

Deuteronomy 12:1-31 Worshiping at the Right Place and in the Right Way

Introduction: Moses is addressing the children of Israel and giving them final instructions before they enter Canaan. In chapters 6-8 he had spoken with primary emphasis upon the first commandment. In chapters 9-11 he had spoken with primary emphasis on the second commandment. In chapters 12-14 he will speak with primary emphasis on the third commandment: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain” etc.

I. Instructions to destroy idolatry out of the land V. 1-4

- A. Verse 1 is merely an introduction of the subject matter Moses is about to speak to them about.
- B. He instructs them to destroy the places of idol worship along with the idols, V. 2-3.
 - 1. To go to the house of the Lord and praise Him and then additionally go to places of idol worship and praise them would be taking God’s name in vain.
 - 2. They were to destroy all of the idols and places where they were worshiped.
 - 3. They were to destroy even their names, V. 3. (Stop their names from being used anywhere in the land.)
- C. They were not to build similar places for worship of the Lord, V.4. (Not on the mountains, the hills, in the groves nor under the large trees.)

II. A God appointed place of worship V. 5-14

- A. God, Himself, would appoint a place where the people of Israel were to worship, V.5
 - 1. It was to be a place where God would put His name. (His name at that place implies His presence at that place.)
 - 2. All of the tribes were to worship at this place.
 - 3. To choose some other place to worship His name would be dishonoring His name.
- B. God at this time did not say where the place would be.
 - 1. It would not be at the same place all of the time.
 - 2. It would be at Shiloh at first. (The tabernacle would be set up there.)
 - 3. It would later be at Jerusalem. (After the tabernacle became unusable, a tent would be set up at Jerusalem to house the Ark of the Covenant and later the temple would be built.)
- C. All animal sacrifices were to be made at the altar in the place which God selected, V. 6-7. (All of the family was to come and worship.)
- D. Worship in the land would be somewhat different than it was in the wilderness, V.8a.
 - 1. For instance in the wilderness the sacrifices would be discontinued during their travel.
 - 2. Whereas in Canaan sacrifices would be continuous.
- E. They were especially warned not to think that God would accept their worship if they sought to worship according to what was right in their own eyes, V.8b.
- F. They were to come to the place God appointed and worship in the way God appointed, V. 9-14.

III. Regulations concerning the eating of animals and the eating of sacrificial meals V. 15-19.

- A. They would be permitted to kill sacrificial animals for food in the place where they live, V.15. (But they could not sacrifice them there.)
- B. They would be permitted to kill and eat animals which were not suitable for sacrifice, V.15. (Such as antelope and deer.)
- C. They must not, however, eat the blood of any of those animals, but must pour it out upon the ground, V. 16. (They came from the ground and would be symbolically returned to the ground.)

- D. The tithes of grain and grapes must not be eaten at any place except the God appointed place of sacrifice, V.17-18.
- E. A special admonition was given to support the Levites, V.19.

IV. Regulations after an expansion of the land V.20-28

- A. All of these regulations would still apply in the land even after the borders of the land would be expanded, V. 20-24.
- B. They were to be obedient so that it would go well with them and their children, V. 25.
- C. But all sacrificed animals must be carried to the place where God's name is, V. 26-27.
- D. This must be done in order that all would go well with them and their children in the land, V.28.

V. A warning not to pattern their worship after the idol worshipers V.29-31

- A. They were warned not to allow themselves to be enticed to go off after the worship of the gods of the heathen, V. 29-30.
- B. They were just as sternly warned not to pattern their worship of the true God after the manner of worship which the heathen used in their worship of idol gods, V. 31.
- C. They were to be careful to worship according to the word of God, V. 32.

VI. Some special lessons for us

- A. We should worship at the right place. (Even if it means traveling a great distance to do so.)
- B. We should worship in the right way.
 - 1. According to the word of the Lord.
 - 2. Not as the world worships.
 - 3. Not according to what may seem right to us.
- C. We should be faithful to bring our tithes and offerings to the house of the Lord.