

## Deuteronomy 9-12 - Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

Let me once again briefly set the scene for our study tonight.

It's 40 years and some months since the Exodus.

A new generation stands on the eastern border of the Promised Land, preparing to enter in and make their conquest.

Moses, their leader for the last 40 years, will not be going with them.

That task will fall to his faithful assistant, Joshua.

But Moses knows what challenges await Israel in Canaan so he uses his last days with them to remind them of who they are as the people who are in covenant with God.

THIS is his repeated message & theme throughout the 3 speeches he gave to the nation, recorded here in Deuteronomy.

As we saw last week, Moses sounds like a broken record/ scratched CD as he keeps reminding them of their side of the covenant with God – to obey Him.

In the first 8 chs he calls them to obey God 23 times!

We'll see that same emphasis tonight

### II. MOSES' SECOND DISCOURSE Chs. 5–28

#### ***D. Lessons from the Past (8:1–11:7)***

We ended with ch. 8 last time. In this section, Moses is reviewing their past & showing how Israel has a tendency to be rebellious.

It is this rebelliousness that prompts his repeated urging that they obey.

#### **9:1 “Hear, O Israel:**

“Listen up! Don't grow sluggish now as I speak and you listen!”

**You are to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, <sup>2</sup> a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you heard *it said*, ‘Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?’**

There were several different groups of people living in Canaan.

They occupied various regions and spoke different languages with different traditions but there was an overarching culture that united them all so that while they called themselves by different national names – collectively they were all lumped under the title of *Canaanites*.

One of these groups were the descendants of a guy named Anak.

Anak was the first of the giants. His descendants were known as the Anakim.

No relation to Skywalker.

They had made their headquarters in the very middle of Canaan at a place called Hebron.

**<sup>3</sup> Therefore understand today that the LORD [YAHWEH] your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you.**

While *they* would be doing the fighting, it's God who would be animating them &

giving them the victory over the Canaanites.  
He says that “you shall drive them out & destroy them *quickly*.”  
Yet in 7:22 he said –

**And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.**

So which is it? Will they defeat the Canaanites little by little or quickly?

Both! What Moses means by destroying the Canaanites *quickly* is that they were to remove them by means of a war or eradication, not move in & settle down among them and try to take over.

Remember that the Canaanites were an utterly corrupt society that was beyond all hopes of redemption.

God intended to use Israel as the agent of His judgment on them.

But at the same time, the territory of Canaan was too vast for Israel to assimilate all at one time.

If they made one massive campaign to remove the Canaanites all at once, right away, it would leave large regions unpopulated and the fields and towns would fall into disrepair.

They were to adopt a strategy of conquering Canaan in stages.

But their conquest was to be one of *armed conflict* not *assimilation*.

**4 “Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, ‘Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land’; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you. <sup>5</sup> *It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. <sup>6</sup> Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.***

That’s pretty clear! They aren’t to get uppity & think the reason they are experiencing such incredible success in battle is because they’re so good.

It’s that the Canaanites are so bad & God is using Israel as the agent of His judgment.

Next, Moses really lays it on – reminding them of some of their more notable blunders during the last 40 years.

**7 “Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD. <sup>8</sup> Also in Horeb [Sinai] you provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry *enough* with you to have destroyed you. <sup>9</sup> When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD made**

with you, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water. <sup>10</sup> Then the LORD delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. <sup>11</sup> And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, *that* the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant. <sup>12</sup> “Then the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly; they have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molded image.’

While Moses was up on the mount, Aaron was caving in to the pressure of the people to provide an idol.

He fashioned a golden calf around which the people threw themselves into full-blown worship.

**13**“Furthermore the LORD spoke to me, saying, ‘I have seen this people, and indeed they are a stiff-necked people. <sup>14</sup>Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.’

Moses interceded for Israel & asked God to relent of His anger & give Israel another chance. God agreed.

**15**“So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire; and the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands. <sup>16</sup>And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the LORD your God—had made for yourselves a molded calf! You had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you.

<sup>17</sup>Then I took the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes. <sup>18</sup>And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. <sup>19</sup>For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was angry with you, to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me at that time also.

<sup>20</sup>And the LORD was very angry with Aaron *and* would have destroyed him; so I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. <sup>21</sup>Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it *and* ground *it* very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mountain.

The incident with the golden calf was shameful precisely because it came **RIGHT AFTER GOD HAD SPOKEN OUT LOUD TO THEM** telling them to make no image representing Him.

And the visible manifestation of His presence was swirling right over their heads!

**22 “Also at Taberah and Massah and Kibroth Hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath.**

At Taberah they complained about the hardships of the wilderness. [Num 11:1-3]

At Massah they complained about no water. [Exo 17:1-7]

At Kibroth Hattaavah they murmured about the manna. [Num 11:31-34.]

**23 Likewise, when the LORD sent you from Kadesh Barnea, saying, ‘Go up and possess the land which I have given you,’ then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and you did not believe Him nor obey His voice.**

Kadesh Barnea, when the people refused to enter the Promised Land, was the proverbial straw that broke the back of God’s forbearance with the rebels of Israel.

**24 You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you. 25 “Thus I prostrated myself before the LORD; forty days and forty nights I kept prostrating myself, because the LORD had said He would destroy you. 26 Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said: ‘O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people and Your inheritance whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look on the stubbornness of this people, or on their wickedness or their sin, 28 lest the land from which You brought us should say, “Because the LORD was not able to bring them to the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness.” 29 Yet they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out by Your mighty power and by Your outstretched arm.’**

Moses intercession for Israel is a great example for us as we pray.

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There are Christians today who want to apply the covenant God made with Israel to the US; it can’t be done.

God’s covenant with the descendants of Abraham is unique & non-transferable. And contrary to some faulty teaching going in some circles, the US is *not* a modern day *replacement* for Israel in the plan of God.

Now, bearing that in mind – the *principle* Moses reveals here, that what happened to Israel would reflect upon *the world’s perception* of Israel’s *God*, can arm *our* prayers & intercession for *our* nation.

Is it not true that the world sees the US traditionally as a Christian nation?

And if not a Christian nation, then at least predominantly a nation of Christians?

I will name some modern nations. You shout out the religion or philosophy associated with them.

Israel – Judaism

India – Hinduism

Saudi Arabia – Islam

Iran – Islam

Iraq – Islam  
Syria – Islam  
Italy – Roman Catholicism  
Thailand – Buddhism  
China – Communism  
Germany – Secularism  
France – Secularism  
USA - ???

Because of the election a week ago, now more than ever, in the eyes of the world, the US is a nation of Christians; evangelical Christians.

And yet at the same time much of the world sees our nation as a bully & major exporter of sin via the popular media and pornography.

Israel really struggled in their walk with God, and though they were deserving of His judgment, Moses prayed that God would bestow mercy lest the world think poorly of Israel's God.

Our nation is certainly deserving of judgment.

But as God's own, who are in covenant with Him, we must follow Moses' example & pray for mercy – not because we deserve it, but because of God's own glory!

Let us pray for the goodness of God to be showered on our nation in such overwhelming measure that it brings us to repentance.

As we read in Romans 2:4 – it is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance.

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**10:1 “At that time the LORD said to me, ‘Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain and make yourself an ark of wood. <sup>2</sup> And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke; and you shall put them in the ark.’ <sup>3</sup> “So I made an ark of acacia wood, hewed two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. <sup>4</sup> And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which the LORD had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. <sup>5</sup> Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me.” <sup>6</sup> (Now the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah, where Aaron died, and where he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead. <sup>7</sup> From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of rivers of water. <sup>8</sup> At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day. <sup>9</sup> Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, just as the LORD your God promised him.)**

Because the tribe of Levi served as priests, they weren't given a specific region or territory in Israel.

They were scattered throughout the nation & lived in special cities where they could lead the people in the worship of God.

**10**“As at the first time, I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the LORD also heard me at that time, *and* the LORD chose not to destroy you. **11**Then the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, begin *your* journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.’

**12**“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, **13**and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?

This is the 24<sup>th</sup> time Moses calls them to obey as their side of the covenant with God.

**14**Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, *also* the earth with all that *is* in it.

Christian, heed that statement well!

If you visited the Smithsonian Museum & didn't have to walk along the cordoned walkways but could actually wander among the priceless antiques & artifacts, would you exercise caution?

If you were invited to the White House & were given a tour of the historic rooms normal visitors aren't granted access to, would you take care of your movements to make sure you didn't break anything?

This earth – really, *the entire physical* universe *belongs* to God.

We ought to respect it & exercise the utmost care & caution in our use of it.

If there was anyone who was an environmentalist & conservationist, it ought to be the Christian.

It's unfortunate that the environmentalist movement has been co-opted & dominated by secularists on one hand & New-Agers on the other.

We ought to encourage Christian young people to pursue a Biblical environmentalism & take that realm captive to Christ.

**15**The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as *it is* this day. **16**Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.

Circumcision was a rite the Jews performed to mark them *physically* as the descendants of Abraham.

Here Moses calls them to make sure their faith is *personal & real*, not a mere formality.

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Let's apply that to ourselves: Why do you come to church?

Is it merely a habit, a ritual?

Or is it the response of a heart in love with God?



**17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.**

These words alone could occupy us for hours.

Think about what they would convey to the people they were *first* spoken to.

The Israelites lived in a world dominated by the belief that there were many gods.

These deities were merely supernatural powers who held sway & control over the elements in a particular region.

As gods, they were higher & more powerful than human beings, but they were in themselves limited in power & the sphere of their influence.

In fact, the gods of the ancient world were really just elevated & expanded forms of men & women, subject to the same passions & desires as humans.

When Moses says that Yahweh, Israel's God, is God of gods, he means that in the same way that the pagans saw their gods as existing in a realm *above* them, so Yahweh was in a realm *all by Himself above* the level of the gods the pagans worshipped.

If Baal was a god *above* the Canaanites, then Yahweh was a deity *above* Baal! Moses is not saying Baal was real. He's simply letting Israel know they must not think of Yahweh as just another regional deity.

He's not Baal's peer; He's no equal to Molech or Asherah. He exists on a realm far above them.

You take that idea now & meditate on it as it relates to God being *Lord of lords*.

**18 He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. 19 Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.**

God calls His people to make sure justice is blind, showing no partiality because of economic or racial status.

What we find here is completely out of sync with the norm for that day.

It was a universally accepted practice to show favoritism to your own group while manipulating the system in order to gain an advantage over those who were different.

In Israel, justice, equity, & fair treatment for all, regardless of social or racial background were to be inviolable norms.

**20 You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name.**

25<sup>th</sup> call to fear & obey the Lord.

**21 He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. 22 Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.**

Judging by the census taken in Numbers, Israel had grown to a population of about 3 million.

**11:1 "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.**

26<sup>th</sup>

Take careful note of the first words of v. 1 – “Therefore,”

Because God had been so very good to Israel . . .

“You shall love the LORD your God.”

Love, by its very nature cannot be forced, coerced, commanded, or demanded.

Love must be free. Yet here we see Moses telling the people to love Yahweh.

How do we reconcile this? It all begins with that word “Therefore.”

Precisely because of Who God is & what He had done for Israel, there was only one right response – total devotion & love.

While it’s true that no one can force or command love, it’s also true that love is subject to reason.

Since God is the origin of reason, love is the only appropriate response to Him.

This isn’t true for just Israel, or now, just Christians.

We could make a solid case for love for God to every single person on earth.

- God is a Person, not an impersonal cosmic force.
- He is perfect.
- He loves us with an infinite love.
- He is blessing us in countless ways right now.
- He is beautiful beyond description.
- And we were created by Him expressly to love Him.

Our greatest potentiality as human beings is achieved *in* loving Him.

Really – there is only one rational attitude a man or woman can have toward God – Devoted & loyal love.

**2 Know today that I do not speak with your children, who have not known and who have not seen the chastening of the LORD your God, His greatness and His mighty hand and His outstretched arm—**

Now Moses lists a bunch of the miracles they’d witnessed over the last 40 years . .

**3 His signs and His acts which He did in the midst of Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to all his land;**

**4 what He did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and their chariots: how He made the waters of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued you, and how the LORD has destroyed them to this day;**

**5 what He did for you in the wilderness until you came to this place;**

**6 and what He did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben:**

These guys rebelled against Moses’ leadership. For this they were judged -

**how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, their households, their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel— <sup>7</sup>but your eyes have seen every great act of the LORD which He did.**

Moses is speaking to the elders of the nation – those who’d been under 20 during the Exodus but who have now matured into the leaders of the nation.

Though young, they’d personally witnessed all these things.



### **E. Rewards for Obedience (11:8–32)**

**8**“Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess, <sup>9</sup> and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’

27<sup>th</sup>

**10** For the land which you go to possess *is* not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered *it* by foot, as a vegetable garden; <sup>11</sup> but the land which you cross over to possess *is* a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, <sup>12</sup> a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God *are* always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year. <sup>13</sup> ‘And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>14</sup> then I will give *you* the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. <sup>15</sup> And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.’ <sup>16</sup> Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, <sup>17</sup> lest the LORD’s anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

Since we covered vs. 8-17 last Sunday, we’ll leave it for those who weren’t here to get the CD.

**18** “Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

28<sup>th</sup>

This repeats what God had told them to do in ch. 6 in that passage known as the *Shema*.

What we find here led to the practice of the *tefillin* or *phylacteries*; little boxes that hold a scroll written with the words of the Shema which Jewish Orthodox wear on their foreheads and the backs of their hands as they worship.

But God didn’t mean that they were to literally wear such devices; He meant they were to keep God’s Word as the filter and context of their thoughts & deeds.

**19** You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and

**when you rise up.**

God's word was to become a part of their daily conversation, so that all of life was lived in its light.

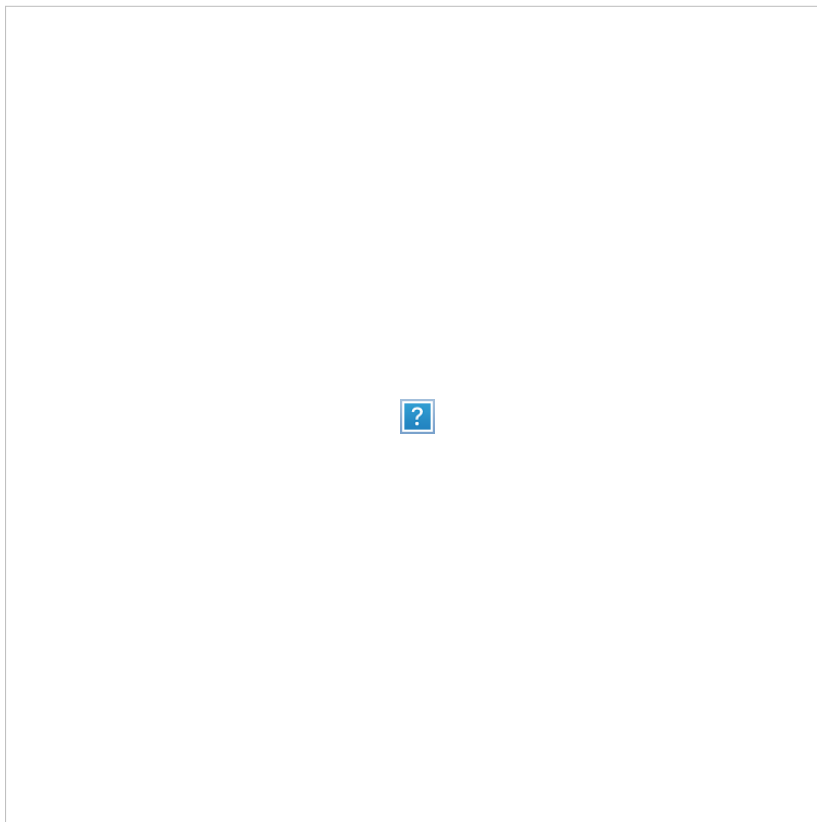
**20 And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 21 that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.**

This led to the practice of the mezuzah, which was like a phylactery for the house. Moses emphasizes the need for parents to pass on these things to their children.

For not only would their *conquest* of Canaan be dependent on obeying God, their *holding on to the land* would be directly related to their on-going obedience.

**22“For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him—**

29<sup>th</sup>



**23 then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves. 24 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even**

**to the Western Sea, shall be your territory.**

Let's take a look at what territory Moses identifies here & in 1:7 as belonging to

Israel. <sup>[1]</sup>

**25 No man shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you. 26“Behold, I set before you today a**

blessing and a curse: <sup>27</sup> the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today;

<sup>30</sup><sup>th</sup>

<sup>28</sup> and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. <sup>29</sup> Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. <sup>30</sup> Are they not on the other side of the Jordan, toward the setting sun, in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh? <sup>31</sup> For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it. <sup>32</sup> And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today.

Moses will expand on the blessing & curse as well as how they were to memorialize them on the 2 mountains later in ch. 27. We'll cover it then.

V. 32 is the 31<sup>st</sup> call to obedience.

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What's interesting about Moses' description of the location of Mt. Ebal & Gerazim, as well as his description of landmarks earlier in ch. 1, give us a solid clue that some kind of *rudimentary maps* were available at this time.

For many years it was the thinking of the academic world that maps were a late invention.

But archaeology has now unearthed Babylonian maps dating back to 2300 BC.

[2]

Moses, who was trained as a prince of Egypt would have had a thorough familiarity with maps & the geography of that region.

### **F. Statutes for Worship Ch. 12**

**12:1**“These *are* the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth.

<sup>32</sup><sup>nd</sup>

**2**You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.

Pagans believed their deities dwelt on the tops of high places & under large trees so that where they built their altars and set up their idols.

God said the Jews were to erase all evidence of pagan worship from these places.

**3**And you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. **4**You shall not worship the LORD your God *with such things*.

As Israel encountered these pagan religious centers they would come face to face with the way the idols were worshipped.

Because some of the Canaanite practices were so sensual there was the temptation Israel would pick them up & convert them to use in worshipping God.

God says, “Don’t do it!”

This speaks to us about the forms we use in worship.

We must exercise great care that we don’t just ape the world’s forms of entertainment in our worship of God.

Worship has the glory of God as its object, not the entertainment or pleasure of self.

It’s not wrong to develop new ways of worshipping God, but what *is wrong* is taking our inspiration from the world.

Our inspiration ought to be the Holy Spirit & the Word of Truth.

In John 4 Jesus told the woman at the well that real worship is framed by the Spirit & Truth.

**5“But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. 6There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. 7And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you.**

While the Canaanites worshipped their gods on just about every hill and under every large tree, Yahweh was to be worshipped in only one place – to be discovered later as He directed them.

You’ll remember that the tabernacle had already been built & the rule given that sacrifices could be made only there.

Anyone sacrificing on his own at any other place was to be put to death.

So God is saying that once they enter Canaan, He will direct where the tabernacle was to be set up & all worship was to take place there & only there.

**8“You shall not at all do as we are doing here today— every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes— 9for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you.**

Though the earlier prohibition against worshiping anywhere but the tabernacle had already been given – it had been widely neglected by the people & not enforced by Moses.

It seems he allowed some leniency in regard to this rule, possibly because the layout of the camp of Israel had made getting to the tabernacle difficult.

That would change when they entered Canaan since getting around would be easier.

**10But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which**

the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety, <sup>11</sup>then there will be the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you.

As God speaks of the people worshipping, He refers to it as *rejoicing*.

The worship of God was to be a thing of *great joy*, not a dark, dreary religious duty in which they were all sad & downcast.

It was to be a pious party, a holy holiday, a time to gather one's loved ones together & celebrate.

<sup>13</sup>Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; <sup>14</sup>but in the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you. <sup>15</sup>“However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike. <sup>16</sup>Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water.

While all *sacrifices* were to be conducted *only* at the place God showed them, that didn't mean the slaughter of *all animals* was permitted only there.

They were free to eat meat any time they wanted & could butcher it in their towns.

The one thing that linked the sacrifices with the general butchering of meat was that they were to show the utmost respect for life by thoroughly draining the blood & pouring reverently onto the earth.

<sup>17</sup>You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand. <sup>18</sup> But you must eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God chooses, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all to which you put your hands.

Just as the people were to make their sacrifices only at the tabernacle, they were to also bring the tithe of their first-fruits there.

This offering was shared between the priests & the people so that the one who brought it partook of the same meal that was placed on the altar and burned as an offering to the Lord.

The idea is that the people shared a meal with God.

This is just an awesome picture of the kind of intimacy God wants with His people.

**19 Take heed to yourself that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.**

Since the Levites were supported solely by the sacrifices & tithes of the people, God calls them to remember their duty to bring their offerings.

**20 “When the LORD your God enlarges your border as He has promised you, and you say, ‘Let me eat meat,’ because you long to eat meat, you may eat as much meat as your heart desires.**

God didn’t limit their consumption of meat to just the fellowship offerings they brought.

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Moses repeats himself here, as he does often in Deuteronomy.

The reason why is because this was a speech given to the people and as with all spoken messages, there was the need to repeat some things because it took the people a little while to assimilate what he was saying.

They didn’t have the privilege of being able to go back and read it again – they depended on his repeating & adding detail until they understood clearly what he was saying.

**21 If the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, then you may slaughter from your herd and from your flock which the LORD has given you, just as I have commanded you, and you may eat within your gates as much as your heart desires. 22 Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them. 23 Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life; you may not eat the life with the meat. 24 You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth like water. 25 You shall not eat it, that it may go well with you and your children after you, when you do *what is* right in the sight of the LORD.**

Prior to this, all meat was supposed to be slaughtered at the tabernacle, though as we’ve seen this wasn’t practiced consistently.

Now, because the people will be spreading out over a wide area, it would be impractical to require that all animals be butchered at the tabernacle.

Those living near enough to it were still encouraged to come and have the priests prepare their meat.

But those living at a distant didn’t need to concern themselves with going to the tabernacle.

But for all – they were to make sure they bled their meat and show due respect for life by reverently pouring the blood onto the earth.

**26 Only the holy things which you have, and your vowed offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses. 27 And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be**



**poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, and you shall eat the meat.**

While the blood of their everyday meat was to be poured out on the earth, the blood of their sacrifices was deposited at the base of the altar.

**28 Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do *what is good and right* in the sight of the LORD your God.**

33<sup>rd</sup>

**29 “When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, <sup>30</sup>take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ <sup>31</sup>You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.**

Moses adds to the earlier prohibition of looking to the Canaanites for ideas on how to worship God.

God considered the worship of the pagans to be an abomination.

**32 “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.**

34<sup>th</sup> call to obedience.

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In light of v. 32, it’s interesting to consider how the ancient rabbis justified their development of the *Talmud*, which they said was a fence of protection around God’s Word.

In the Talmud the Jew finds an exhaustive commentary on *how* to keep the Law.

Where God’s Word says to honor the Sabbath day & to keep it special by not working but instead, resting & reflecting on the Lord, the Talmud has page after page of the kind of things that constitute work and so cannot be indulged in on the Sabbath.

God intended His people to look to Him for how *they* were to honor the Sabbath & to depend on His Spirit for guidance on what it meant to enjoy the blessing He meant the Sabbath to be.

The Talmud placed so many restrictions on what a person could do on the Sabbath that instead of it being a blessing it became a huge burden – one so heavy that the Sabbath itself became a work to endure!

Here’s what we can learn from v. 32 & the Talmud –

God has given us His Word to bring joy & delight to life, not to weigh us down with burdens.

While it might seem like it’s a lot easier to have someone spell out for us with a set of rules what we can and can’t do, God wants to guide us with principles of truth & have us look to & depend on Him in an intimate relationship of immediate communion.

That's what it means to walk in the Spirit.  
Let me use an example –  
Some years ago our boys attended a private school that had a dress code but not uniforms.  
Every so often some child would violate the code and was disciplined.  
This frustrated some of the parents & they began to press for a standard uniform for all students.  
At a parent meeting they said they didn't want to have to think or worry about what clothes fit the dress code – that a set uniform would be so much easier.  
Now, the dress code was this – business casual; that is about as easy as it gets for buying clothes but some of the children pressed their parents to buy clothes that were more hip and youth oriented and their parents didn't have the courage to say "No."  
So to make it easier, they wanted uniforms.  
But the leadership of the school who understood the school's philosophy of education refused to budge.  
Their goal was to train young people & their parents how to apply their faith to daily issues like wardrobe.  
A uniform is a rule that makes decisions easy but it doesn't train a child to live steer his/her course through the principles of *modesty* on one hand & *aesthetics* on the other.  
What the leaders of the school hoped for was that as a child looked into his or her closet each morning, their choice of clothes would be made *prayerfully*, an act of walking in the Spirit.  
Rules don't teach that. They make decisions easier but also serve to stir up rebellion.  
God wants us to study His word to discover the principles of truth then to walk in the Spirit, living by the light of those principles.

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[1] Deut 1:7 - "Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites [the Nebo ridge on the east bank of the Jordan], and unto all the places nigh thereunto [the Jordan valley, east of the river itself], in the plain [in Hebrew, *Arabah*, the Great Rift of the Jordan valley south of the Dead Sea], and in the hills [the Judean hills], and in the vale [in Hebrew, *Shephelah*, lying between the coastal plain and the Judean hills], and in the south [the Negev], and by the seaside [the Mediterranean coastal plain], to the land of the Canaanites [particularly the Plain of Sharon and the Jezreel Valley], and unto Lebanon [in the north, but how far north?], unto the Great River, the River Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them."

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