuel who is finishing his walk, if you will, another way of saying that the people got what they wanted so badly, a king. Now they must pay the consequences. Just about everyone was familiar with Samuel's visions as a child in the Shiloh temple or the beginning of his walk before the people which lasted up to the present moment. From now on, however, he will no longer do so or function as a judge who, incidentally, did a lot of actual walking as he made his rounds throughout Israel dispensing justice, etc.

1Sam 14.24: And the men of Israel were distressed that day; for Saul laid an oath on the people saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food.

The context is a battle against the Philistines, native inhabitants of Canaan, which Saul as well as David had to contend with off and on. Although the Israelites were successful, they were “distressed” or *nagas* which means to impel, to drive. The reason lay in the oath or *'alah*, a verb which also can apply to a curse, and that curse corresponding to what Saul says of anyone who tastes food until evening or the beginning of a new day. That verb is *'arar* which is more forceful than *'alah*. As a result of this twofold curse, if you will, the people had to struggle on resulting in not so great slaughter of Philistines as had been desired (cf. vs. 31).

1Sam 14.36: Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and despoil them until the morning light; let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." But the priest said, "Let us draw near to God."

This verse takes place after the battle with the Philistines noted in the last chapter and after the people had recovered from their harshly imposed fast. Because victory against the Philistines was incomplete due to the Israelites weakened condition, Saul thought it was time to press his advantage. The people concurred though the priests sensed something wasn't quite right. Instead, they asked that everyone “draw near” to God, *qarav* being the verb which suggests that under Saul's guidance they were not *qarav* or far off. In other words, shortly after being made king and having achieved two victories Saul was beginning to stray from this advice to *qarav*.

1Sam 15.18: And the Lord sent you on a mission and said, “Go, utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.”

“Until” here represents a crucial turning point in the rejection of Saul as king, these words being uttered by Samuel. Saul had failed that in his divine “mission” or *derek* (cf. Dt 1.31) which fundamentally means a road or way. Although Saul was victorious against the Amalekites, he hadn't destroyed them totally but allowed the people to take booty as well as take alive Agag, their king. *Kalah* (cf. Dt 28.21) as “consumed” means to bring to a full end or completion which isn't the case at hand.

1Sam 15.35: And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

A poignant verse which sums up the relationship between the last judge of Israel and her first king. This verse isn't exactly correct, for both men met one other time: “And he too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night. Hence it is said, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?’” Pressing this further, Samuel did appear to Saul the night before the Philistines slew him on Mount Gilboa, that is, through the medium of Endor recounted in Chapter Twenty-Eight.

Note the two expressions of regret over Saul as king: that by Samuel as grief (the verb *'aval*, also as to mourn) and by the Lord as by “repented” or *nacham* (cf. Gn 27.44) which also means to take vengeance. Thus there was a shared sense of embarrassment between the two.

1Sam 16.11: And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he comes here."

Jesse and his eleven sons knew that Samuel had something up his sleeve but wasn't letting on even as these sons passed before him and were not seen fit as candidates for being king. Since all were rejected, everyone present knew it would be David. Thus it was simply a matter of time for the obvious to become public knowledge. The eleven brothers must have felt some resentment but did not manifest it during the time it took for Jesse to dispatch a messenger and bring back David. This resentment and tension is intimated by the words “we will not sit down.” In other words, they all remained standing for what seemed an interminable length of time.

1Sam 19.23: And he went from there to Naioth in Ramah; and the Spirit of God came upon him also, and as he went he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

The occasion is Saul in hot pursuit of David when the “Spirit” of God or *Ruach* (cf. Jos 5.1; also as breath) came upon him, the verb “to be” being used. Interestingly the small word “also” (*gam*) applies to Saul, meaning that messengers he had sent inquiring about David prophesied. In other words, Saul was getting nowhere in his pursuit and suffered the same fate as his messengers. That is to say, Saul “prophesied” or *nava’* (cf. 1Kg 18.29) which fundamentally means to bubble or pour forth. If Saul had stopped there, things may have turned out quite differently. The time of Saul prophesying lasted from his being at the great well in Secu, part of Ramah, to his going to Naioth, another part of Ramah. In other words, the length of his ecstatic condition took place in a small area though not necessarily having lasted a short period of time.

1Sam 20.5: David said to Jonathan, “Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at table with the king; but let me go that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening.”

The new moon signaled the a time of special sacrifice, and David was expected to be at Saul’s table for the occasion. He was taking quite a risk at not attending, especially disappearing for three days or four, evening being considered the beginning of a new day. Nothing is said what David did during that time out in the field, most likely praying for a resolution concerning his ever increasing tense relationship with Saul.

1Sam 20.41: And as soon as the lad had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times; and they kissed one another and wept with one another until David recovered himself.

Here David and Jonathan are out in the field engaged in a pre-arranged secret communications where the shooting of arrows one way or the other would reveal Saul’s current state of mind towards David. It turned out that Saul was very much intent on killing David, and that Jonathan was risking his life to inform him. *Gadal* (cf. Gn 26.13) is the verb for “recovered” and fundamentally means to be great or to grow.

1Sam 22.3: And David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, “Pray let my father and my mother stay with you till I know what God will do for me.”

David asks the king of Moab to protect his parents from the vengeance of Saul until he discerns what God will do for him, the preposition *l-* being used which reads literally, “do to me.” This became manifest in vs. 5 when the prophet Gad told David not to remain in the stronghold but go to the land of Judah. This is the first appearance of Gad who may or may not have some connection with Samuel. Certainly the two must have known about each other through their relationship with David.

1Sam 25.36: And Abigail came to Nabal; and lo, he was holding a feast in his house like the feast of a king. And Nabal’s heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; so she told him nothing at all until the morning light.

“Merry within him” with respect to Nabal’s heart reads literally “good upon him,” a way to describe his drunken condition. Abigail was familiar with these bouts and knew to keep quiet until Nabal became sober which was not until the next day. Apparently Nabal awoke early, hence mention of “morning light.” Abigail knew her husband well, that this early hour was best for telling him about her

relationship with David. It turned out that Nabal died ten days later, Abigail's words having paralyzed him, if you will.

1Sam 29:8: And David said to Achish, "But what have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day I entered your service until now that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my Lord the king?"

David appeals to the Philistine Achish with whom he allied himself, this going back to Chapter Twenty-Seven in his bid to escape Saul. However, Achish's fellow commanders recommended that David leave their camp, not trusting his alliance. "Service" is rendered literally as "to your face." Between David's switching of allegiance and the present Saul consults the medium of Endor as to the impending sense of doom he has on the threshold of battle with the Philistines. Thus it turned out beneficial for David to be rejected by the Philistines. If he remained with them, he may have had to confront Saul on the battlefield which went against his strict hands-off policy regarding Saul as the Lord's anointed.

1Sam 30:4: Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until they had no more strength to weep.

The Amalekites had just destroyed Ziklag, hence the occasion for great mourning. Also they had captured David's two wives as well as Abigail (cf. vs. 5). Due to this tragedy as well as personal blow to David, everyone wept until their "strength" ebbed away, *koach* being the noun which implies ability as well as power.

1Sam 30:17: And David smote them from twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped except four hundred young men who mounted camels and fled.

David and those under his command take vengeance upon the Amalekites due to their destruction of Ziklag and abduction of his wives. *Nesheph* is the noun for "twilight," from a verbal root meaning to blow because of the breezes that arise in the transition from day to night and visa versa. The slaughter lasted throughout the night and all the next day. Those youths who had escaped on camels took with them a significant number which later could be used against David. Perhaps they joined the Philistines, for soon Saul will have a final confrontation with them on Mount Gilboa.

Second Samuel

2Sam 1:12: and they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son and for the people of the Lord and for the house of Israel because they had fallen by the sword.

This verse flows from the previous one when David and those with him rent their clothes over the death of Saul. Their collective mourning takes place on the same day that a survivor informed David about the great slaughter on Mount Gilboa. Upon hearing this, David ordered the man to be executed for having claimed to kill Saul. And so everyone joined in with King David with mourning and weeping until evening of that day, yet another indication of the beginning of a new day. Note, however, that nothing is said about praying or offering sacrifices. As for the words "had fallen by the sword," it reads literally "had fallen in (*b-*) the sword" which is more graphic a description.

2Sam 10.5: When it was told David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown and then return."

The context is the death of Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, when David sent servants to console his son Hanun. However, Hanun treated them harshly, both cutting off half their beards and cutting their garments, profound signs of being put to shame. Instead of taking immediate action, David bade the servants to wait until their beards (rather, the other half of their beards) grew back. That must have been at least a month. In other words, David didn't want to do anything rash but give Hanun time to ponder and try to figure out what would happen next.

2Sam 13.27: But Absalom pressed him until he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

Absalom's brother Amnon had just abused Tamar, daughter of Absalom, so he wanted to take revenge. Before a festival centered around the shearing of sheep, Absalom wanted Amnon to attend which went against David's wishes, for he was aware of what had happened. The verb here is "pressed" or *parats* which means to break down or destroy, and to emphasize further the force which Absalom brought to bear, the preposition *b-* is used, "pressed in him."

2Sam 15.24: And Abiathar came up, and lo, Zadok came also, with all the Levites, bearing the ark of the covenant of God; and they set down the ark of God until the people had all passed out of the city.

David is in the process of fleeing Jerusalem due to Absalom's conspiracy to become king. The last such reference of the ark being set down by the priests is when Joshua crossed the Jordan River. Surely David and others recalled that event, a reverse exodus, if you will. Also it was a signal for the apparent undoing of all that had been accomplished from that time. *Yatsaq* is the verb for "set down" which fundamentally means to pour out. Thus this exodus from Jerusalem is made all the more poignant. All the people passing by could hardly look at the ark, not knowing what would become of them and the presence of God in their midst. After the last straggler passed by, David ordered the ark's return to Jerusalem. He had intended this all along but didn't want the people to know for their own safety, that is, until they had left the city.

2Sam 15.28: See, I will wait at the fords of the wilderness, until word comes from you to inform me.

This verse is in the same context as the previous entry. David has moved on some and gives word to Zadok the priest to return the ark of the Lord to Jerusalem and remain there. Although it didn't take long for word to reach David from Jerusalem, the "until" at hand intimates that he was filled with anxiety about what would happen when Absalom entered, how he would treat Zadok and other priests loyal to David.

2Sam 17.13: If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we shall drag it into the valley until not even a pebble is to be found there."

This verse forms part of the counsel Hushai gave to Absalom about how to entrap David and his men. The image is quite dramatic, of dragging an entire city into a valley until the very last pebble of that city doesn't remain.

2Sam 19.7: Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants; for I swear by the Lord, if you do not go, not a man will stay with you this night; and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now.

After Absalom had been slain, Joab comes to David, asking that he take immediate steps of reconciliation which here is put in terms of “speak kindly.” Literally it reads “speak on the heart (*lev*)” which is more direct and touching. Those involved are Absalom's followers. Joab appeals directly to David's personal history going all the way back to his youth. The evil he has in mind may apply to personal affairs which haven't been recorded. However, what stands out is David's treatment of Uriah and taking his wife: “Now the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised me” [2sam 12.10].

2Sam 19.24: And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king; he had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes from the day the king departed until the day he came back in safety.

Mephibosheth was lame and not able to care for himself fully, having been neglected from the day of his father's death until David returned to Jerusalem. In other words, Mephibosheth was out of the picture during David's consolidation of power, his fall from God's favor and now the rebellion of Absalom.

2Sam 20.3: And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten concubines whom he had left to care for the house and put them in a house under guard and provided for them but did not go in to them. So they were shut up until the day of their death, living as if in widowhood.

David has returned to Jerusalem after the rebellion of his son Absalom and sought to restore matters in the palace to his liking. Although he was entitled to have sexual relations with the royal concubines, his recent experience at nearly having lost the throne chastened him. Besides, the memory of having Uriah killed for his wife was never far from his mind. By shutting up the concubines David sent a clear message that never would he engage in such harmful activity.

2Sam 21.10: Then Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock from the beginning of harvest until rain fell upon them from the heavens; and she did not allow the birds of the air to come upon them by day or the beasts of the field by night.

Rizpah is the concubine of Saul who was mourning the death of her master's family at the hands of King David. The “until” here represents the time these bodies had been exposed, that is, throughout the summer. This devotion moved David to finally bury the remains of Saul, his son Jonathan and those who had perished at the battle on Mount Gilboa.

2Sam 22.38: I pursued my enemies and destroyed them and did not turn back until they were consumed.

Radaph (cf. Dt 28.45) is the verb for “pursued” followed by the destruction of enemies (*shamad*, cf. Jos 25.13). In the verse at hand, *radaph* is the same as not turning back or *shuv* (cf. Judg 6.18). In other words, both work together until the enemies are “consumed,” *kalah* (cf. 1Sam 15.18).

2Sam 23.10: He rose and struck down the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand cleaved to the sword; and the Lord wrought a great victory that day; and the men returned after him only to strip the slain.

Reference is to a battle King David had with his perennial enemy, the Philistines. During this battle David wished to make the most of his victory, fighting until his hand “was weary” or *yagah*, a verb which also means to labor. Despite this weariness, David’s hand “cleaved” to his sword, *davaq* (cf. Rt 2.23) meaning to glue to it permanently or until a victory had been gained.

2Sam 24.15: So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time; and there died of the people from Dan to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men.

The context is the prophet or seer Gad who offered David three choices in response to his guilty conscience. Gad was not unlike Samuel who saw David rise from being a shepherd to king over Israel and perhaps was under his tutelage. One of the choices is a “pestilence” of *dever* which derives from the verbal root *davar* meaning to speak or give expression.

The other two afflictions are David being on the run from his enemies for three months and a famine lasting three years. David opted for the three day pestilence since it was the shortest. However, he didn’t know that some seventy thousand people would die from it. Thus the “appointed time” or *mohed* represents these three days, the third having ended at evening or the beginning of a new day.