1Q22 Words of Moses

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Description and Background

The small, heavily worn fragments known as 1Q22 Words of Moses comprise four columns of text in a handwriting described as “irregular and clumsy.” Because the manuscript had been rolled with the beginning on the inside, only the first part of it was preserved.

The text contains Moses’ farewell discourse to the children of Israel. Most of this address consists of paraphrases from Deuteronomy.

In the following translation of 1Q22 Words of Moses, subscript numbers indicate lines of text in the original, brackets enclose the translator’s conjectural restorations based on clues such as parallel passages and repetitious formulas, the word Blank marks spaces left blank on purpose (new paragraph) or by mistake, and bracketed ellipsis points represent lacunae (missing text) of unspecified length.

Translation

Column I

1 [And God spoke] to Moses in the year [forty] of the departure of the children of Israel from [the land of] Egypt, in the eleventh month, 2 the first day of the month, saying: [Muster] all the congregation, climb [Mount Nebo] and stay there, you and Eleazar, Aaron’s son. Blank Interpret [for the heads of] families of the levites and for all the [priests] and decree to the sons of Israel the words of the Law which I commanded [you] on Mount Sinai to decree to them. [Proclaim] in their ears everything accurately, for [I will require] it from them. [Take] the heavens and the [earth as witnesses] for they will not love what I have commanded them, they and their sons, all the days [they live upon the ear]th. [However] I announce that they will desert me and choose the sins of the nations, their abominations and their disreputable acts and will serve their gods, who for them will be a trap and a snare. They will violate all the holy [assemblies], the sabbath of the covenant, [the festivals] which today I command [to be kept]. This is why I will strike them with a great [blow] in the midst of the land for the conquest of which they are going to cross the Jordan there. And when all the curses happen to them and strike them until they die and until they are destroyed, then they will know that the truth has been carried out on them. Blank And Moses turned towards Eleazar, son of Aaron and to Joshua [son of Nun, saying] to them: Speak [all the words of the Law, without leaving any out. Be silent.]

Column II

1 Israel, and listen! On this day you are going to become the people of God, your God [of. K]e]ep [my rules], my stipulations, [my commandments] which [command] you to carry out. And when you cross the Jordan for me to give you large [and good] cities, houses full of every [wealth, vineyards and olive groves] which you [did not plant, wel]ls bored which you did not dig, and you eat and become replete, [bew]are of raising your...
heart and forgetting what I command you today; 5 for it is your life and your old age.  

Blank [And Moses spoke] and [said to the sons of Israel: Forty 6 years have passed [from the] day of our departure from the land of Egypt, 8 and] today God, our God has caused these words [to issue] from his mouth 7 [all his precepts {and all his precepts}] How [shall I alone carry] your burden, [your weight, your quarrels? 8 [When] the covenant [has been established] and the path [on which you must] walk has been decreed, [choose for yourselves wise men who] will explain 9 [to you and your sons all the words of this Law. [Be] very [careful,] for your lives, [to keep them, lest] the wrath 10 [of your God] against you be enkindled and reach you, and it closes the skies above, which make rain fall upon you, and [the water] from underneath the earth which give you [the harvest]. 9 Blank And Moses [continued speaking] to the sons of Israel: These are the commandments [which God] commands you to carry out 12 [...][...]

Column III

1 [Every seven years you shall leave the land] at rest, [and the yield of the land’s rest will provide you] with food, you [and your animals and the beasts of the field] 2 [... And what] remains will be for the poor or from among your brothers who are in the land. No-one will sow his field or prune his vine. 3 [No-one will harvest his harvest or] gather anything. Keep all the words of this covenant 4 [carrying them out,] for [... in order to do [...] And in this year you shall grant a release. 5 [Every creditor] who [has lent something to someone, or] who possesses something from his brother,] will grant a release to his fellow for God, your God, has proclaimed the release. You are to demand restitution from the foreigner, but from your brother you shall not demand restitution, for in that year 7 [God will bless you, forgiving you your sins...] 8 [... in the year [...] of the month of 9 [...] on this day [...] Because your fathers wandered in the wilderness until the tenth day of the month {the tenth day of the month} 10 You shall refrain from all work.] And on the tenth day of the month, you shall atone [...] of the month 12 [...] they shall take [...] 11

Column IV

1 in the congregation of the gods [and in the council of the holy] ones, and in [...] favour of the sons of Israel and on behalf of the land 2 [And you shall] take [the blood and] pour [it] on the earth [...] 3 [...] and it will be forgiven them [...] And] Moses [spoke saying:] Do [...] 4 [...] eternal precepts for your generations [...] And on the [...] day 5 [...] he will take [...] the children of Israel [...] 6 [...] all that which [...] for all 7 [...] of the [...] year the person who [...] 8 [...] upon the book [...] the priest [...] 9 [...] he will lay his hands [...] all this 10 [...] year these 11 [...] of the two [...]

Commentary

1Q22 Words of Moses contains elements of the treaty-covenant pattern found in the Old Testament. This pattern includes (1) a preamble that introduces God as the one initiating the covenant or that introduces his prophet as his designated spokesman; (2) a brief review of God’s relations with his people in the past; (3) the terms of the covenant, that is, the specific commandments that God expects Israel to observe; (4) a formal witness by the people that they understand these commandments and will keep them; and (5) a list of blessings that the people will receive if they keep the commandments and a list of curses that will fall upon them if they fail to observe the
commandments; and (6) provisions for reminding the people of the covenant. All this is reminiscent of the ancient Israelite covenant assembly described in the Bible and in chapters 1–6 of the book of Mosiah (in the Book of Mormon)\textsuperscript{12} and may be illustrated in the following manner:

**Treaty-Covenant Pattern in the Old Testament, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Book of Mormon**

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**Notes**


3. See ibid., xxv and xxvi, for a fuller explanation of these devices.

4. Compare Leviticus 8:3; Numbers 20:8; Deuteronomy 4:10; 31:12.

5. For 1Q22 I 12–II 2, see Deuteronomy 27:9–10.


12. Mosiah 1–6 describes a religious convocation of the Nephites, an Israelite group that had settled in the New World. The occasion was the coronation of a new king, Mosiah, at the temple in the Nephite city of Zarahemla, around 130 B.C. See my article “King, Coronation, and Covenant in Mosiah 1–6,” in Rediscovering the Book of Mormon, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 215–6. Evidence also demonstrates that this Nephite assembly was a celebration of the biblical Feast of Tabernacles. See John A. Tvedtnes, “King Benjamin and the Feast of Tabernacles,” in By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Desert Book and FARMS, 1990), 2:197–237. Especially relevant to the treaty-covenant pattern found in 1Q22 Words of Moses is the fact that Tvedtnes demonstrates how passages from the book of Deuteronomy were used in both Jewish and Nephite celebrations of the Feast of Tabernacles.