

**Deuteronomy 12:20-32**  
**You Shall Not Add to It nor Take Away from It**  
**February 14, 2021**

<sup>20</sup> “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. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth like water. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> Only the holy things which you have, and your vowed offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> “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.

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

The passage today can – if we will allow it – provide us with some hints into a particular theology that was introduced right in the first pages of the Bible, and that will continue to be built upon throughout much of the rest of the Bible.

This is concerning the nature of the soul of man and how it comes into being. We’ll see that as we go through the verses today. You might not think the verses we just read would even hint at that, but they do. And they also give us insights into a ritual we perform each week before leaving the church, that of the Lord’s Supper.

To understand the importance of Jesus’ words there, we need to understand the importance of His words in John 6. And to understand the reason for why He says what He says there, we need to understand precepts from all the way back here in the Law of Moses.

And so, when you think, “My mind is numbed over by all of this Old Testament stuff,” you need to remember that without it, we wouldn’t have an appreciation for, or a right understanding of, all of the stuff in the New Testament. It really is that simple.

**Text Verse:** “And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’”

<sup>20</sup> Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.’” Luke 22:19, 20

Moses spoke about the importance of not eating blood in last week’s passage. He is going to speak about the importance of not eating blood again today, in even more detail. The precept

predates the Law of Moses, and it is dealt with intimately in the law, not just here in Deuteronomy 12.

He is clear – no blood. And yet, in this passage from Luke, Jesus says that the cup we take is that of the New Covenant in His blood. Maybe He was just making an analogy to the cup itself. No, Matthew is more specific when he quotes the Lord, saying, “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28).

Matthew is speaking of the contents of the cup. We can ask ourselves if the contents are really His blood or not. The words He uses concerning the bread and the wine answer the question. He also held up the bread and said, “This is My body.

It is as plain as the nose on one’s face that He was holding bread and calling it His body. Thus, He is saying it is a metaphor for His body. Likewise, He was holding a cup of wine, demonstrating that it was a metaphor for His blood. The Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation fails, because it fails to take the word of the Lord as intended, thus twisting the meaning and purpose of the Lord’s Supper.

But why did Jesus bring this up at all? What is it about the blood that is so important for us to know? We saw some of that in Leviticus 17. We saw some of it last week, and we will see a bit more of it in the passage today. God is revealing truths to us in such things.

And so, don’t be overwhelmed with all of the laws, as if that is all the Lord is trying to convey. He is teaching us, through the law, of how we can more fully appreciate Jesus. In His coming, the law has met its purpose and it is fulfilled. In its fulfillment, it has met its end. This is the great part of being on this side of the cross. We can see what God was doing and why. And it is all about Jesus.

Such great truths as these are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. That It May Go Well with You (verses 20-27)**

Moses is now going to repeat and expand upon what he said in the previous passage, especially what was said in verses 15-18. And there is good reason for this. Those verses said –

“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. <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.”

Deuteronomy 12:15-19

## <sup>20</sup> “When the LORD your God enlarges your border

*ki yakhriv Yehovah elohekha eth gebulekha* – “When enlarges Yehovah your God your border.”

It is in the second person singular, and this will continue until verse 32. Either Israel the nation, as a collective whole, is being addressed, or Moses is speaking to each person individually as if each person is an example of the whole.

The idea of extending the borders is probably twofold. First, it speaks of the initial conquest of Canaan, the people would move in and eventually spread out as the inhabitants were exterminated. But it also certainly speaks of even extending beyond the borders of Canaan proper.

The note of extending the borders of Canaan was first found in Exodus 34 when referring to the three annual pilgrim feasts. At that time, the Lord assured Israel that when they went to Jerusalem during those feasts, their homes and land would be secure.

It was a note requiring faith by the people. Obviously, if all of the people went to the place selected by the Lord to observe a weeklong feast, it would seem to be the most propitious time for their enemies to come in and plunder the land.

But the Lord’s words to the people ensured them that it would not be so. They simply had to be obedient to the charge, and respond in faith by coming as instructed –

“Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel. <sup>24</sup> For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year. Exodus 34:23, 24

The wording even indicates that the expansion of the borders would act as its own buffer for Israel, allowing them to attend these feasts without fear. With that understood, Moses says...

<sup>20</sup> (con't) **as He has promised you,**

Rather, it says, *kaasher dibber lakh* – “as has spoken *to* you.” This could be translated as “promised,” but it is to be considered a conditional promise if so. In Deuteronomy 11, it said –

“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— <sup>23</sup> then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves. <sup>24</sup> 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. Deuteronomy 11:22-24

The people are told that keeping the commandments would lead to driving out the nations and eventual expansion of the borders. Regardless of this, though, the point of what is being conveyed here concerns the people’s conduct while in the land, specifically in regard to the slaughter of animals for food. This is next seen...

<sup>20</sup> (con't) **and you say, ‘Let me eat meat,’ because you long to eat meat,**

The Hebrew is more personal: *v’amarta okelah basar ki taaveh naphshekha l’ekol basar* – “and you say, ‘Let me eat meat,’ because desires your soul to eat meat.” There is the understanding that meat is something highly desired, even yearned after.

But there is also the understanding that animals were generally considered first and foremost for sacrificial use. The common word for altar (such as in verse 12:3) is *mizbeakh*, and it even conveys this thought. It signifies a slaughter place, coming from *zabakh* meaning to kill, offer, sacrifice, slay and so on. That then is derived from a primitive root signifying to slaughter an animal.

The very act of slaughtering an animal carried in the mind of the people the sense of a sacrifice. A sacrifice was something made on an altar, and the Lord wanted a single altar for the sacrifices and offerings presented to Him. This then made the situation untenable – especially if the borders have been expanded.

It would be unreasonable to make a journey of several days to simply have a meal consisting of meat. But it is understood that the soul of man craves after meat. As was seen in the previous sermon, while the people were camped around the tabernacle, they were required to bring any animal to be slaughtered before the Lord –

“Whatever man of the house of Israel who kills an ox or lamb or goat in the camp, or who kills it outside the camp, <sup>4</sup> and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of

meeting to offer an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, the guilt of bloodshed shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people, <sup>5</sup> to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to the priest, and offer them as peace offerings to the LORD.” Leviticus 17:3-5

However, once in the land, and especially when the tribes had taken over their inheritances that were long distances from the tabernacle, there needed to be provisions that allowed them to deviate from this previous requirement, thus allowing them to eat meat unhindered by an impossible mandate.

Without Moses’ words of this chapter, there would be confusion concerning what to do, especially when some of the animals they were allowed to eat, being considered clean according to the law, were also not animals acceptable for offering to the Lord. As we noted last week, only those animals that typologically looked forward to Christ could be offered on the altar to the Lord.

So, what are the people to do in order to not sin against the Lord based on what the law already says, and based on what is already allowed to be eaten according to the Leviticus 11 dietary laws? The answer was partially stated in the previous verses, but it will be provided here with further detail. That begins with...

<sup>20</sup> (con’t) **you may eat as much meat as your heart desires.**

Moses tells the people that when they want meat, they can eat meat. The previous law was solely for the time in the wilderness. With the people dwelling in the land of Canaan, it would no longer apply. They would be spread out through the land and were allowed to freely do as they wished in this regard. As long as it conformed to the laws now to be set forth by Moses...

<sup>21</sup> **If the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you,**

What is too far? It doesn’t say, and thus it is a free allowance to do according to what is reasonable. When we read the Bible, we may think of Israel as a small piece of land where the people could easily go to whatever spot the Lord determined to place His name.

However, there were no cars. Everything had to go on foot. Today, to travel to the next town, even 30 or 40 miles away, it would certainly seem unreasonable to start walking with your evening meal in order to first slaughter it there.

It would even be true with a ten-mile walk. By the time you walked an animal ten miles, offered it up, and then carried its meat back home, you would have to spend at least five or six hours, maybe more. In other words, what is being conveyed here is basically an allowance for any and all to conduct their affairs according to the permissible rules as they are set down.

This is the standard, and only the exceptions – which are actually the main commandments – are to be exactly carried out in accord with the law of the altar. This releases all of the people from the burdens that would otherwise be necessarily imposed on them for any and all consumption of animals.

**21 (con't) then you may slaughter from your herd and from your flock**

Here, it uses the root of the word for “altar,” *zabakh*, that was noted while looking at the last verse. It generally means “to slaughter for sacrifice.” However, here it speaks of simply slaughtering for food.

The accommodation and allowance are granted according to the word, and it applies to both animals of the herd and of the flock. These are animals generally associated with those acceptable for sacrifice upon the altar of the Lord.

And yet, they are authorized for general slaughter without any religious connotation assigned to them. If someone wanted T-bone steak for the evening, that is now made available to him.

**21 (con't) which the LORD has given you,**

*asher natan Yehovah lekha* – “which has given Yehovah you.” This is the same basic thought from verse 12:15 that said, “according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.”

Moses is careful to acknowledge the Lord’s hand as being the source of the possessions of the people. It is thus to be to them a reminder that not only is this allowance now being spoken of as a grant to the people, but the very animal itself is a blessing from the Lord. Therefore, they are to treat the command with respect...

**21 (con't) just as I have commanded you,**

This refers to the words of the previous clause, “then you may slaughter from your herd and from your flock ... just as I have commanded you.” The allowance is granted by the Lord through Moses, and it thus removes any difficulty from the otherwise undiscernible notion of what to do.

If this provision were not made, it could be argued by the priests that every single such animal had to be brought to the tabernacle, regardless of the distance, and it would have had to be slaughtered according to the temple rights.

In this, there would have been obvious other difficulties, because the command from Leviticus 17 said that such animals were to be offered as peace offerings to the Lord. The laws of the peace offerings included the procedures for the sacrifice, removal of certain portions of the animal to be burnt on the altar, and so on.

However, Leviticus 7 (the peace offering of thanksgiving) included offering cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, or cakes of blended flour mixed with oil, and leavened bread as well. Some of that was to be given to the priest.

And, along with that, the meat of the offering had to be eaten either on the same day it was offered (thanksgiving offering) or by the second day (voluntary offering).

And then, there is the command that the breast and the right thigh of the offering were to belong to the priests who offered them. Because of all of this, the priest's job would never end.

And yet, if Moses didn't include this provision, this is what would be expected. But once in the land, the previous command was set aside allowing for freedom concerning the matter. The animal could be slaughtered in whatever location the people lived...

<sup>21</sup> (con't) **and you may eat within your gates as much as your heart desires.**

The Hebrew reads: *b'kol avvat naphshekha* – “in all desire your soul.” There is no limit placed upon the people, and there is no burden concerning the matter any longer.

It is a marvelous provision that, if overlooked, would have led to enormous confusion in the land. The animals of the flock and of the herd, with certain restrictions, were to be handled solely at the discretion of those who owned them. They were to be eaten...

<sup>22</sup> **Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them.**

The words here follow on after verse 12:15, which said, “the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike.” As you can see, verse 12:15 is in the opposite order of verse 22. A more literal comparison of the two would be –

Indeed, just as are eaten the gazelle and the deer, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean together [meaning in the same manner] may eat them. (22)

The unclean and the clean may eat of it; as the gazelle and as the deer. (15)

Through the repetition, and through rearranging the wording, Moses is methodically eliminating any question of his intent. Nobody will be able to later question the law through some sort of manipulation of what he is saying.

There is complete freedom in this regard concerning these animals, but with certain exceptions. Some were noted in the previous passage last week. They are now reexplained again here. The first of those exceptions is next stated...

**<sup>23</sup> Only be sure that you do not eat the blood,**

*raq khazeq l'bilti akol ha'dam* – “Only! Be firm to not eat the blood.” This follows on after verse 16, expanding what was said there. However, there is a difference that conveys the meaning in a very strong manner –

Only the blood not you (all, plural) shall eat. (16)

Only be sure to not eat the blood. (23)

In verse 16 everything was in the singular except that one clause. There, it changed to the plural to highlight the importance of this. Moses highlights the matter again by skipping any pronoun. Thus, it is an all-encompassing prohibition. Further, he adamantly stresses the precept through the use of the words he has chosen. The reason for this is next explained...

**<sup>23 (con't)</sup> for the blood is the life;**

*ki ha'dam hu ha'nepesh* – “For the blood, it, the soul.” This is what was briefly explained in the previous chapter, and it is what needs to be highlighted again. The blood is the vehicle of life, here called the *nepesh*, or the soul. For this reason, the Lord reserved all blood to Himself.

To eat the blood was to assimilate into oneself something which belonged to Him alone. It was therefore idolatrous to use it in any other way than designated by Him. Under certain circumstances, it could be used in the rites of the tabernacle as typologically anticipating Christ. Otherwise, it was to be poured out and covered with earth.



As the Bible says here that the blood *is* the soul, it gives us an insight into one of the doctrines of theology taught by Scripture – What is the soul, and where does it come from? There are several views on this, and this is the perfect time to learn them. Three basic views are:

The Preexistence View. Of this, there are two separate divisions. The first is the Platonic view which says the soul was never created. The second is the Christian, (created) view. This says the soul was created from eternity. Without going over all the details of it or reasons why, it is a heretical view.

The next is the Creation View. This assumes God directly creates a new individual soul for everyone born into this world. The body is generated through the parents, but the soul is created by God. It says that the soul is created at the moment of conception.

One reason for holding to this view is that all genetic information is present at conception. One reason why this view is wrong is that God completed His work of creation on Day 6. Another, obvious reason from this verse is that the blood, which carries all the genetic information, is called the soul right in this verse.

And then there is the Traducian View. This comes from the Latin word *tradux*, the branch of a vine. This says that each human being is a branch of the parents. Both soul and body are naturally generated by father and mother.

There is abundant biblical evidence for this third view. Eve was made from Adam, not separately. There is the fact noted by Paul that both males and females come from a union of males and females. Eve is called the mother of all the living. The Bible says that Adam had children in his image, thus natural generation is implied.

The Greek word for flesh, *sarx*, can mean both a physical body and a whole person with a body. Acts 17 says that all humans are derived from one man (“one blood”). Hebrews says that Levi was in Abraham’s loins, implying a physical transmission. In the Bible, the body in a womb is considered a person.

Paul says that all men sinned through one man, demonstrating that sin is transmitted by natural process – something that would not occur with a created soul. David even says that man is conceived in sin. And Jesus is said to come from the loins (or body) of David, demonstrating a genetic connection. And Paul shows that humans are a soul body unity. The soul is “naked” without the body.

All of these, and many other reasons from Scripture and from simply thinking the matter through, clearly demonstrate the importance of the precept once again being conveyed by Moses. As the blood *is* the soul, Moses, therefore, says...

**23 (con't) you may not eat the life with the meat.**

As mentioned last week in some detail, to really understand this more fully, the sermon on Leviticus 17 should be referred to. Blood is given for atonement, it is the soul of the being, and so on. The prohibition here looks to the work of Christ, and the precept was never to be violated. Because of this, Moses again repeats words from verse 16, saying...

**24 You shall not eat it;**

Again, Moses repeats the prohibition, and it is said in another way for the third time –

Only the blood not you (all, plural) shall eat. (16)

Only be sure to not eat the blood. (23)

No you (singular) shall eat it. (24)

There are no loopholes, there are no caveats, and the prohibition applies to each, to any, and to all. The blood is not to be eaten. The typology of Christ must never be marred. This is why, when He came, He was able to say the following –

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup>Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup>For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. <sup>56</sup>He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.’” John 6:53-56

The life is in the blood. To attempt to gain life through any blood, except the blood of Christ, is to mar the significance of what Christ Jesus did. In participating in the Lord’s supper – an obvious reference to His words in John 6 – we partake of the symbolism He speaks of. For any other blood...

**24 (con't) you shall pour it on the earth like water.**

It is word for word and letter for letter identical to the corresponding clause in verse 12:16. If you missed the sermon, you’ll have to go back and watch that. I was feeling really crummy on the day I typed this sermon, and I was in no mood to help you out of that responsibility. Your job this afternoon is to go back and get the details there. For now, Moses again says...

**25 You shall not eat it,**

It is the exact same words that he just said to begin the previous verse.

<sup>25</sup> (con't) **that it may go well with you and your children after you,**

As with elsewhere when Moses uses this expression, its meaning is, “to the end purpose that it may go well with you.” In other words, “There is the goal of things going well with you, and your children after you. The way to achieve that goal is to do those things that you are being instructed to do.”

The implication is that in not doing what is instructed, things will not go well. What is anticipated will be withheld from the one who does such things. Charles Ellicott says, “Very possibly, the physical as well as the moral effect of the rule is contemplated here.” I would disagree with that. The precept is moral in nature.

People all over the world drink blood and they live long lives. Those who get sick from it, do so just like with any other tainted food. The precept here, and the stress upon it, is not for physical health, but for upholding the sacred, moral, nature of the typology that anticipates the coming of Jesus Christ.

This is the importance of the precept, and this is the reason for the admonition concerning the good end purpose that comes...

<sup>25</sup> (con't) **when you do *what is* right in the sight of the LORD.**

*ki taaseh ha'yashar b'ene Yehovah* – “when you do the right in eyes Yehovah.” The Lord is watching, and His eyes are on the precepts He sets forth. Due to this precept having been repeatedly stated, it is an admonition that in not following through with it, the Lord will be greatly displeased. Therefore, to simply do what is instructed is worthy and commendable.

Despite the precept being thoroughly ingrained into the national psyche, Ezekiel 33:25 shows that the people willingly violated it. In this, things did not go well with them because they had done what was detestable for them to do.

For now, Moses returns to the general theme of the thought at hand, that of what to do with the animals owned by the people. He has given them allowances concerning slaughtering them within their own gates, and not at the tabernacle. However, after citing the first exception, that of eating the blood, he now mentions the second exception...

<sup>26</sup> **Only the holy things which you have,**

The word is *qodesh*, signifying apartness or sacredness. Thus, they are holy things. These include sacrifices and offerings such as are noted in Leviticus 18 –

“And the LORD spoke to Aaron: ‘Here, I Myself have also given you charge of My heave offerings, all the holy gifts of the children of Israel; I have given them as a portion to you and your sons, as an ordinance forever. <sup>9</sup>This shall be yours of the most holy things reserved from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every trespass offering which they render to Me, shall be most holy for you and your sons. <sup>10</sup>In a most holy place you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.

<sup>11</sup>“This also is yours: the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them to you, and your sons and daughters with you, as an ordinance forever. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.” Leviticus 18:8-11

In other words, those animals prescribed by law to be brought before the Lord. Among other things, these consisted of sacrifices, offerings, the firstborn and the tithes of animals. These were to be presented before the Lord and handled according to the law. They were not to be slaughtered within the gates of the people. Further...

<sup>26</sup> (con’t) **and your vowed offerings,**

The *neder* is a promise or a thing promised. When an animal was vowed as an offering, it could not be slaughtered within the gates of the people. Like the holy things, they had to be presented to the Lord. As Moses next says...

<sup>26</sup> (con’t) **you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses.**

This means to where the tabernacle, and later the temple, were located. The idea, as noted last week, was to ensure oneness of the people in their religious life. In fact, between verse 5 and this verse, this phrase has been stated in one way or another six times.

In bringing all of these there, it was to keep the people from sacrificing inappropriately in any way. The responsibility for these things belonged solely with the priests and solely at the place the Lord chose.

<sup>27</sup> **And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God;**

This is referring to the burnt offerings of Leviticus 1 –

“He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>6</sup>And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. <sup>7</sup>The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire. <sup>8</sup>Then

the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; <sup>9</sup> but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD." Leviticus 1:5-9

<sup>27</sup> (con't) **and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, and you shall eat the meat.**

This is referring to the sacrifices that were to be eaten by the people after being presented to the priests for their handling of the animal, and of the priests' reception of the holy parts dedicated to the Lord.

For example, the tithed animals and the firstborn animals were sacrificed, but other than every third year, they were eaten by the people. In the third year, they were given away in their entirety. Such things were considered as law.

*The soul of the flesh is in the blood  
And it is this then that makes atonement for you  
Only through the precious, crimson flood  
Can you be cleansed, spotless, and new*

*There at the Altar, the blood is cast  
And it is this Sacrifice which will open the Door  
Through it is new life; gone is the past  
Through that death, comes life evermore*

*Be sure and know that there is but this One way  
No other avenue can reconcile you to Me  
But in coming through My Son, you start a new day  
One which will continue unabated for all eternity*

## **II. Take Heed to Yourself (verses 28-32)**

<sup>28</sup> **Observe and obey all these words which I command you,**

These words now take the reader back to verse 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."*

The command is to observe and to hear (meaning hearken to) everything contained in the chapter. It includes destroying the places where the inhabitants served their gods, destroying their altars, and so on. It also includes serving the Lord at the one place He would choose for His name, and everything that has been associated with that.

The entire chapter is given to ensure unity of worship by the people of Israel. In doing these things Moses notes...

<sup>28</sup> (con't) **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.***

He again uses the same words as before, indicating that there is an end purpose that will be met in observing and hearkening to what they are told. Things will go well with them as long as they do, emphasized by the words *ad olam*, or "as far as the vanishing point." *Olam* signifies out of time or mind, and thus it is a point that vanishes into the past or future.

As long as Israel did what was expected in the eyes of the Lord, things would continue to go well. Obviously, knowing the history of Israel, this does not mean forever. They failed to do what was right. In turn, things didn't go well for them. Something more than the law is needed for them to come to such a state before the Lord.

For now, Moses returns to the general thought found in verses 2-4, that of the conduct of the nations they were to dispossess. There he told them to destroy the means and modes of worship they employed, and to not serve the Lord in those ways. Now, he says...

<sup>29</sup> **"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,**

Here, the synergistic (working together) relationship of the conquest is seen again. Moses says the Lord will cut off the nations, and yet he says, "which you go to dispossess, and you displace them." The two are working as one, but Israel cannot work alone.

The idea is that Israel will dispossess them, but only because the Lord is there to cut them off from before Israel. But, because it is said that the Lord will cut them off, it means that He is the Source of their power, and their Source of power is greater than the nations they will face and the gods those nations worshipped. Therefore...

<sup>30</sup> **take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them,**

Moses brings a new word into Scripture, *naqash*. It is a verb meaning to entrap with a noose, or to catch by a snare. He is warning the people that, like an animal getting ensnared, so they

will get ensnared if they are not diligent to pay heed. With this said, Moses goes on with the thought...

**30 (con't) after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying,**

Moses is relaying to them the stupidity of such a thing, and thus the just nature of any punishment meted out on them for such a thing. The Lord cut the people off, Israel went in to dispossess them and, in fact, displaced them, and yet the perverse question they may then ask concerning their gods is...

**30 (con't) 'How did these nations serve their gods?**

This is speaking of finding out the manner in which their worship was conducted. Verse 31 will show this is not speaking of serving other gods, but serving the Lord in the manner in which the other gods were served. In other words, it would be comparable to what Aaron did with the golden calf. He set up an idol and called it the Lord. Thus, he claimed to be worshipping the Lord in an unauthorized manner. Something similar is seen in 2 Kings 17 –

And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them. <sup>26</sup> So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land." <sup>27</sup> Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land." 2 Kings 17:25-27

Moses is telling Israel that this is not to be considered, and it is a trap that will bring harm, not the other way around. Because of this, they were not to say...

**30 (con't) I also will do likewise.'**

The means and mode of worship for the Lord have been established through the law. To serve Him as the nations served their gods would be an abomination to the Lord, and they were never to follow such practices. They were to stick to the rites and rituals set forth before them in the law itself.

To ensure this would be so, Moses warns them now, in advance, that no other path was to be considered...

**<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;**

This tells us that Moses was not speaking of worshipping the other gods, but of worshipping the Lord as the previous peoples worshipped their gods.

It is the same idea as was seen at the beginning of the chapter. Moses instructed them to destroy all such items of worship. In conclusion, he said, “You shall not worship the Lord your God *with* such *things*.” The call here is for unity of worship towards the Lord.

And the reason for this is – as always – typology. The people were given unity of worship because it is unity of worship given by the Lord in anticipation of the coming of Christ. The details anticipate Him and His ministry. Only in Christ is God pleased with man’s worship, and so Israel was to reflect that – not in the law itself, but in the typology it displayed.

And so, until His coming, Israel was to worship in anticipation of His coming. Anything else is an abomination, because it is a false manner of worship invented to serve a false god, such as...

**<sup>31 (con’t)</sup> for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.**

This is how the nations served their gods at times, whether to Molech or other supposed gods. It eventually did become a practice of Israel. So vile is the practice that the Lord says that such a thing had never entered into His mind –

“And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not listened to receive instruction. <sup>34</sup> But they set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to defile it. <sup>35</sup> And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.” Jeremiah 32:33-35

For such sins, and because of the attitude of the people, there was eventually no remedy left. The Lord destroyed them, and they were exiled to Babylon. They failed to heed, but Moses ends the chapter as it began on a note that Israel must be careful to observe the statutes and judgments set before them...

**<sup>32</sup> “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it;**



In this clause alone in today's passage the words switch to the second person plural – “Whatever I command you (all), you (all) are to be careful to observe it.” This makes it absolutely certain that Moses penned this.

Anyone else would have carefully followed in the singular, but Moses has revealed the word of the Lord, and it is conveyed to all of the people. They were to hear the word and then they were to hearken unto it. Moses felt at liberty to speak to the individual, to speak to the nation, and to speak to all of the people at any given time in order for them to hopefully pay heed. And to finish off the verse and the chapter, he says...

**\*32 (fin) you shall not add to it nor take away from it.**

This was conveyed to the people in verse 4:2. There, he added in the reason for it, saying, “that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.” In that verse, it was in the second person plural. Here it is in the second person singular.

Moses has conveyed the thought to all of the people, and he has conveyed it to each of them. There is to be no tolerance in violating the precept at any time, and by anyone. This is because it is impossible to keep the law when the law has been altered. To add to it will violate it, and to take from it will violate it.

With that understood, we can stand back before closing and know the same is true concerning the word of God as a whole. To add to it is to add in what man has decided is right. To take away from it is to determine that what God has decided is wrong.

This cannot be tolerated. The word is a unified whole. Everything recorded in it is recorded for the people of God to know and understand the mind of God and His intentions for His people, even if all of it does not apply to whatever people at a particular time.

In other words, the Law of Moses is written for us in the church – to understand what God has done in redemptive history. Without it, there would be a void in our understanding of His workings. And yet, the Law of Moses does not apply to us today – in any way, shape, or form. It is annulled through the work of Christ.

In this, we have entered a new dispensation, that of grace. We are to live according to the word of the Lord that applies to us at this time. To further understand this, the synoptic gospels were written to record Christ's life under the law, and of His fulfillment of that law. In those books, He speaks to Israel under the law, and – at times – in anticipation of the kingdom age promised to them.

He is not speaking to the church in the synoptic gospels. And yet, the information in the synoptic gospels is necessary for us to understand what He did, how it leads us into the current dispensation, and what will happen to Israel in the future.

As long as we keep our categorical boxes straight, our doctrine will be sound, and we will not make the major errors that so many make in their theology when they mix the boxes. We are to not add to the word, nor are we to take from it. But we are also to take it in its proper context at all times – not coopting what belongs to others at other times in redemptive history.

Today's passage is for our instruction in theology, but it is not intended for application in our lives. And yet, it is intended for us to continually find hints of Jesus as we search it out. As long as we are doing that, we are in the sweet spot – because He is the sweetest spot of all. He is our hope and our anticipation. He is the fulfillment of everything Moses spoke of. He is the release for Israel from their bondage. And He is the Savior of both Jew and Gentile because of what He did under this impossible body of law. He is Jesus.

**Closing Verse:** *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 1 Timothy 3:16, 17*

**Next Week:** Deuteronomy 13.1-5 This is how you are to trod – if you are a faithful son... (You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part I) (42<sup>nd</sup> Deuteronomy sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **You Shall Not Add to It nor Take Away from It**

“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, so  
tasty and sweet

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  
-----so, you may do

Just as I have commanded you, as I did impart

And you may eat within your gates as much as  
desires your heart  
Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you  
may eat them  
The unclean and the clean alike may eat them  
----- without any haw or hem

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  
Or between us there shall be strife

You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth  
like water

You shall not eat it, that it may go well with you  
And your children after you  
When you what is right in the sight of the LORD do

Only the holy things which you have, and your  
vowed offerings  
You shall take and go to the place which the LORD  
chooses

-----to where He gives His approval nod  
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  
And enjoy life upon the land that you trod

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, failing His precepts never

“When the LORD your God cuts off from before you  
The nations which you go to dispossess, bringing on  
them mayhem  
And you displace them and dwell in their land  
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. It shall not be so, as I am  
conveying

You shall not worship the LORD your God in that  
way  
For every abomination to the LORD which He hates  
-----raising His ire  
They have done to their gods  
For they burn even their sons and daughters to  
their gods in the fire

“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it

-----to this you shall commit  
You shall not add to it nor take away from it

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your  
word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...