

Deuteronomy Chapter 12

Verses 1-32: This portion corresponds to (5:6-10), and the concept of worship as it relates to the first two commandments. Involved in this discussion is the intermingling of instructions on correct ways to worship and the prohibition against false worship. There are five main parts in the contents of the chapter:

- (1) the title or preface (verse 1);
- (2) The destruction of pagan altars (verses 2-3);
- (3) The establishment of the true place for worship (verses 4-12);
- (4) The provision for sacrifices in this place (verse 13-28); and
- (5) The prohibition against false gods (verse 29-31).

Each of the subsections enlarges on the fact that there is no other God besides the Lord God.

Moses begins by repeating his instructions concerning what to do with the false worship centers after Israel had taken possession of the land of the Canaanites (see 7:1-6). They were to destroy them completely to prevent the temptation of idolatry and to preserve the uniqueness of their worship (see note on 12:29-31).

Verses 1-4: Moses comes to the statutes he had to give in charge to Israel; and begins with such as relate to the worship of God. The Israelites are charged not to bring the rites and usages of idolaters into the worship of God. Not under color of making it better. We cannot serve God and mammon. Nor worship the true God and idols. Nor depend upon Christ Jesus and upon superstitious or self-righteous confidences.

Deuteronomy 12:1 "These [are] the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth."

“In the land”: The immediate entry to the land of Canaan governs all that follows (12:10; 26:1).

Moses has already given the Ten Commandments again, to these people. The chapter here, is dedicated to giving the Levitical law again. It is a little different from the earlier one in the book of Leviticus, but basically it is the same.

Deuteronomy 12:2 "Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree:"

“Utterly destroy: The land must be cleansed from all idolatry so it can be holy to the Lord (Lev. 11:44-45). This duty is implicit in the first two commandments. “Hills”: Worship at these places was accompanied by depraved rites. The god was thought to live in the mountain or on the hill. By ascending the mountain, the worshiper was in some symbolic sense closer to the deity.

“The high mountains ... hills ... every green tree”: The Canaanite sanctuaries to be destroyed were located in places believed to have particular religious significance. The mountain or hill was thought to be the home of a god and by ascending the mountain, the worshiper was in some symbolic sense closer to the deity. Certain trees were considered to be sacred and symbolized fertility, a dominant theme in Canaanite religion.

The purpose in utterly destroying these places is so the worship of false gods will not spring up among the Israelites. The false gods of the Canaanites and their places of worship, must be totally done away with.

Deuteronomy 12:3 "And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place."

“Their altars ... pillars graven images”: These were elements of Canaanite worship, which included human sacrifice (verse 31). If they remained, the people might mix the worship of God with those places (verse 4).

This is a detail of just exactly what was to be done to each of these things. The worship in the high places seemed to be a physical effort on their part, to be nearer their false gods.

Deuteronomy 12:4 "Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God."

Not sacrifice to him on hills and mountains, and under green trees. You shall not serve the Lord with superstitions. Though the Jews commonly refer this to the destruction of the names of God, and of any thing appertaining to the temple. That though the temples and the altars of the Heathens were to be overthrown. Yet not a stone was to be taken from the house of God, or that belonged to it, nor any of his names to be blotted out. So the Targum of Jonathan and Maimonides, who also observes, that whoever removes a stone by way of destruction from the altar, or from the temple, or from the court, is to be beaten. So he that burns the holy wood.

This is just another way of saying that the LORD their God was the only One to be worshipped.

Verses 5-32: The command to bring ALL the sacrifices to the door of the tabernacle, was now explained with reference to the Promised Land. As to moral service, then as now, men might pray and worship everywhere as they did in their synagogues. The place which God would choose, is said to be the place where he would put his name. It was to be his habitation, where, as King of Israel, he would be found by all who reverently sought him. Now, under the gospel, we have no temple or altar that sanctifies the gift but Christ only. And as to the places of worship, the prophets foretold that in every place the spiritual incense should be offered. (Mal. 1:11). Our Savior declared, that those are accepted as true worshippers, who worship God in sincerity and truth, without regard either to this mountain or Jerusalem (John 4:21). And a devout Israelite might honor God, keep up communion with him, and obtain mercy from him, though he had no opportunity of bringing a sacrifice to his altar. Work for God should be done with holy joy and

cheerfulness. Even children and servants must rejoice before God. The services of religion are to be a pleasure, and not a task or drudgery. It is the duty of people to be kind to their ministers, who teach them well, and are good examples to them. As long as we live, we need their assistance, till we come to that world where ordinances will not be needed. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are commanded to do all to the glory of God. And we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to the Father through him. They must not even inquire into the modes and forms of idolatrous worship. What good would it do them to know those depths of Satan? And our inward satisfaction will be more and more, as we abound in love and good works, which spring from faith and the in-dwelling Spirit of Christ.

Deuteronomy 12:5 "But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, [even] unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:"

“The place which the LORD your God shall choose” (compare verses 11, 18, 21). Various places of worship were chosen after the people settled in Canaan, such as Mt. Ebal (27:1-8; Joshua 8:30-35), Shechem (Joshua 24:1-28) and Shiloh (Joshua 18:1), which was the center of worship through the period of Judges (Judges 21:19). The tabernacle, the Lord’s dwelling place, was located in Canaan, where the Lord chose to dwell. The central importance of the tabernacle was in direct contrast to the multiple places (see verse 2), where the Canaanites practiced their worship of idols. Eventually, the tabernacle was brought to Jerusalem by David (compare 2 Sam. 6:12-19).

“The place” is opposite in meaning to the places (of verse 2), where the Canaanites worshipped. This legislation does not either prohibit or permit other sanctuaries. Though there was only one tabernacle, it would be moved from place to place. There would be many places over the course of time, but only one place at a time. Gilgal, Bethel and Shiloh were temporary centers before the temple was built in Jerusalem.

God had led them through the wilderness, and each time they stopped was a campsite He had chosen. The LORD Himself, will choose the spot for His temple to be built. It is interesting when He does choose, it is at the location where Abraham was to offer Isaac in sacrifice.

Deuteronomy 12:6 "And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks:"

For the daily sacrifice, and upon any other account whatsoever. This was before ordered to be brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and now to the place where that should be fixed (Lev 17:8).

"And your sacrifices": All other distinct from burnt offerings, as sin offerings, trespass offerings, and peace offerings, especially the latter.

"And your tithes": Tithes of beasts, and the second tithes, according to Jarchi.

"And heave offerings of your hand": These according to the same writer were the firstfruits. And so it is rendered in the Septuagint version; and thus Maimonides says, the firstfruits are called Trumot, or heave offerings (see Exodus 22:29).

"And your vows and your freewill offerings": Which were a type of peace offerings (Lev. 7:16).

"And the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks": Which were sanctified and devoted to the Lord (Exodus 13:2).

See notes on (Lev. Chapters 1-7), for descriptions of these various ceremonies.

Their offerings to God could not be made at a place of their choosing. Their offerings to God had to be made at a place He had chosen for that purpose. The place where the offerings were to be made had to be holy in the sight of God. Burnt offerings and sacrifices were brought to the altar. We remember from a previous lesson, that these were offered in conjunction with the meat offerings and the drink offerings. The meat offering was the makings for bread. The tithe was one tenth of whatever they are tithing. The heave offerings were lifted and offered to God. Then, they belonged to the priesthood. This and the freewill offerings were not requirements. They were given in loving appreciation. The bloody sacrifices were for sins, and were brought to the temple to sacrifice.

Deuteronomy 12:7 "And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee."

"Eat ... rejoice": Some of the offerings were shared by the priests, Levites, and the worshipers (compare Lev. 7:15-18). The worship of God was to be holy and reverent, yet full of joy.

They shared with the altar. The priests and the person offering both, ate of the offering here.

Deuteronomy 12:8 "Ye shall not do after all [the things] that we do here this day, every man whatsoever [is] right in his own eyes."

"Every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes": There seems to have been some laxity in the offering of the sacrifices in the wilderness which was not to be allowed when Israel came into the Promised Land. This self-centered attitude became a major problem in the time of Judges (compare Judges 17:6; 21:25).

God has given instructions and laws on how they are to live. They had been living as the rest of the world, doing what was right in their own sight until now. God wants Moses to inform them, they are to begin this new life in the Promised Land with the law of God as their law. They will be governed by God's law. In the wilderness, it would have been difficult to establish these laws. Now that they are to enter their Promised Land, they must establish them and keep them.

Deuteronomy 12:9 "For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you."

The land of Canaan, which was typical of the rest which remains for the people of God in heaven. For though they now enter into a spiritual rest in Christ, they are not yet come to their eternal rest. They are in a world of trouble, through sin, Satan, and wicked men. But they shall come to it, as Israel did to Canaan. For God has promised and prepared it, and it remains for them. Christ prayed for it, is also gone to prepare it. And the Spirit is the seal and earnest of it, and works up the saints, and makes them meet for it.

"And to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you": And the land of Canaan being an inheritance, and the gift of God, was also a type of the heavenly inheritance. Which saints are now born unto, and have both a right unto, and meekness for, through the righteousness of Christ, and grace of God. But as yet are not entered on it, but that is reserved for them in heaven, and they are preserved and kept for that. And before long shall inherit it, as the free gift of God their Father to them, and which is peculiar to them as children. Jarchi and Ben Melech by the "rest" understand Shiloh, and by the inheritance Jerusalem. So in the Misnah (see 1 Chron. 23:25). The Targum of Jonathan is, "ye are not come to the house of the sanctuary, which is the house of rest, and to the inheritance of the land."

When Moses is speaking to them, they have not yet crossed over Jordan. This is to be established, when they do go over.

Deuteronomy 12:10 "But [when] ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and [when] he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety;"

Which lay between the place where they now were, and the land of Canaan, and which they would quickly go over.

"And dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit": The land of Canaan, and which shows that that is meant by the inheritance. And when:

"He giveth you rest from all your enemies round about": Which was done when the land was subdued, and divided among the tribes of Israel (Joshua 22:4). And which confirms the sense of Canaan being the rest. Though this was more completely fulfilled in the days of David, when he and Israel had rest from all their enemies roundabout (2 Sam. 7:1). And who brought the Ark of the Lord to Jerusalem. And into whose heart the Lord put it to prepare to build a temple at Jerusalem for him. And which was erected and finished in the days of his son Solomon.

"So that ye dwell in safety": From their enemies, as they more especially did in the reigns of David and Solomon. Which seems plainly to describe the time when the place not named should appear to be chosen by the Lord to put his name in, as follows.

God will keep His promise to take them into the land of promise first. God will cause their enemies to live at peace with them. It is the presence of God which brings the perfect peace mentioned here.

Deuteronomy 12:11 "Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD:"

Fixed and settled, and will be known to be the place.

"Which the Lord your God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there": Where he himself would dwell, and where his name would be called, and he would be worshipped.

"Thither shall ye bring all that I command you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offerings of your hands": Of which (see note on Deut. 12:6).

"And all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord": Or, "the choice of your vows"; which, as Jarchi observes, was brought of their choicest things, as they ought to be (see Mal. 1:14).

These offerings are not to be made, until God establishes a place to make them. The vows made to God are not of obligation, but dedication. The burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, and heave offerings are dealt with in detail in Leviticus.

Deuteronomy 12:12 "And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that [is] within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you."

In the place chosen and fixed, where a temple would be built for him, and he would take up his residence. Eating with joy and gladness that part of the offerings which belonged to them. Keeping as it were a feast before the Lord, in token of gratitude for what they had received from him.

"Ye and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants": Which explains what is meant by their household (Deut. 12:7). Wives are not mentioned, because it could not be thought they would eat and rejoice, or keep such a feast, without them, and therefore needless to name them.

"And the Levite that is within your gates": Such also were to partake of this entertainment, who were useful in instructing their families in the knowledge of divine things, and serviceable to them on many accounts in the worship of God.

"Forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you": In the division of the land, and so having nothing to manure and cultivate. Was destitute of the fruits of the earth, and could make no improvement and increase of his substance, as they could.

We know that the Levites were not counted among the twelve tribes which inherited land in the Promised Land. They received cities with boundaries to raise their families. The Levites belonged to God in service. They were not herdsmen, or vineyard keepers. Notice, that all were to worship God. The women as well as the men, were expected to join in this worship. To rejoice

before the LORD was the obligation of the twelve tribes and the Levitical tribe. We must be thankful for the blessings God bestows upon us.

Deuteronomy 12:13 "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest:"

And so any other, this is put for all the rest.

"In every place that thou seest": Which might take with their fancy, seem pleasant, and so a proper and suitable place to sacrifice in, as on high places, and under green trees. But they were not to indulge their own fancies and imaginations, or follow the customs of others. But keep to the rules prescribed them by the Lord, and to the place fixed by him for his worship.

We see a warning again about offering places, other than the place God has chosen. Offerings there would not be acceptable to God.

Verses 14-28: While the pagan nations in the land of Canaan had many places where they served their gods and offered sacrifices, the Israelites were to have one place, the "place which the LORD shall choose", to offer their sacrifices. The Israelites could slaughter animals and eat meat within their gates, but the prohibition against eating "blood" was valid in all places (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11; Acts 15:20).

Deuteronomy 12:14 "But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee."

Which tribe is not named, nor what place in that tribe (see note on Deut. 12:5).

"There thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings": On the altar of burnt offering there placed.

"And there shalt thou do all that I command thee": Respecting sanctuary service, and particularly those things observed in (Deut. 12:6).

The place of offering had to be a place where no earthly activity took place. It must be a place that has been set aside and sanctified for this specific purpose by God.

Deuteronomy 12:15 "Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart."

"Kill ... in all thy gates": While sacrificial offerings were brought to the appointed centers for worship as well as the central sanctuary, the killing and eating of meat for regular eating could be engaged in anywhere. The only restriction on eating non-sacrificial meat was the prohibition of the blood and the fat.

It appears from this, that they could eat or drink anything God had blessed them with, and they were thankful for. There was only one restriction to this, as we see in the following verse.

Deuteronomy 12:16 "Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water."

All manner of blood being forbidden, of fowl or of beasts, whether slain for sacrifice or for common food.

"Ye shall pour it out upon the earth as water": Which cannot be gathered up again for use, but is swallowed up in the earth.

Life is in the blood. The LORD specifically forbids the eating or drinking, of blood. The New Testament commandments given to the Christians forbid the eating and drinking of blood.

Acts 21:25 "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written [and] concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from [things] offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication."

The blood of the animal was to be poured upon the ground and covered with the dirt.

Verses 17-18: This tithe had to be taken to the central sanctuary and is known as the second tithe. The first went to the Levites (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:21); and this one was brought to Jerusalem for the Lord's feast (14:22). Possibly every third year, the second tithe was kept at home and used for the poor (14:28).

All sacrifices and offerings had to be brought to the place chosen by God.

Deuteronomy 12:17 "Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand:"

This cannot be understood of the tithe given to the Levites, or of that which the Levites out of theirs gave to the priests, for that was only eaten by them. But of the tithe which every three years they were to lay up within their gates, and which they were to eat with their families and others. But the other two years they were to carry it to the place the Lord chose, or turn it into money. And when they came thither purchase with it what they pleased, and eat it. They and their household, and others with them, before the Lord (see Deut. 14:22).

"The firstlings of thy herds or of thy flocks": These also the firstborn males belonged to the Lord, and so to the priests, and could not be eaten by the people anywhere. And must be understood either of the next firstlings, which were the people's, or of the female firstlings. Which they might devote to the Lord, and so not allowed to eat at home, but in the chosen place.

"Nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings": Which were species of peace offerings, and so to be eaten not in their own cities, but in the place appointed.

"Or heave offerings of thine hand": The firstfruits" (see Deut. 26:1). These were such they were not bound to bring, but brought them freely.

These are things dedicated to the LORD, that must be eaten in the tabernacle. These are not to stay as part of the wealth of the person offering. They belong to the altar of God.

Deuteronomy 12:18 "But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that [is] within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto."

Which may be said to be eaten before him, being eaten in the place where his sanctuary stood, in which he dwelt.

"Thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates": Who were all to come with him to this place (See note on Deut. 12:12).

"And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in all that thou puttest thine hand unto": Cheerfully make and keep this feast in the manner directed to. Rejoicing with his family and his friends, with the Levites and with the poor, expressing his thankfulness to God for his blessing on his labor.

Some of the offerings may be shared with the altar and the Levites. They must first be offered in the temple. Then the priests give back to the people the portion they are allowed to eat. All things offered to God are holy. They must eat it in the order prescribed by God.

Deuteronomy 12:19 "Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth."

By withholding from him the tithes appointed for his maintenance. Or rather by neglecting to take him with him in order to partake of the feast or entertainment before spoken of.

"As long as thou livest upon the earth": So that it was not one time only, but always. Whenever he ate these holy things before the Lord, as long as he lived, he was to be careful he had the Levite with him, for a reason given (Deut. 12:12).

The Levite lives of the offerings brought to the church. To forsake them, would leave them without food to sustain them.

Deuteronomy 12:20 "When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after."

Brought them into the land of Canaan, where they should have large and good pastures for the feeding of their cattle. Which they had not in the wilderness, and so a greater increase of them.

"And thou shalt say, I will eat flesh": Which they were short of, or ate but little of in the wilderness, lest their herds and their flocks should be consumed. But now having room to feed them, and an increase of them, they would give themselves a greater liberty of eating flesh.

"Because thy soul longeth to eat flesh": Would have a craving appetite unto it, having so long ate none, or very little.

"Thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after": Of any sort that is clean, and allowed to be eaten, and as much of it as is craved. Only intemperance must be guarded against.

They will be blessed with abundant land. God will allow them to eat flesh, as long as they do not eat the blood.

Deuteronomy 12:21 "If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after."

"If the place ... be too far": Moses envisioned the enlarging of the borders of Israel according to God's promise. This meant that people would live further and further away from the central sanctuary. Except for sacrificial animals, all others could be slaughtered and eaten close to home.

The temple in Jerusalem, perhaps, might be too far for them to come. This is a provision made for that instance. Under no circumstances are they to eat, or drink blood.

Deuteronomy 12:22 "Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat them: the unclean and the clean shall eat [of] them alike."

Which were not only clean creatures, as before observed, but were commonly and frequently eaten. There being plenty of them in those parts.

"So thou shalt eat them": Their oxen and calves, their sheep and lambs, their goats and their kids.

"The unclean and the clean shall eat of them alike": No difference being to be made on that account, with respect to common food (see note on Deut. 12:15). Which all alike might partake of, notwithstanding any ceremonial uncleanness that any might be attended with.

This seems to allow the eating of the unclean animal, as long as the blood is completely drained, and not eaten.

Deuteronomy 12:23 "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood [is] the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh."

“The blood is the life” (see Gen. 9:4-6 and Lev. 17:10-14). The blood symbolized life. By refraining from eating blood, the Israelite demonstrated respect for life and ultimately for the Creator of life. Blood, representing life, was the ransom price for sins. So, blood was sacred and not to be consumed by the people. This relates to atonement (in Lev. Chapter 16; Heb. 9:12-14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7).

Throughout Scripture, the life is spoken of as being in the blood. Abel's blood cried out from the earth, after Cain slew him. Somehow, the blood atones for sin. Perhaps, it is like a life for a life. It was the blood of Jesus which did away with our sin. His blood atoned for our sin. He was our substitute on the cross.

Deuteronomy 12:24 "Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water."

Neither with the flesh, nor separately.

"Thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water": As the blood of sacrifices was poured upon the altar, the blood of common flesh was to be poured upon the earth. Signifying it was not to be used, and no account to be made of it (see note on Deut. 12:16).

Even blood that is shed for the killing of an animal to eat, should not be eaten. It must soak into the earth as water does.

Deuteronomy 12:25 "Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou shalt do [that which is] right in the sight of the LORD."

That they and their posterity might be spared, and continue long, and enjoy much prosperity. For those that eat blood, contrary to this command of God, it is threatened that he would set his face against them, and they should be cut off (Lev. 7:27).

"When thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord": Not only observe this command, but all others.

This is an ordinance that brings blessings to the person who obeys the ordinance. Those who want to be in the will of the LORD, will observe this.

Deuteronomy 12:26 "Only thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take, and go unto the place which the LORD shall choose."

Which the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret of the title of their holy things. And Aben Ezra of their burnt offerings and peace offerings. They seem to include all in (Deut. 12:17).

"And thy vows thou shalt take, and go unto the place which the Lord shall choose": So often referred to, but not named (see Deut. 12:5).

A vow, and the holy things, must not be taken lightly. They must go to the place God has designated for this purpose.

Deuteronomy 12:27 "And thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God: and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh."

And on that only, even the altar of burnt offering.

"And the blood of thy sacrifices": One as well as another. Not only of the burnt offerings, but of the sin offerings, trespass offerings, and peace offerings.

"Shall be poured out upon the altar of the Lord thy God": Either sprinkled on it, or poured out at the bottom of it (see Lev. 1:1).

"And thou shalt eat the flesh": That is, of the peace offerings, for of them only might the people eat, and that only before the Lord.

The burnt offerings must be at the brazen altar in the tabernacle or temple, that God has designated for this purpose. The blood must be poured on the altar of the LORD. The person offering can eat of the flesh of the animal, however.

Deuteronomy 12:28 "Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest [that which is] good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God."

Respecting the demolition of all monuments of idolatry, and bringing all holy things to the place the Lord should choose to dwell in. And eating common flesh in their own houses, only to be careful not to eat blood.

"That it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever": For, as has been often observed, their continuance in the land of Canaan, and enjoyment of all good things in it, depended upon their obedience to the commands of God (see Isa. 1:19).

"When thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God": Which is to do all his commandments. For these are what are good and right in his sight, and it is for the good of men to do them.

To be blessed of God, is conditional. They must be obedient to God, to receive of His blessings. To keep the commandments of God, brings abundant blessings. To break the commandments of God, brings curses.

“Verses 29-31: The Hebrew people were not to emulate the religious patterns of the nations they were dispossessing. One of the most repugnant actions of the Canaanites was “even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods” (Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5).

Verses 29-30: Compare (2 Cor. 6:14 – 7:1), where Paul gives a similar exhortation.

Deuteronomy 12:29 "When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;"

The seven nations of the land of Canaan (Deut. 7:1).

"Whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land": Or to inherit them. And thou dost inherit them, by dwelling in their land.

When the ark of the covenant went with them into battles that the Lord had sent them into, God blessed them. The enemies fled before them, or were killed. God removes nations before Israel, so that Israel can receive the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Deuteronomy 12:30 "Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise."

Their examples and customs, and so to be drawn into the same idolatrous practices (see Psalm 106:35). After that they will be destroyed from before thee; for their idolatries and other sins.

"And that thou inquire not after their gods": What they were, their names, forms, and figures.

"Saying, how did these nations serve their gods?" What was the manner of worship they gave them? What rites, customs, and ceremonies did they use in their adoration of them?

"Even so will I do likewise": Or however, if this was not determined on when the inquiries were made. There was danger that this would be the result of them, and therefore the caution is given.

We see Moses is warning the people not to take any interest at all in the false gods of these Canaanites. Usually, it is not good to delve into other religions. It seems we forget which is real, and pick up some of the false religion when we inquire. Christianity is like a marriage to one husband. Being interested in someone else, brings problems.

Deuteronomy 12:31 "Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods."

"Burnt in the fire": One of the detestable practices of Canaanite worship was the burning of their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to Molech.

This practice was forbidden in Israel's law (Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 32:35), since it was tantamount to murder regardless of the supposedly religious reason for it. Both Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:3), and Manasseh (2 Kings 21:6), were guilty of child sacrifice. As verse 30 depicts, this could lead to expulsion from the land, as in fact it did in the case of the northern kingdom (2 Kings 17:17-18). See further, the note on (2 Kings 16:3-4).

It appears their evil worship had included human sacrifice. The things that were an abomination before God were some of the very things they were involved in. The worship of false gods is spiritual adultery.

Deuteronomy 12:32 "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."

In the manner it is commanded and directed to. The laws of God, both as to matter and manner, were to be obeyed just as they were delivered.

“Thou shall not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (see note on 4:2). Neither add any customs and rites of the Heathens to them, nor neglect anything enjoined on them (see Prov. 30:6).

One of the terrible mistakes these Israelites made just before their Babylonian captivity, was the addition of the worship of false gods to their worship of the One True God. To add to or take away from God's teachings, is as if we are saying God made a mistake. We as well as these Israelites, must do exactly as God has commanded, if we are to be blessed of God.

Deuteronomy Chapter 12 Questions

1. What is this chapter dedicated to?
2. Where are the law and commandments listed the first time?
3. Why should they utterly destroy the places of worship of the false gods?
4. In verse 3, what details of the destruction is given?
5. Why did they worship in high places?
6. What is verse 4 saying?
7. Where had they camped on their wilderness journey?
8. Who will choose the sight for the worship of God?
9. Where were they to bring their burnt offerings and sacrifices?
10. What were all of the people doing, before they received the law?
11. This new life in the Promised Land is to be governed by _____ law.
12. When is this law to come into being?
13. The vows are not of obligation, but of _____.

14. Who was to rejoice before the LORD?
15. Why did the Levites not inherit land?
16. What was given to the Levites?
17. Where were they to make their offerings?
18. Is it alright for them to kill and eat their animals?
19. What is forbidden to them to eat or drink?
20. Life is in the _____.
21. In verse 19, they are warned not to forsake the _____.
22. Abel's _____ cried out from the earth.
23. Blood should be poured upon the earth as _____.
24. Where were the burnt offerings burned?
25. Who cuts off the nations before them?
26. When the _____ of the _____ went with them into battle, they won.
27. What is Israel not to inquire of from these people?
28. What was one of the terrible practices of their worship?