

# Deuteronomy 12 Commentary

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Moses on Mt Nebo (Deuteronomy 34:1+)  
Listen to Mt Nebo as you Ponder How Moses' May Have Felt

Deuteronomy by Irving Jensen- used by permission  
deut

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Deuteronomy		
Dt 1:1-4:43	Dt 4:44-26:19	Dt 27:1-34:12
Moses' First Discourse	Moses' Second Discourse	Moses' Third Discourse
Historical Review	Legal Exposition	Prophetical Promises

<b>Looking Back</b> 40 Years	<b>Looking Up</b> What God Expected of Israel				<b>Looking Ahead</b> What God Will Do for Israel		
Recapitulation of Wanderings	Rehearsal of Israel's Law				Ratification of Israel's Covenant	Historical Appendices	
Remembrance of the past	Commandments for the Present				Dt 27:1-30:20 Blessing and Cursing	Dt 31:1-34:12 Death of Moses	
Take Heed Don't forget	Ten Commands	Related Commands			Two Choices Affecting the Future		Moses' Parting Words
Dt 1:1-4:43 Looking Back	Dt 4:44-11:32 Exposition of Decalogue	Dt 12:1-16:17 Ceremonial Laws	Dt 16:18-20:20 Civil Laws	Dt 21:1-26:19 Social Laws	Dt 27:1-28:68 Ratification of Covenant	Dt 29:1- 30:20 Terms of Covenant	Dt 31:1-34:12 Moses' Song, Blessing, Death
<b>Plains of Moab</b>							
<b>ca. 2 Months</b> <b>Moses: Author</b> (Except Dt 34)							

**Deuteronomy 12:1** "These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth.

- **the statutes:** Dt 4:1,2,5,45 Dt 6:1,2
- **as long as you live on the earth.:** De 12:19 Dt 4:19 1Ki 8:40 Job 7:1 Ps 104:33 Ps 146:2
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- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

#### Structure of Deuteronomy 11:31–12:1

- A land (Hb. eretz) (Dt 11:31)
- B giving you, and you shall possess (Dt 11:31)
- C careful to do (Dt 11:32)
- D the statutes and the judgments (Dt 11:32)
- E which I am setting before you today (Dt 11:32)
- D' the statutes and the judgments (Dt 12:1)
- C' carefully observe (Dt 12:1)
- B' given you to possess (Dt 12:1)
- A' earth (Hb. eretz) (Dt 12:1) (Moody Bible Commentary)

**J Vernon McGee** - Theme of Deuteronomy 12: Israel permitted only one place to worship Later in the history of Israel, God chose Jerusalem as the place where the temple was to be built. They were to go there to worship God. Why didn't God permit the worship in every other place? I think the reason is obvious. There was idolatry in the land, and they were commanded to destroy it. Because they did not destroy it, they were commanded to assemble in one place for worship. This unified their worship and brought them closer together as a nation. They were one when they went up to Jerusalem for the feasts....Believers do not meet in one place to worship God today; we meet around One Person and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the important thing to keep in mind today. The name of your church doesn't make the difference. The denomination or lack of denomination of your church doesn't make the difference. The all-important question is this: do you meet around the person of Jesus Christ? Now, friends, if you don't, that is idolatry, because then you are meeting around something that is replacing Christ. If you are meeting to socialize or be entertained, that is idolatry. The thing that is to draw us together into a oneness is the person of Jesus Christ. How important that is! ([Deuteronomy 12 Mp3's](#))

**Guzik** entitles this chapter "The Worship God Demands."

**Believer's Study Bible** - The succeeding chapters (12-26) set forth specific obligations for Israel, some of which are of the regular Sinaitic legislation and some of which deal with factors not included there. They may be usefully described in three categories: religious, political (i.e., civil), and moral, i.e., those designed to effect the well-being of the people.

**These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe**([shamar](#)) **in the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess** ([yarash](#)) **as long as you live on the earth** - The NET, NLT, NIV versions are better having "you **must** be careful to obey." Obedience was not an option! **God of your fathers** refers to the patriarchs and the Moses mentions one of the promises to the patriarchs **to possess** the land. **As long as you live on the earth** means in essence as long as you are alive this is to be in force.

**Coakley on These are the statutes and the judgments**- This is a superscription that begins this major block of material and is similar to the others used to structure the book (Dt 1:1; 4:44; 6:1; 12:1; 29:1; 33:1). The terms used to identify the type of law code found here are statutes and the judgments. These two Hebrew words are often paired together (4:1; 5:31; 6:1) and essentially mean much the same (like "rules and regulations"). The usage here has the effect of narrowing from general stipulations (Dt 5–11) to more specific commands. (Moody Bible Commentary)

**NET Note** on **you shall carefully observe in the land** - Heb "you must be careful to obey in the land the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess all the days which you live in the land." This adverbial statement modifies "to obey," not "to possess," so the order in the translation has been rearranged to make this clear.

**Utley** - you shall carefully observe" This is a combination of a VERB, "keep watch" (BDB 1036, KB 1581, Qal IMPERFECT) and a Qal INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, (BDB 793, KB 889). This is a recurrent theme (e.g., Exod. 23:13, 21; 34:11–12; Lev. 18:4–5, 26, 30; Deut. 4:6, 9, 15, 23, 40; and many more especially in Deuteronomy and Wisdom Literature).

**Utley** - "which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you" The VERB shows completed action (BDB 678, KB 733, Qal PERFECT), yet the events are future. It is a Hebrew way of showing certainty (i.e., Prophetic Perfect). This is a recurrent theme in Deuteronomy (cf. Dt 1:8, 20, 21, 25, 35, 36, 39; 2:29; 3:18, 20; 4:1, 21, 38, 40; 5:16, 31; 6:10, 23; 7:13, 16; 8:10; 9:6, 23; 10:11; 11:9, 17, 21, 31; 12:1, 9; 15:4; 17:14; 18:9; 19:1, 2, 8, 14; 21:23; 24:4; 25:15, 19; 26:1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 15; 27:3; 28:8, 11, 52; 31:7; 32:49; 34:4). It shows YHWH's gracious choice and provision for Israel.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: POSSESS THE LAND** This VERB (Qal PERFECT) is used repeatedly in connection with:

1. YHWH's promise/oath to the Patriarchs (cf. Dt 1:8; 10:11)
2. Israel acting on these promises and invading the land (cf. Dt 2:24; 3:18–20)
3. It parallels "inheritance" (Dt 3:28)
4. Israel must obey the covenant so as to maintain possession of the land (cf. Dt 4:1, 5, 14; 6:1; 8:1; 11:8–9, 26–32)

**Deuteronomy 12:2 "You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.**

- **shall utterly destroy**: De 7:5,25,26 Ex 23:24 Ex 34:12-17 Nu 33:51,52 Jdg 2:2
- **you shall dispossess**, Nu 22:41 2Ki 16:4 17:10,11 23:13 Jer 3:6 Eze 20:28,29 Ho 4:13
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 7:25 "The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be snared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 7:26 "You shall not bring an abomination into your house, and like it come under the ban; you shall utterly detest it and you shall utterly abhor it, for it is something banned.

### OBLITERATE THE PLACES OF IDOL WORSHIP

**You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree** - Note that one major theme of this chapter is a warning against unauthorized places of worship (Dt 12:2-4, 13, 14, 29-31). Here Moses repeats what he had stated earlier as it is such a critical

teaching...

Deuteronomy 7:5 But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire.

**NET Note** n **You shall utterly destroy** - Heb "destroying you must destroy"; KJV "Ye shall utterly (surely ASV) destroy"; NRSV "must demolish completely." The Hebrew infinitive absolute precedes the verb for emphasis, which is reflected in the translation by the words "by all means."

**NET Note** on **every green tree** - Every leafy tree. This expression refers to evergreens which, because they keep their foliage throughout the year, provided apt symbolism for **nature cults** such as those practiced in Canaan. The deity particularly in view is **Asherah**, wife of the great god El, who was considered the goddess of fertility and whose worship (ED: "WORSHIP" IS BETTER STATED PRACTICE OF LEWD, ABOMINABLE ACTS) frequently took place at shrines near or among clusters (groves) of such trees (see also Deut 7:5). See J. Hadley, NIDOTTE 1:569–70; J. DeMoor, TDOT 1:438–44.

**MacArthur** - The Canaanite sanctuaries to be destroyed were located in places believed to have particular religious significance. The mountain or hill was thought to be the home of a god and by ascending the mountain, the worshiper was in some symbolic sense closer to the deity. Certain trees were considered to be sacred and symbolized fertility, a dominant theme in Canaanite religion.

**Coakley** - Mountains were often the locations of cultic centers, and pagan worship was often carried on in groves of trees. Forests were not only important for providing timber for building projects in the ancient Near East but were also considered important symbols of fertility and hence readily associated with pagan practices (cf. Ge 12:6 where the "oak of Moreh" is juxtaposed next to "the Canaanite"). Abraham often erected altars by trees (e.g., Ge 13:18; cf. Dt 11:30), perhaps to counter the Canaanite practices associated with trees. Any objects related to worship were to be torn down or burned. The Israelites were to leave no trace and were to obliterate their name from that place.

**THOUGHT**- One has written regarding this warning to those who call themselves "Christian" today: "Any culture that does not conform to the will of God is pagan, that is, foreign to God. Paying token lip service to God does not mean that our culture is Christian. Today we are hardly prone to lapse into the idol worship of ancient Israel, but we must be on guard lest our worship of God and life-style before Him become compromised with godless forms of modern culture. Keeping Christian faith and practice pure in a pagan setting is always difficult."

**Utley** - "utterly destroy all the places" "Utterly destroy" comes from a Hebrew word that means "cause to perish" (BDB 1, KB 2, Piel INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and Piel IMPERFECT, which show intensity, cf. v. 3; Num. 33:52 [twice]; 2 Kgs. 21:3). God was admonishing the Israelites to destroy the pagan altars so as not to become a part of their fertility worship (cf. Exod. 23:24; 34:13). **"on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree"** These are the locations of local Ba'al and Asherah altars where fertility rites were practiced (cf. Jer. 2:20; 3:2, 6; 17:2; Isa. 57:5, 7; Hosea 4:13).

**Possess** (03423) **yarash** to take possession of, inherit, dispossess, to drive out. Yarash is an especially important word in contexts dealing with Israel's conquest of and possession of the land of Canaan. Yahweh first promised possession of the land in the context of the Abrahamic covenant (Ge 15:7-21<sup>+</sup>). Note also that "possessing" implies "dispossessing" another nation. In a legal sense, the right of possession passed from one generation to the next and so constituted "inheritance." Note that possession of the promised land and/or the "inheritance" was directly connected to Israel's trust relationship with the Lord, so that breaking trust, and thus breaking the covenantal relationship with Yahweh led to dispossession. But even in exile, Israelites awaited the day when they would repossess the land (Jer. 30:3<sup>+</sup> - May 14, 1948 is when Israel was given statehood but this is not the final fulfillment - that awaits the [Millennial Reign of their Messiah](#)).

**Yarash** is a **key word** in Deuteronomy - Deut. 1:8; Deut. 1:21; Deut. 1:39; Deut. 2:12; Deut. 2:21; Deut. 2:22; Deut. 2:24; Deut. 2:31; Deut. 3:12; Deut. 3:18; Deut. 3:20; Deut. 4:1; Deut. 4:5; Deut. 4:14; Deut. 4:22; Deut. 4:26; Deut. 4:38; Deut. 4:47; Deut. 5:31; Deut. 5:33; Deut. 6:1; Deut. 6:18; Deut. 7:1; Deut. 7:17; Deut. 8:1; Deut. 9:1; Deut. 9:3; Deut. 9:4; Deut. 9:5; Deut. 9:6; Deut. 9:23; Deut. 10:11; Deut. 11:8; Deut. 11:10; Deut. 11:11; Deut. 11:23; Deut. 11:29; Deut. 11:31; Deut. 12:1; Deut. 12:2; Deut. 12:29; Deut. 15:4; Deut. 16:20; Deut. 17:14; Deut. 18:12; Deut. 18:14; Deut. 19:1; Deut. 19:2; Deut. 19:14; Deut. 21:1; Deut. 23:20; Deut. 25:19; Deut. 26:1; Deut. 28:21; Deut. 28:42; Deut. 28:63; Deut. 30:5; Deut. 30:16; Deut. 30:18; Deut. 31:3; Deut. 31:13; Deut. 32:47; Deut. 33:23;

**Related Resource:**

- [What is the significance of high places in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Deuteronomy 12:3** "You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place.

- **You shall tear down:** Nu 33:52 Jdg 2:2 2Ch 31:1
- **burn their Asherim:** 1Ki 15:13 2Ki 18:4 23:14 2Ch 14:3 19:3 34:3 Jer 17:2 Mic 5:14
- **obliterate:** Ex 23:13 Ps 16:4 Ho 2:17 Zec 13:2 Rev 13:1
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 23:13+ (REGARDING OBLITERATING THEIR NAME!) "Now concerning everything which I have said to you, be on your guard; and **do not mention the name of other gods**, nor let them **be heard from your mouth**.

Exodus 34:13+ "But rather, you are to **tear down their altars** and **smash their sacred pillars** and **cut down their Asherim**

Deuteronomy 7:5+ "But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their **graven images** with fire.

Deuteronomy 7:25+ "The **graven images** of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be snared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.

Psalm 78:58 For they provoked Him with their [high places](#) and aroused His jealousy (SEE ISRAEL THE WIFE OF JEHOVAH) with their **graven images**.

### OBLITERATE THEIR NAME!

Note the five verbs which give a crystal clear picture of God's hatred of idolatry and His will for Israel **tear down...smash...burn...cut down...obliterate**- these "fab five" signify that every vestige of idolatry was to be destroyed without pity and without exception.

**You shall tear down** ([nathats](#)) **their altars** and **smash** (shatter) **their sacred pillars** and **burn their Asherim** (poles) **with fire** - Both Hebrew verbs **tear down** and **smash** are perfect tense depicting continuing or permanent effect. **Smash** is same verb used to describe what Moses did to the two tablets of the covenant (Dt 9:17, 10:2) Later Moses adds "You shall not plant for yourself an **Asherah** of any kind of tree beside the altar of the LORD your God, which you shall make for yourself." (Dt 16:21) **Asherim** is the plural of the term **asherah**, which can refer to the Canaanite fertility goddess, or to the wooden pole used as her symbol (cf. Ex 34:13; Dt 16:21; 1Ki 15:13; 18:19; 2Ki 23:4).

**Guzik** - The practice in the ancient world, which was always short on buildings, was to take a nice building such as a temple previously used to worship a prior god, and simply make it a place to worship one's own god. The LORD God wanted none of that in His own worship. He commanded that the places of pagan worship be completely destroyed, and that they shall not worship the LORD your God with such things. This is where the worship of many is corrupted. It isn't that they worship too little; they worship too much. They worship the LORD, **and** the things of the world. God doesn't want such worship. It is an abomination to Him....Since much of the pagan worship of the Canaanites was a sexualized worship of fertility and nature, their shrines and temples were often in beautiful outdoor settings. God didn't want Israel to adopt this approach of worshipping the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25+).

**THOUGHT** - Many could really begin to worship God in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24), if they would only "destroy" in their hearts their pagan places of worship. Because they give their hearts to so many other things, there is little to give to the LORD. (Guzik)

**Sacred pillars** (04676) ([matstsebah](#) from **natsab** = to take a stand) means something set upright, most often "a standing, unhewn block of stone utilized for religious and memorial purposes. Moses set up an altar and also twelve pillars at the base of Mount Sinai to represent the twelve tribes of Israel (Ex. 24:4). Many times in 2 Kings, the term refers to a sacred pillar that aided people in their worship of pagan gods, especially the

Canaanite god Baal. In most of these passages, the sacred columns were used by Israelites, contrary to the Lord's prohibition concerning the worship of any other god (2 Ki. 3:2; 10:26, 27; 18:4; 23:14; cf. Hos. 10:1, 2; Mic. 5:13). **Matstsebah** refers to the obelisks which stood at the entrance to the temple of the Sun in the Egyptian city of Heliopolis (Jer. 43:13) **Septuagint** = **stele** = a commemorative stone block or pillar, monument, pillar from the time of Hom. inscribed and used as a grave marker, or for commemoration of events, **Matstsebah** in Deuteronomy -Deut. 7:5; Deut. 12:3; Deut. 16:22;

**Asherim** (0842) **Asherah** refers to "poles" representing and/or associated with the goddess Asherah - these poles could be cut down and burned (Jdg. 6:25-26). They were made (1Ki 14:15) and set up (1Ki 14:23) after being carved (2Ki 21:7). In many cases, Asherah clearly refers to the deity and not to an image or symbol (Jdg. 3:7, 1 Ki. 18:19 and 2 Ki. 23:4). Asherah used 3x in Deuteronomy - Dt 7:5, 12:3, 16:21.

#### Related Resources:

- [Who was Asherah / Ashtoreth? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Wikipedia - [Asherah Pole](#)
- [What is an Asherah pole? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why was the worship of Baal and Asherah a constant struggle for the Israelites? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**And you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods**- Any vestiges of their gods left standing would serve as a continual temptation to the fallen flesh of the Israelites, especially in light of the fact that worship of their gods was usually associated with [licentiousness](#).

**THOUGHT** - Sadly fallen flesh quickly gravitates to [licentiousness](#) even doing so under the guise of worship. It is 2021 as I write and it is notable how many revelations of worship leaders that are well known and extremely popular are succumbing to "worship at the *altar* of sexual temptation." ([one example, another](#)). Worship has to be "laser focused," for Jesus made it clear you cannot serve two masters (Mt 6:24+) and God will not accept profaned worship regardless of how "beautiful" the songs sound.

**Engraved images** (idols)(06456) **pasil** from **pasal** = to hew into shape) an image that was carved. An idol was most commonly shaped from wood or stone and represented the image of a pagan deity for the purpose of religious worship. The idols were to be burned (Dt. 7:5, 25); and cut down (Dt. 12:3); for they provoked God to anger (Ps. 78:58; Jer. 8:19); and incited Him to judgment (Jer. 51:47, 52; Micah 1:7; 5:13). The presence of these idols were indicative of the sin and rebellion of the people (2 Chr. 33:19, 22; Hos. 11:2); while the removal of such idols was a sign of repentance (2 Chr. 34:3, 4, 7; Isa. 30:22).

**and obliterate their name from that place**- NET = "eliminate their very memory from that place." As noted in the Ex 23:13 passage they are to be so "obliterated" that the names of these abominable gods are never again even mentioned! This command reminds me of Paul's command to "**abstain** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) from every (how many?) form of evil." (1 Th 5:22+). What is fascinating is that the Greek word for "**form**" ([eidōs](#)) is the root of the word [eidolon](#), the Greek word for **idol**! Coincidence? I think not!

**Obliterate** (Lxx = [apollumi](#)) (destroy, ruin) (06)(**abad**) is a verb meaning to perish, to be destroyed, to be ruined, to be lost, to in a state of ruin and destruction pertaining to an object, including the death (Ex 10:7). Abad can mean literally to die, or, in the case of things, reputation, etc., to pass away. In a causative sense, abad means to destroy, to reduce to some degree of disorder. God's destruction of evil, both threatened (Lev. 26:38) and realized (Nu 17:12); Israel's destruction of the Canaanites and their altars (Nu 33:52; Dt. 12:2, 3); the perishing of natural life (Ps. 49:10; 102:26; Eccl. 7:15); the perishing of abstract qualities such as wisdom and hope (Isa. 29:14; Lam. 3:18); and an item or animal being lost (Dt. 22:3; Eccl. 3:6)

Abad in Deuteronomy - Deut. 4:26; Deut. 7:10; Deut. 7:20; Deut. 7:24; Deut. 8:19; Deut. 8:20; Deut. 9:3; Deut. 11:4; Deut. 11:17; Deut. 12:2; Deut. 12:3; Deut. 22:3; Deut. 26:5; Deut. 28:20; Deut. 28:22; Deut. 28:51; Deut. 28:63; Deut. 30:18; Deut. 32:28;

**NET Note - Sacred pillars.** These are the stelae (stone pillars; the Hebrew term is מַצֵּבֹת, matsevot) associated with Baal worship, perhaps to mark a spot hallowed by an alleged visitation of the gods. See also Deut 7:5. **Asherim** - Sacred Asherah poles. The Hebrew term (plural) is אֲשֵׁרִים ('asherim). See note on the word "(leafy) tree" in Dt 12:2, and also Deut 7:5.

Anything that comes between your soul and your God is your idol.

**J Vernon McGee** on the continual danger of idolatry - We should not think we are immune to idolatry today. We tend to think we are such enlightened folk that we would not fall down and worship an idol. Can we be so sure about that, friends? Anything, anything that comes between our souls and God becomes an idol. I know a young man whom I saw grow up in the church and seemingly become a sweet Christian. Later he became a member of a large corporation. Because he had wonderful ability, he began to move up in the organization. The farther he moved up in the corporation, the farther he moved away from God. Today his job comes first. I was holding meetings in a distant city where he lives, and he invited Mrs. McGee and me for dinner, for old time's sake. He made it very clear to me that he would not be able to come to any of the meetings because of his business. Business, his position, his advancements -- they had become his idol, his god. Talk about worship! He fell down before that idol seven days a week! ([Deuteronomy 12 Mp3's](#))

What was the danger of the pagan religions? Religious syncretism mild begin to replace true worship of Yahweh...

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#### **QUESTION - [What is religious syncretism?](#)**

**ANSWER** - *Syncretism*, as defined by the American Heritage Dictionary, is "the reconciliation or fusion of differing systems of belief." This is most evident in the areas of philosophy and religion, and usually results in a new teaching or belief system. Obviously, this cannot be reconciled to biblical Christianity.

Religious syncretism often takes place when foreign beliefs are introduced to an indigenous belief system and the teachings are blended. The new, heterogeneous religion then takes a shape of its own. This has been seen most clearly in Roman Catholic missionary history. Take, for example, the Roman Catholic Church's proselytizing of animistic South America. Threatened with the fear of death, natives were baptized into the church by the tens of thousands without any preaching of the Gospel whatsoever. Former temples were razed, with Catholic shrines and chapels built on the same spot. Natives were allowed to substitute praying to saints instead of gods of water, earth and air, and replaced their former idols with new images of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet, the animistic religion the natives had formerly practiced was never fully replaced—it was adapted into Catholic teachings, and this new belief system was allowed to flourish.

More recently, religious syncretism can be seen in such religious systems as the [New Age](#), [Hinduism](#), [Unitarianism](#), and [Christian Science](#). These religions are a blending of multiple different belief systems, and are continually evolving as the philosophies of mankind rise and fall in popularity.

Therein lies the problem, for syncretism relies on the whim of man, not the standard of Scripture. The Bible makes it very clear what true religion is. Think on just a few things stated in Scripture: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37); "Jesus replied, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6); "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31); and "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Religious syncretism is simply not compatible with true Christianity. In fact, any modification to biblical law and principle for the sake of a "better" religion is heresy (Revelation 22:18-19). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### **[Utley](#) - SPECIAL TOPIC: ISRAEL'S MANDATED RESPONSE TO CANAANITE FERTILITY WORSHIP**

This verse lists several cultic items of Ba'al worship and how Israel is to destroy them.

1. "You shall tear down their altars"
  - a. the VERB, BDB 683, KB 736, Piel PERFECT, cf. Deut. 7:5; 2 Chr. 31:3; 34:4
  - b. the item, "altars," BDB 258, Ba'al's altars were raised platforms of cut stone with an uplifted stone (pillar) and a hole to plant a tree or secure a wooden, carved stake (Asherah)
2. "smash their sacred pillars"
  - a. the VERB, BDB 990, KB 1402, Piel PERFECT, cf. Deut. 7:5; 2 Kgs. 3:2; 10:27
  - b. the item, "pillars," BDB 663. These were uplifted stones used as a phallic symbol for the male fertility god (cf. 16:22).
3. "burn their Asherim with fire"
  - a. the VERB, BDB 976, KB 1358, Qal IMPERFECT, cf. Deut. 7:5, in 2 Chr. 31:1 and 34:4; they were to be "chopped down."
  - b. the item, Asherim, BDB 81. It symbolized the tree of life. Asherah (cf. ABD, vol. 1, pp. 483–87, although in the poetic literature from Ugarit, Anath is Ba'al's consort, cf. ABD, vol. 1, pp. 225–27), was the female consort of Ba'al. It may have been a live tree or a curved stake.

4. "you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods"
  - a. the VERB, BDB 154, KB 180, Piel IMPERFECT, cf. Deut. 7:5; 2 Chr. 14:2; 31:1; 34:4, 7
  - b. the item, "engraved images of their gods," BDB 820 CONSTRUCT 43. Deut. 7:5; and 2 Chr. 34:7 make a distinction between the Asherim and the images.
5. "obliterate their name from that place"
  - a. the VERB, BDB 1, KB 2, Piel PERFECT, cf. Deut. 12:2 (twice)
  - b. the item, "name," BDB 1027. This seems to represent the god's name as owner of the place, which is now destroyed and, therefore, their names have perished. It is YHWH's name that has a name/worship site now (cf. Deut. 12:5, 11).

#### Deuteronomy 12:4 "You shall not act like this toward the LORD your God.

- Dt 12:30,31 16:21,22 20:18 Lev 20:23
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

#### You shall not act like this toward the LORD your God-

#### Deuteronomy 12:5 "But you shall seek the LORD at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come.

- **But you shall seek** De 12:11 Dt 16:2 Dt 26:2 Jos 9:27 18:1 1Ki 8:16,20,29 14:21 1Ch 22:1 2Ch 7:12 Ps 78:68 87:2,3 Joh 4:20-22 Heb 12:22 Rev 14:1
- **for His dwelling:** Ex 15:2 Ex 25:22 Nu 7:89 1Ki 8:27 Ps 132:13,14 Isa 66:1,2 Ac 7:48-50 Eph 2:20-22 Col 2:9

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 20:24 'You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you.

Exodus 25:22 "There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.

Numbers 7:89 Now when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, so He spoke to him.

1 Kings 8:27 "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!

Psalms 132:13; 14 For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation. 14 "This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

Isaiah 66:1; 2 Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? 2 "For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD. "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

**But you shall seek the LORD at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes** God's instructions for worship must be followed.

**Coakley** - Establishing the Lord's name at this place is a repeated theme throughout the book (Dt 12:11, 21; 14:23–24; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2). This could be wherever God instructed the tabernacle to be set up until it ultimately was centered at Jerusalem, but the focus was on only one designated national worship center, not multiple sites. (Moody Bible Commentary)

**Guzik** - Worship was not left to the opinion or whim of the individual Israelite. They had to worship God at His prescribed place, and among other worshippers of God. Worship is not a "do as you please" or a "Lone Ranger" activity.

**McGee** - Eventually, the designated place was Jerusalem. But even before that, Israel was to worship in one place only. There was

to be one place for their burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, and vows. The tithes of food which they brought before the Lord had to be eaten in this one place. ([Deuteronomy 12 Mp3's](#))

**MacArthur** - Cf. Dt 12:11, 18, 21. Various places of worship were chosen after the people settled in Canaan, such as Mt. Ebal (27:1–8; Jos 8:30–35), Shechem (Jos 24:1–28) and Shiloh (Jos 18:1), which was the center of worship through the period of Judges (Jdg 21:19). The tabernacle, the Lord's dwelling place, was located in Canaan, where the Lord chose to dwell. The central importance of the tabernacle was in direct contrast to the multiple places (see v. 2) where the Canaanites practiced their worship of idols. Eventually, the tabernacle was brought to Jerusalem by David (cf. 2Sa 6:12–19).

**Choose** reflects God's omniscient sovereignty to do as He pleases and knows best for their (our) good and His glory. **Choose** is a **keyword** in chapter 12 (Deut. 12:5; Deut. 12:11; Deut. 12:14; Deut. 12:18; Deut. 12:21; Deut. 12:26). The **place** the LORD **chooses** is a **key thought** in Deuteronomy occurring 22 times! (Dt 12:5, Dt 12:11, Dt 12:14, Dt 12:18, Dt 12:21, Dt 12:26, Dt 14:23, Dt 14:24, Dt 14:25, Dt 15:20, Dt 16:2, Dt 16:6, Dt 16:7, Dt 16:11, Dt 16:15, Dt 16:16, Dt 17:8, Dt 17:10, Dt 18:6, Dt 23:16, Dt 26:2, Dt 31:11)

**to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come** - Note His Name is synonymous with His presence. See [Utley's topic for discussion of His Name YHWH](#).

**THOUGHT** - It may not be easy to find the place where God wants you to worship, but it is out there. There is a place where He wants you to worship. He has not called you to follow Him in isolation. (Guzik)

**Choose** (0977) [bahar/bachar](#) in most contexts means to choose or to select, to take a keen look at, to prove, to . It denotes a choice, which is based on a thorough examination of the situation and not an arbitrary whim. Lot choose Sodom (Ge 13:11). Moses chose able men (Ex 18:25). "Theologically, bāchar asserts the sovereignty of God in all of life. It affirms divine omnipotence and capacity for choice and in so doing declares that purpose and personality, expressing itself in agape love, lie at the heart of reality." (Gilbrant) TWOT adds that bahar/bachar is often "used to express that choosing which has ultimate and eternal significance." "Bāḥar is used 30 times in Deuteronomy, all but twice referring to God's "choice" of Israel or something in Israel's life." (Vine) Bahar in Deuteronomy - Deut. 4:37; Deut. 7:6; Deut. 7:7; Deut. 10:15; Deut. 12:5; Deut. 12:11; Deut. 12:14; Deut. 12:18; Deut. 12:21; Deut. 12:26; Deut. 14:2; Deut. 14:23; Deut. 14:24; Deut. 14:25; Deut. 15:20; Deut. 16:2; Deut. 16:6; Deut. 16:7; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 16:15; Deut. 16:16; Deut. 17:8; Deut. 17:10; Deut. 17:15; Deut. 18:5; Deut. 18:6; Deut. 21:5; Deut. 23:16; Deut. 26:2; Deut. 30:19; Deut. 31:11;

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([Utley](#)) Many modern scholars have tried to assert that Deuteronomy was written late to accommodate Hezekiah and Josiah's reforms of centralizing Israel's worship. However, Deuteronomy does not name Jerusalem as the specific site that YHWH will choose. In context the theological contrast is between:

1. the local Ba'al shrines and the one shrine of Israel
2. the monotheism of Israel versus the polytheism of Canaan (and the rest of the ancient Near East)

#### **The tabernacle (ark) traveled with Israel:**

1. Gilgal, Josh. 4:19; 10:6, 15
2. Shechem, Josh 8:33
3. Shiloh, Josh 18:1; Jdgs. 18:31; 1 Sam. 1:3
4. Bethel, (possible) Jdgs. 20:18, 26–28; 21:2
5. Kiriath-jearim, ark, 1 Sa 6:21; 7:1–2 (priests at Nob, cf. 1 Sa 21–22)
6. Jerusalem
  - a. David captures the citadel of Jebus (cf. 2 Sa 5:1–10)
  - b. David brings the ark to Jerusalem (cf. 2 Sa 6:1–23)
  - c. David purchases the site of the temple (2 Sa 24:15–25; 2 Chr. 3:1)

**Deuteronomy 12:6 "There you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.**

- **burnt:** Lev 17:3–9 Eze 20:40
- **tithes:** De 12:17 14:22–26 15:19,20 26:2 Lev 27:32,33 Nu 18:15–17 Mal 3:8,10 Lu 11:42 18:12
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

#### **Related Passages:**

Leviticus 1:3+ 'If his offering is a **burnt offering** from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD.

Leviticus 27:30 Thus **all the tithe** of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S; it is holy to the LORD.

Leviticus 7:32 'You shall give the right thigh to the priest as a **contribution** from the sacrifices of your peace offerings.

**There you shall bring your burnt offerings** - (see "[Related Resources](#)" below) **Burnt offering** were "holistic" and spoke of total, complete and unreserved dedication to Yahweh. This was a voluntary offering.

**THOUGHT** - God wants **US** before He wants our offering. Don't fall into the trap of thinking your offering substitutes for the offering of your whole being, heart, soul and might (cf Dt 6:5+). "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies (HOLISTIC PRESENTATION!) a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." (Romans 12:1+, cf Ro 6:12-14+)

**Guzik** - The place of worship was to be a place of atonement, confession (which was made when hands were laid on the head of the sacrificial victim), and cleansing. (ED: NOTE WHAT THIS PRACTICE WAS TEACHING ISRAEL -- THEY NEED A "PERFECT" SUBSTITUTE! CLEARLY THIS POINTED TO THEIR MESSIAH, THE LAMB OF GOD - Isaiah 53+, Jn 1:29+).

**your sacrifices** - These are partially burned and partially consumed and could be sin offerings, peace offerings, thanksgiving offerings. See [What were the various sacrifices in the Old Testament? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**your tithes** - This provided support for the priests whose only inheritance was Yahweh! See also [What is the difference between tithes and offerings? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Guzik** - The place of worship was to be a place of giving. Of course, there were other places where an Israelite could give and be generous, but giving had to begin at the place of worship God has appointed. Some have thought that because Deuteronomy 12:6 mentions your tithes, that this is an additional tithe which was commanded of Israel, on top of the tithe commanded in Numbers 18. Some even call this the "festival tithe." But in context, this passage is only speaking of where to bring the tithe, not commanding an additional one to be brought.

**the contribution of your hand** - These are literally "heave offerings of your hand" (Lev 7:32+) and is a picture of a part of the sacrifice raised up and offered to the priests for their consumption. (see "[Related Resources](#)" below)

**Believer's Study Bible** - The "heave offering" ([terumah](#), Heb.), perhaps "lifted up" or just presented to the Lord, could consist of the thigh of the right hind leg as Lev 7:32, unleavened cakes (Lev 7:13, 14; Nu 15:19-21), the tithe (Nu 18:24), sanctuary building materials (Ex. 25:2, 3), land (translated "district" in Ezek. 45:1; 48:8), etc.

**Contribution** (offering, heave offering) ([08641](#)) [terumah](#) from rum = to be high or exalted, depicts something being lifted up as one would do in an offering) is a feminine noun that means offering, the first use referring to the contributions from the sons of Israel to God for the building of the Tabernacle (Ex 25:2-3). Terumah describes a number of different offerings - contribution of materials for building (Ex 25:2; 35:5); an animal for sacrifice (Ex. 29:27; Nu 6:20); the thigh part of the animal to the priest (Lev 10:14); a shekel as a contribution to the LORD (Ex 30:13-15 - the purpose of the offering being to atone); gold for the priests (Nu 31:52); land for the priests (Ezek. 45:6, 7); the offering of war booty (Nu 31:29) and materials for an idol (Isa 40:20)! In one instance, this word is used to describe a ruler who "takes bribes" ("demands contributions" - HCSB) (Pr. 29:4). In Ex 29:27-28 the NAS translates terumah as heave offering an older English phrase that reflects the root verb rum which means "to be high" or in the Hiphil "to lift up." The idea is that the heave offering represented a part separated from the main offering Deut 12:6, 11, 17

**your votive offerings**, - (see "[Related Resources](#)" below) "This is an example of a conditional vow to God, "I'll do this, if You will do that." This is the Jews keeping their part of the vow (Lev. 7:16-18)." ([Utley](#))

**your freewill offerings** - (see "[Related Resources](#)" below) "This refers to an offering in thanks or praise from one who was overwhelmed with the goodness of God (cf. Lev. 22:18ff)." ([Utley](#))

**and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock** - Give God the first and the best. Everything they (we) had was from Him and thus it was only right to give the first back to Him.

[Utley](#) on **firstborn** - This is a reference to the Death Angel going through Egypt killing the **first born** of cattle and mankind. In light of this event all the first born of cattle and humans belonged uniquely to God (cf. Exod. 13; Lev. 27:26-27)!

**Firstborn** (01060) **bekor** means an offspring who came first in the order of birth (animals Ge 4:4) or persons (Ge 25:13). Swanson adds that bekor means "firstborn, usually, the first male offspring, the oldest son, with the associative meaning of prominence in the clan and privileges pertaining to clan and inheritance (Ge 43:33; Ne 10:37)." The firstborn of clean animals were sacrificed to the Lord (Dt. 12:6, 17), but the firstborn males of unclean animals could be redeemed (Nu 18:15) Yahweh calls Israel his 'first-born son'. He uses the language of a family relationship. The status of the first-born in antiquity was one of great privilege. In the laws of Israel, the first-born had the right of headship of the family after the father died, and the right of receiving a double portion of inheritance (Deut. 21:17). It was a position of prominence and pre-eminence. The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **bekor** with Greek word [prototokos](#) (from **protos** = first, foremost, in place order or time; rank dignity + **titko** = beget, to bear, bring forth) can mean first-born chronologically (Lk 2:7),

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#### QUESTION - [What is a burnt offering?](#)

**ANSWER** - The **burnt offering** is one of the oldest and most common offerings in history. It's entirely possible that Abel's offering in Genesis 4:4 was a burnt offering, although the first recorded instance is in Genesis 8:20 when Noah offers burnt offerings after the flood. God ordered Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, in a burnt offering in Genesis 22:1-24, and then provided a ram as a replacement. After suffering through nine of the ten plagues, Pharaoh decided to let the people go from bondage in Egypt, but his refusal to allow the Israelites to take their livestock with them in order to offer burnt offerings brought about the final plague that led to the Israelites' delivery (Exodus 10:24-29).

The Hebrew word for "**burnt offering**" actually means to "**ascend**," literally to "go up in smoke." The smoke from the sacrifice ascended to God, "a soothing aroma to the LORD" (Leviticus 1:9+). Technically, any offering burned over an altar was a burnt offering, but in more specific terms, a burnt offering was the complete destruction of the animal (except for the hide) in an effort to renew the relationship between Holy God and sinful man. With the development of the law, God gave the Israelites specific instructions as to the types of burnt offerings and what they symbolized.

Leviticus 1:1-17+ and Lev 6:8-13+ describe the **traditional burnt offering**. The Israelites brought a bull, sheep, or goat, a male with no defect, and killed it at the entrance to the tabernacle. The animal's blood was drained, and the priest sprinkled blood around the altar. The animal was skinned and cut it into pieces, the intestines and legs washed, and the priest burned the pieces over the altar all night. The priest received the skin as a fee for his help. A turtledove or pigeon could also be sacrificed, although they weren't skinned.

A person could give a burnt offering at any time. **It was a sacrifice of general atonement—an acknowledgement of the sin nature and a request for renewed relationship with God.** God also set times for the priests to give a burnt offering for the benefit of the Israelites as a whole, although the animals required for each sacrifice varied:

- Every morning and evening (Exodus 29:38-42; Numbers 28:2)
- Each Sabbath (Numbers 28:9-10)
- The beginning of each month (Numbers 28:11)
- At Passover (Numbers 28:19)
- With the new grain/firstfruits offering at the Feast of Weeks (Numbers 28:27)
- At the Feast of Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah (Numbers 29:1)
- At the new moon (Numbers 29:6)

**The ultimate fulfillment of the burnt offering is in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross** His physical life was completely consumed, He ascended to God, and His covering (that is, His garment) was distributed to those who officiated over His sacrifice (Matthew 27:35). But most importantly, His sacrifice, once for all time, atoned for our sins and restored our relationship with God. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### QUESTION - [What is a heave offering?](#)

**ANSWER** - A heave offering was a way of presenting one's offering to God, and it appears in the Old Testament along with burnt offerings, grain offerings, freewill offerings, and the offering of the firstborn of the flocks. The heave offering is part of the Mosaic Law and was one of the common sacrifices or offerings given to God by the Israelites.

Only a few translations, such as the KJV and the NAS, call it the "heave offering"; most translations consider it simply an offering presented before the Lord. The "heave" of the "heave offering" is a simple upward movement. It could refer to the generic movement of lifting or "heaving" the sacrifice toward the altar, or it could refer to lifting up or separating a portion of the sacrifice from the rest. This "heaved" portion was set apart for use by the priests (Leviticus 7:34).

The heave offering was not really a separate offering but the portion of another offering that was reserved for the use of the priests. “You shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering which was waved and which was offered from the ram of ordination, from the one which was for Aaron and from the one which was for his sons. It shall be for Aaron and his sons as their portion forever from the sons of Israel, for it is a heave offering; and it shall be a heave offering from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, even their heave offering to the LORD” (Exodus 29:27–28, NAS).

The heave offering was often used in conjunction with a wave offering, and both were then given to the priests. The heave and the wave refer to the movement of the sacrificed item over the altar. With a wave offering, the priest moved the offering from side to side over the altar, and, with a heave offering, the sacrificed item is presented with an up-and-down motion. The Hebrew word *terumah*, which is the word for “heave offering,” comes from the verb stem *rum*, which means “exalted” or “lifted up.” In most biblical instances, the heave offering was the part of a sacrifice set aside or “lifted up” for a higher purpose.

The heave offering was often given in conjunction with tithes (Leviticus 7:14, 34) as a provision for the Levites, the priestly tribe who did not have land of their own and therefore could not grow their own food. They depended on the Lord’s provision through tithes and heave offerings (Numbers 18:24, 29). The heave offering is also similar to the tithe in that it was to be given of a person’s firstfruits, that is, out of the first portion of the produce harvested each year (Numbers 15:21). The Levites themselves also offered a heave offering to the Lord out of the tithes of the Israelites. A tenth of all they were given by the other tribes was offered up to God (Numbers 18:26). [| GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### QUESTION - [What is a votive offering?](#)

**ANSWER** - A votive offering was one type of offering in the Jewish sacrificial system. It’s mentioned, in some translations, in Leviticus 7. **A votive offering was given to repay a vow or in consecration or fulfillment of a vow.** Unlike other sacrifices that had to be consumed in one day, the votive offering could be left for one night and finished on the next day. Under no condition in the Israelite system of sacrifices could an offering be eaten after the second day (Leviticus 7:15–18+).

While the NASB, NRSV, and LEB use the term **votive offering** in Leviticus 7:16, most Bible translations use the term **vow** instead, to distinguish the biblical offering from an unbiblical practice, also termed “votive offering.” These **heathen votive offerings were permanent memorials offered to a deity in fulfillment of a vow.** Common among pagan worshipers, votive (or ex-voto) offerings were either fashioned by an individual or amassed by a community and then preserved as a grand-scale memorial to a deity. Votive offerings were made of materials that were not to be consumed, spent, or used for any other purpose than as gifts to a god. Votive offerings could be etched depictions in stone or carved statues of the deity, public inscriptions, pottery, or jewelry or food for the idols. During times of famine, plague, or war, idol worshipers often made vows to their gods, promising to give something in return for favors shown. When the trouble passed, the worshiper would bring a votive offering to the temple or shrine and leave it there.

The story of [Jephthah](#) in the Old Testament contains a type of votive offering. Before attacking the Ammonites, Jephthah made a vow to God: if he won the battle, he would offer God a burnt offering upon returning home. Jephthah foolishly specified that the offering would be “whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me” (Judges 11:31). God granted Jephthah the victory, but it was Jephthah’s only daughter who greeted him when he returned (verse 34). Since the sacrifice was made at the fulfillment of a vow, it could be considered a votive offering.

To this day, many cultures and religions practice the giving of votive offerings. Stupas, temples, pagodas, and shrines are usually filled with food, candles, flowers, trinkets, paintings, etc., to honor various deities—and to secure prosperity, good health, and other blessings for the giver. The Western practice of throwing coins into a fountain for “good luck” could be seen as a secularized type of votive offering.

Votive offerings are part of both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox religions. In Latin, the term *ex-voto* meant “according to a vow” and originally referred to a gift given to fulfill a private vow to honor God. In both churches, votive offerings are made not just to honor God but to honor Mary or the various saints. For example, one might light a small white votive candle before a statue or sacred image in a cathedral or shrine. The candle, also called a [prayer candle](#), can be lit in devotion to God, in honor of a deceased loved one, or in gratitude to a saint for deliverance from danger or sickness. Catholics also observe votive masses to celebrate special occasions, such as weddings, funerals, or the election of a Pope. The Roman Missal of 1970 contains fifteen votive masses, including celebrations of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Sacrament, the Apostles, Saint Peter, and Saint Paul. The purpose of these votive masses is said to be to inspire devotion among the people.

Lighting candles while one prays (or does anything else, for that matter) is not prohibited in Scripture. Candles may add beauty to the environment, but they have no power and no mystical or supernatural qualities. They cannot accompany our prayers to heaven, make our prayers more powerful or effective, or prolong our prayers in any way. Any votive offering made to a [saint](#) is idolatry; any votive offering that attempts to curry favor with God or procure His blessing slips into the realm of superstition. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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## QUESTION - [What is a free will offering / freewill offering?](#)

**ANSWER** - The free will (or freewill) offering was a sacrifice regulated by God's standards in the [Mosaic Law](#), but it was completely voluntary (Leviticus 23:38). In the Law, the free will offering was to be of a male bull, sheep, or goat with no physical deformities or blemishes, and it was not to have been purchased from a foreigner (Leviticus 22:17–25). The offering was to include flour mixed with oil and wine; the amounts varied on whether the sacrifice was a lamb, bull, or ram (Numbers 15:1–10). As with all sacrifices, the free will offering was to be made in a place of God's choosing, not in an area formerly used by other religions or at home (Deuteronomy 12). Although it was appropriate to give the sacrifice during formal feast-days, it could be given any time (Deuteronomy 16:10). Unlike other offerings governed by stricter rules, the priests could eat the free will offering on the day it was sacrificed or the day after (Leviticus 7:16–18).

Free will offerings did not always have to be animals or grain or drink offerings. The first time a free will offering is mentioned in the Bible is in Exodus 35:10–29. God had given instructions on how to build the tabernacle, and Moses relayed what supplies were needed for its construction. The people responded as their hearts stirred them, bringing jewelry, fine yarn, tanned skins, silver, bronze, acacia wood, onyx stones, spices, and oil. These items were all donated “as a freewill offering to the Lord” (Exodus 35:29). Centuries later, the people made similar offerings for David to pass on to Solomon to build the temple (1 Chronicles 9:1–9). In the book of Ezra, the people gave traditional animal offerings (Ezra 3:5) as well as supplies to rebuild the temple after the Babylonian captivity (Ezra 2:68; 7:16; 8:28). The people also made animal offerings in 2 Chronicles 31 when King Hezekiah, one of Judah's best kings, led the nation in returning to God and reinstituting His ceremonies. In Ezekiel 46:12, free will offerings are mentioned as being offered in the [millennial kingdom](#).

Whether it was the sacrifice of an animal or donated supplies for a place of worship, the free will offering was to be given freely, as the Lord moved the Israelites' hearts. It was not to be used to gain prestige (Amos 4:5) or because of guilt, inducement, or force. Today, the free will offering is the only offering we have. There is no tithe demanded on the church. We rely on the sacrifice of Jesus and not the sacrifice of animals for our atonement. All the money, time, and resources we give are to be freely given, as the Spirit leads. The trick for many is noticing and obeying “when the Spirit leads.” God has given us everything we have; if He moves our hearts (Exodus 35:29), then we should cheerfully give (2 Corinthians 9:7). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 12:7** "There also you and your households shall eat before the LORD your God, and rejoice in all your undertakings in which the LORD your God has blessed you.

- **there:** De 12:18 14:23,26 15:20 Isa 23:18
- **shall:** De 12:12,18 16:11-15 26:11 27:7 Lev 23:40 Ps 128:1,2 Mal 2:13 Ac 2:46 Php 4:4
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**There also you and your households shall eat before the LORD your God, and rejoice in all your undertakings in which the LORD your God has blessed you** - This speaks of the communion or fellowship which Jehovah desired His people to experience. Meals in the oriental culture (and even today) are considered times of special fellowship (cf Jesus' plea for fellowship with the Laodicean church in Rev 3:20<sup>±</sup>).

**THOUGHT** - These were times of joy, a vague foretaste of the joy believers will experience at the [the marriage supper of the Lamb](#). Are you invited? Have you made your wedding clothes ready for this glorious event?

“**Let us rejoice and be glad** and give the glory to Him, for the **marriage of the Lamb** has come and His bride has made herself ready.” 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the **fine linen is the righteous acts** (ACTS INITIATED BY AND EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT OF JESUS, cf Jn 15:5) **of the saints**. 9 Then he \*said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.” (Rev 19:7-9+)

**Utley** on **you and your households shall eat before the LORD your God** - This refers to a fellowship meal, which is a theological precursor of both **Passover** and **Eucharist** (cf. Dt 12:12, 18; 14:26; Rev. 3:20). God's people were created to rejoice with Him in the physicalness of creation and the intimacy of worship (cf. Lev. 23:40; Num. 10:10; Deut. 12:7, 12, 18; 14:26; 16:11; 26:11; 27:7; 28:47).

Ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your house-holds, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee.—Deut. 12:7

These words occur amid the most careful and urgent instructions on the matter of worship, as it was to be observed by these people when they came into the land. All the false places of worship which they would find in the land, were to be utterly destroyed. In that land, God would appoint them a place of worship; attendance at which was to be obligatory. That is to say, that they must go and worship at this place; and that they must not set up any other place of worship. The particular value of these words is that they reveal the Divine thought of worship. It is an exercise of rejoicing, resulting from blessedness. God blesses men, and in that blessedness they rejoice before Him. It is well that we remember this. Solemnity, reverence, awe, there must ever be, when men draw near to God in worship; but solemnity is not sadness, reverence is not cringing fear, awe is not dullness. All our worship should have the note of joy, of gladness. It should be full of song. It should be of such a glad nature that all our households, children and servants, should find happiness therein. If when we worship, we do, in special sense, come into the presence of God, then let us remember that in His presence is fulness of joy, and at His right hand are pleasures for ever-more. There is a place for sadness, for contrition, for penitence before God; but that is the place of preparation for worship. When that preparation is fulfilled, worship becomes a joy and a gladness.

**Deuteronomy 12:8 "You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes;**

- **every man:** Nu 15:39 Jdg 17:6 21:25 Pr 21:2 Am 5:25 Ac 7:42
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes-** The point is that in the wilderness wandering each person could not always perform the offerings as they would be able to do once they entered the promised land. So they offered in a way they thought was right. But that practice would not be allowed in the promised land.

**Guzik** - Before Israel crossed over the Jordan, during the wilderness wanderings, each Israelite pretty much conducted their own worship as they pleased. But God was not really pleased with this; worship was not a matter left up to whatever pleased the individual. Real worship is concerned with what pleases God. Much of what is called worship in today's church really isn't worship. It is self-focused, man-focused, and personal-experience-focused instead of being God focused. Much of today's worship is measured by how I feel instead of being measured by how God was honored and worshipped.

**Utey** - Things will be more uniform in the Promised Land. The religious practices during the wilderness wanderings period were simpler than the more organized practices in the Promised Land and, especially at the temple, later located in Jerusalem. **every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes**" This phrase has a neutral connotation here, but in Judges it takes on a sinister connotation of an individual asserting freedom from covenant obligations either through sinful choice or covenant ignorance (cf. Judges 17:6; Jdg 21:25).

**Spurgeon** - "Singing should be congregational, but it should never be performed for the credit of the congregation. 'Such remarkable singing! The place is quite renowned for its musical performances!' This is a poor achievement. Our singing should be such that God hears it with pleasure—singing in which there is not so much art as heart, not so much of musical sound as of spiritual emotion."

**Deuteronomy 12:9 for you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you.**

- De 25:19 1Ki 8:56 1Ch 23:25 Mic 2:10 Heb 4:8,9 1Pe 1:3,4
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**For** - This explains why they were offering in ways that seemed right in their own eyes in the wilderness.

**You have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you-** So what is the **resting place**? Clearly in context this is a descriptive synonym for the Promised Land. Moses will elaborate on why it is called a **resting place** in the next verse.

**Deuteronomy 12:10 "When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit,**

**and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security,**

- **When:** De 3:27 4:22 9:1 11:31 Jos 3:17 4:1,12
- **live in the land** De 33:12,28 Lev 25:18,19 1Sa 7:12 1Ki 4:25 Ps 4:8 Pr 1:33 Jer 23:6 32:37 33:11 Eze 28:26 34:25,28 38:8
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**When** - Not "IF" but "**WHEN**" so sure is Moses that they will in fact cross over the Jordan River. That is how certain we should all be regarding the "precious and magnificent promises" of God (2 Pe 1:4+).

**You cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit** - Emphasis again is on the land as a gift to Israel from Yahweh.

**Guzik** - A particular place is important to worship. The man who tells himself, "I can worship God just as well out on the golf course" is a man doing whatever is right in his own eyes. It is fine for him to worship God out on the golf course; but there must also be a specific place where he comes to worship with God's people.. This goes against the trend of our times. Studies find that among baby-boomers, 70% say that you should attend worship services not out of a sense of duty, but only if it "meets your needs." 80% say you can be a good Christian without attending church.

**and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security** - Note that "rest" is (1) divine or supernatural gift from Yahweh and (2) is associated with a real sense of security.

**THOUGHT** - Real rest, soul rest is always a gift from the Lord, not our pleasant circumstances, our successes, our ingenuity, etc. Have you entered the secure supernatural rest provided by Jesus? Are you trusting in the arm of flesh for security (leaning on your own understanding) or are you trusting in the strong arm of the LORD. True rest of one's spirit is not related to one's great wealth, one's great power or a country's military might but is a gift of grace from the LORD. Rely on Him and rest in Him! Whether you are a believer or unbeliever, hear and respond to Jesus...

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Mt 11:28-30+). ([Song](#) or [another](#))

**Deuteronomy 12:11 then it shall come about that the place in which the LORD your God will choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the LORD.**

- **place:** De 12:5,14,18,21,26 14:23 15:20 16:2-8 17:8 18:6 23:16 26:2 31:11 Jos 18:1 1Ki 8:13,29 Ps 78:68 Jer 7:12 Joh 4:20-23
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**Then** - Sequence. Progression of the narrative.

**It shall come about that the place in which the LORD your God will choose**(see [bahar/bachar](#)) **for His name to dwell** - Moses is referring to a the centralized place of worship which was first at Shiloh.

**there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution** ([terumah](#)) **of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the LORD**- No offering were to be carried out at the pagan altars or places so (so-called) worship.

**Deuteronomy 12:12 "And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you.**

- Nu 18:20,23,24,26 Jos 13:14,33 14:4
- **and your sons:** Dt 12:7 Dt 14:26-27, Dt 28:47 1Ki 8:66 2Ch 29:36 30:21-26 Ne 8:10-12 Ps 100:1,2 Ps 147:1 1Jn 1:3,4
- **the Levite:** De 12:19 14:27,29 16:11,14 18:6 26:12
- **since** : De 10:9 18:1,2
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

## Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 14:26-27 "You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. 27 "Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you.

Deuteronomy 28:47 "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things;

## GOD'S LAWS DON'T OPPRESS BUT BRING JOY

**And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you** - (See Dt 12:7 and Dt 12:18). Note that everyone is included in this rejoicing before the LORD.

**Guzik** - The emphasis on shall shows that rejoicing is commanded. It is also commanded in the New Testament; Rejoice always (1 Thessalonians 5:16); Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! (Philippians 4:4). If you can't rejoice out of feeling like it, then rejoice out of being commanded.

**John Trapp** - "No one duty is more pressed in both the Testaments, than this of rejoicing in the Lord always, but specially in his immediate services.

**Spurgeon** - All Christian duties should be done joyfully; but especially the work of praising the Lord. I have been in congregations where the tune was dolorous to the very last degree; where the time was so dreadfully slow that one wondered whether they would ever be able to sing through the 119 Psalm; whether, to use Watt's expression, eternity would not be too short from them to get through it; and altogether, the spirit of the people has seemed to be so damp, so heavy, so dead, that we might have supposed that they were met to prepare their minds for a hanging rather than for blessing the ever-gracious God." (Praise Thy God, O Zion)

**Spurgeon** - We ought not to worship God in a half-hearted sort of way; as if it were now our duty to bless God, but we felt it to be a weary business, and we would get it through as quickly as we could, and have done with it; and the sooner the better. No, no; 'All that is within me, bless his holy name.' Come, my heart, wake up, and summon all the powers which wait upon thee! Mechanical worship is easy, but worthless. Come rouse yourself, my brother! Rouse thyself, O my own soul!"

**Utley** reminds us that "All priests were **Levites**, but not all Levites were priests. Here '**Levite**' refers to the non-priests of the family of Levi who symbolized the poor and needy (cf. Dt 12:18, 19; 14:27, 29; 16:11, 14; 26:12–13), because the Levites had been given no land. They were respected local teachers of the Law.

**Deuteronomy 12:13** "**Be careful** that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every *[cultic]* place you see,

- De 12:6 Lev 17:2-5 1Ki 12:28-32 1Ki 15:34 2Ch 15:17
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

## Related Passage:

1 Kings 12:28-32 (THE PRIME EXAMPLE OF ISRAEL BREAKING THIS COMMAND) So the king consulted, and made two golden calves, and he said to them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt." 29 He set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. 31 And he made houses on high places, and made priests from among all the people who were not of the sons of Levi. 32 Jeroboam instituted a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast which is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; thus he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves which he had made. And he stationed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.

**Be careful** (take heed) **that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every *cultic* place you see** - The pagan idolaters offered their sacrifices on the tops of hills and mountains. One wonders why they would even see them, for to see them was to destroy them. In Dt 7:5 Moses instructed them "thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down (pull down) their altars,

and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire." This obliteration of pagan artifacts would remove any temptation for the Israelites to follow the religious practices of the godless nations they were to dispossess from the Land.

**Utley** - God will show you the special places for offering (cf. Dt 12:5, 11, 14). Do not use the many local Canaanite altars just because they are there. Don't offer a sacrifice to YHWH on altars erected for Ba'al. However, there were some local altars made for YHWH (cf. Deut. 16:21; 1 Kgs. 3:4).

**Be careful** ([shamar](#) - watch, guard; Lxx - [prosecho](#) - [present imperative](#)) (08104) [shamar](#) means to keep, watch, preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over, to be on one's guard. The first use of **shamar** in Ge 2:15 is instructive as Adam was placed in the garden (a perfect environment) and was commanded to "**keep**" it which in the [Septuagint](#) is translated with [phulasso](#) (which is used to translate many of the OT uses of **shamar**) which means to guard like a military sentinel would at his post. Clearly Adam did not do a good job at "keeping" the garden safe from intruders! And because of this failure he was cast out of the garden and angels stationed to "**guard** (Lxx = [phulasso](#)) the way to the tree of life" so that he would not eat of it (Ge 3:24). After Cain murdered Abel he answered God "Am I my brother's **keeper**?" (Ge 3:24)

**Shamar** is a key word in Deuteronomy -Deut. 2:4; Deut. 4:2; Deut. 4:6; Deut. 4:9; Deut. 4:15; Deut. 4:23; Deut. 4:40; Deut. 5:1; Deut. 5:10; Deut. 5:12; Deut. 5:29; Deut. 6:2; Deut. 6:3; Deut. 6:12; Deut. 6:17; Deut. 6:25; Deut. 7:8; Deut. 7:9; Deut. 7:11; Deut. 7:12; Deut. 8:1; Deut. 8:2; Deut. 8:6; Deut. 8:11; Deut. 10:13; Deut. 11:1; Deut. 11:8; Deut. 11:16; Deut. 11:22; Deut. 11:32; **Deut. 12:1; Deut. 12:13; Deut. 12:19; Deut. 12:28; Deut. 12:30; Deut. 12:32;** Deut. 13:4; Deut. 13:18; Deut. 15:9; Deut. 16:1; Deut. 16:12; Deut. 17:10; Deut. 19:9; Deut. 23:9; Deut. 23:23; Deut. 24:8; Deut. 26:16; Deut. 26:17; Deut. 26:18; Deut. 27:1; Deut. 28:1; Deut. 28:9; Deut. 28:45; Deut. 28:58; Deut. 29:9; Deut. 30:10; Deut. 30:16; Deut. 31:12; Deut. 33:9;

**Deuteronomy 12:14 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.**

- De 12:5,11 Ps 5:7 9:11 2Co 5:19 Heb 10:19-22 13:15
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**but in the place which the LORD chooses**(see [bahar/bachar](#)) **in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you** - Note the repeat emphasis on the place God chooses. The repetition again would point out how alluring these other places would be for Israel to conduct worship. God said no, not there, but only where He appointed.

**NET Note** This injunction to worship in a single and central sanctuary—one limited and appropriate to the thrice-annual festival celebrations (see Ex 23:14–17; 34:22–24; Lev 23:4–36; Dt 16:16–17)—marks a departure from previous times when worship was carried out at local shrines (cf. Ge 8:20; 12:7; 13:18; 22:9; 26:25; 35:1, 3, 7; Ex 17:15). Apart from the corporate worship of the whole theocratic community, however, **worship at local altars would still be permitted as in the past** (Dt 16:21; Jdg 6:24–27; 13:19–20; 1 Sa 7:17; 10:5, 13; 2 Sa 24:18–25; 1 Kgs 18:30).

**Deuteronomy 12:15 "However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your gates, whatever you desire, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and the deer.**

- **whatever:** De 14:26
- **the unclean:** De 12:21,22 14:5 15:22,23 Lev 17:3-5
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

## **MEAT COULD BE EATEN WITHIN THEIR HOMES**

**However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your gates** (villages, towns), **whatever you desire, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and the**

**deer** - "Both the ritually pure and impure may eat it" (Dt 12:15NET) Moses is speaking of the people themselves being ceremonially clean or unclean for both could eat meat. This does not refer to the actual animal, for some were unclean under the dietary laws described in more detail in Deuteronomy 14. Note also that anything sacrificed as an offering to the Lord had to be eaten before the Lord in the place He designated.

**Guzik** has an interesting note - In the ancient world, almost every time an animal was butchered it was sacrificed to a god. Here, the LORD made it clear that not every slaughtered animal was considered a sacrifice to Him.

**Utley** - This shows a widening of the Law (cf. Lev. 17:1ff). If an animal was killed (BDB 256, KB 261, Qal IMPERFECT) for food and not sacrifice, it could be killed anywhere. "**unclean and the clean**" does not refer to unclean animals as far as food (cf. Dt 112:20–22; Lev. 11:1-47), but unclean as far as sacrifice. A blemished sheep could be eaten by humans as could wild animals like deer, but not pigs, etc.

**Deuteronomy 12:16 "Only you shall not eat the blood; you are to pour it out on the ground like water."**

- De 12:23-24 Dt 15:23 Ge 9:4
- Lev 7:26,27 Lev 17:10-13 Ac 15:29 1Ti 4:4
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

#### Related Passages:

Genesis 9:4 "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its **blood**."

Leviticus 17:11+ 'For **the life of the flesh** is in the **blood**, and I have given it to you on the altar to **make atonement** for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.' 12 "Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood.'

Acts 15:29+ that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."

**Only you shall not eat the blood; you are to pour it out on the ground like water**- So important is this statute that it is repeated in Dt 12:23-24+ ("for the blood is the life") and Dt 15:23+. In Lev 17:11+ (recorded above) two reasons are given for the command not to eat blood - (1) the life of the body is derived from it, and (2) it is the means by which atonement for sins is made. In a sense both of these restriction have something to do with life for even the atonement was a practice that ultimately pointed to Jesus as our [substitutionary atonement](#) which enables sinners to have new life in Him.

**Utley on shall not eat the blood** - This relates to the Hebrew reverence for blood as the symbol for life. Even when they killed animals, whether for eating or sacrifice, they poured the blood out (cf. 15:23; Lev. 17:13) and did not eat it, because life belonged to God. The blood represented life, life belongs to God (cf. vv. 23–25; Gen. 9:4; Lev. 7:11–12; 17:10–11)!

**McGee** - In Leviticus 17:1-16+, while Israel was in the wilderness camp, they were told that every time an ox, or lamb, or goat was killed, it had to be brought to the door of the tabernacle and the priest would sprinkle the blood upon the altar and would offer the fat as a sweet savor to God. This was to prevent them from making any offering to devils. After they settle in the land, it is obvious that many people will live too far away from Jerusalem to bring every animal there before they kill it for food. So the Lord tells them again that an animal may be killed for food, but they shall not eat the blood of the animal. The blood represents the life, which is the reason that Scripture puts such an emphasis on the blood of Jesus Christ. ([Deuteronomy 12 Mp3's](#))

**Deuteronomy 12:17 "You are not allowed to eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or new wine or oil, or the firstborn of your herd or flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the contribution of your hand."**

- **the tithe:** De 12:6,11 14:22-29 26:12,14 Lev 27:30-32 Nu 18:21-24
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**You are not allowed to eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or new wine or oil, or the firstborn of your herd or flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the contribution ([terumah](#)) of your hand.**

**Coakley** - They were also prohibited from eating anything at home (within your gates) that was to be offered as a sacrifice, because the only designated place to eat those offerings before the LORD was in the central sanctuary.

**Ryrie on tithe** - The tithe had to be taken to the central sanctuary. This referred to what was known as the second tithe. Two tithes were required: an annual tithe for the maintenance of the Levites (Lev. 27:30; Nu. 18:21) and a second tithe brought to Jerusalem for the Lord's feast (Dt. 14:22). Every third year, however, the second tithe was kept at home and used for the poor (Dt. 14:28). One's use of money is often a barometer of his spirituality (cf. 1 Jn 3:17).

**Deuteronomy 12:18** "But you shall eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all your undertakings.

- **shall eat:** De 12:11,12,19 14:23 15:20
- **rejoice:** De 12:7 Ps 32:11 68:3 Pr 3:17 Isa 12:3 Ac 2:46 16:34 1Co 10:31 Ga 5:22 Php 3:1-3
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

But you shall eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God will choose(see [bahar/bachar](#)), you and your son and daughter, and your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all your undertakings. - This refers to the warning about only using the central shrine for worship.

**NET Note** - undertakings - Heb "in all the sending forth of your hands."

**Deuteronomy 12:19** "**Be careful** that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.

- **Take:** De 14:27-29 2Ch 11:13,14 31:4-21 Ne 10:34-39 1Co 9:10-14
- **as long** De 12:1
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**Be careful that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land**- In this discussion about food Moses does not want Israel to forget the Levites who had no possession.

**Coakley** - Placing instructions about Levites between two almost identical sections on the eating of meat was perhaps intentional to highlight the need to focus on their well-being and not just on their performance as religious figures in the tabernacle. Whatever the case, the Lord clearly allowed for the consumption of meat and did not restrict its use for personal dietary preference. This was particularly the case for those who lived a great distance from the central sanctuary and does not contradict the injunction to bring sacrifices only to the tabernacle/temple.

**Deuteronomy 12:20** "When the LORD your God extends your border as He has promised you, and you say, 'I will eat meat,' because you desire to eat meat, then you may eat meat, whatever you desire.

- shall: 1Ch 4:10
- as he hath: De 11:24 19:8 Ge 15:18-21 28:14 Ex 23:31 34:24
- I will: De 12:15 Ge 31:30 Nu 11:4,20,34 2Sa 13:39 23:15 Ps 63:1 84:2 107:9 Ps 119:20,40,174 2Co 9:14 Php 1:8 2:26
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

## **EAT MEAT AS YOU DESIRE**

**When the LORD your God extends your border as He has promised you, and you say, 'I will eat meat,' because you desire to eat meat, then you may eat meat, whatever you desire** - **Extends your border** points out that some Israelites would be far from the appointed place of worship and Moses explains this further in the following passage.

Meat could be eaten in the promised land but it had to be the right kind (Dt 12:17, 22), had to be killed at the right place (Dt 12:15,

18, 21, 27) and had to be killed in the right way (Dt 12:16, 23-25).

Note that Dt 12:20–28 repeats Dt 12:15–18 Moses repeated most of the instructions regarding the killing and eating of animals.

**Coakley** explains that "For the original audience who most likely heard it orally, this repetition would aid in their comprehending these instructions."

**Deuteronomy 12:21** "If the place which the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, then you may slaughter of your herd and flock which the LORD has given you, as I have commanded you; and you may eat within your gates whatever you desire.

- to put: De 12:5,11 14:23,24 16:6,11 26:2 Ex 20:24 1Ki 14:21 2Ch 12:13 Ezr 6:12
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

### GOD CHOOSES THE SITE TO BE WORSHIPPED

If the place which the LORD your God chooses (see [bahar/bachar](#)) to put His name is too far from you- NLT = "It might happen that the designated place of worship-- the place the LORD your God chooses for his name to be honored-- is a long way from your home." (Dt 12:21NLT) Because the LORD had extended Israel's borders as noted above.

It is interesting that Dt 12:21 describes "the place which the LORD your God chooses to put His Name" which parallels 1Ki 5:5+ which says "**Behold**, (KING SOLOMON SPEAKING) I intend to build a house for the Name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spoke to David my father, saying, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he will build the house for My Name.'" Note that the place of God's choosing to be worshipped is reiterated 6 times in this chapter! Dt 12:5,11, 14,18,21,26

Then you may slaughter of your herd and flock which the LORD has given you, as I have commanded you; and you may eat within your gates whatever you desire - Within your gates is "in your villages" (Dt 12:21NET)

**Deuteronomy 12:22** "Just as a gazelle or a deer is eaten, so you will eat it; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it.

- De 12:15,16
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

Just as a gazelle or a deer is eaten, so you will eat it; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it.

**Deuteronomy 12:23** "Only be sure not to eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh.

- the blood is: Ge 9:4 Lev 3:16,17 17:11,14 Mt 20:28 Rev 5:9
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

### DO NOT EAT THE BLOOD

Only be sure not to eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh- Be sure is the verb [chazaq](#) which usually means to be strong. so in this context means to strongly resist eating blood.

**Henry Morris** - Blood offerings and even drinking of blood were common among the pagan religions. God considered the blood sacred as anticipating the blood of Christ, and as containing the "life" of the flesh, which would be shed for the eternal life of all who would partake spiritually of its regenerating power (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11; John 6:53-56). (Defender's Study Bible)

**Guzik** - Since the blood was the picture of life in any animal or man (for the blood is the life), God would not allow Israel to eat meat that had not been properly bled. Instead, it was to be given to God by pouring it out on the earth.

**NET Note** - the blood is the life - This is a figure of speech (metonymy) in which the cause or means (the blood) stands for the

result or effect (life). That is, life depends upon the existence and circulation of blood, a truth known empirically but not scientifically tested and proved until the 17th century A.D. (cf. Lev 17:11).

**Believer's Study Bible** - Blood was the symbol of life, so that to shed blood was equal to taking away life. Accordingly, atonement for sin and eternal life were dependent upon the shedding of blood-life for life (cf. Ge. 9:4, 5, Acts 15:20; Lev. 17:10-14; 1 Sa 14:31-35; Heb. 9:22). Thus, to eat blood was to profane or make common that sacred act of [atonement](#) by which man comes to God. The blood was to be carefully carried to the altar to be disposed of by the officiating priests, or it was to be quietly poured into the earth.

**MacArthur** - See Ge 9:4–6 and Lv 17:10–14. The blood symbolized life. By refraining from eating blood, the Israelite demonstrated respect for life and ultimately for the Creator of life. Blood, representing life, was the ransom price for sins. So blood was sacred and not to be consumed by the people. This relates to atonement in Lv 16; Heb 9:12–14; 1Pe 1:18, 19; 1Jn 1:7.

**Deuteronomy 12:24** "You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the ground like water.

- De 12:16 15:23
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the ground like water.**

**Henry Morris** - Compare to Leviticus 17:13, which says that the blood should also be covered with dust. At times some of the blood was to be sprinkled on the altar before being poured upon the ground (Leviticus 3:2). (Defender's Study Bible)

**Deuteronomy 12:25** "You shall not eat it, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you, for you will be doing what is right in the sight of the LORD.

- that it: De 12:28 4:40 5:16 Ps 112:2 Isa 3:10 48:18,19 Eze 33:25
- when: De 6:18 13:18 Ex 15:26 1Ki 11:38 Ec 2:26
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**You shall not eat it, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you, for you will be doing what is right in the sight of the LORD.**

**Deuteronomy 12:26** "Only your holy things which you may have and your votive offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses.

- holy: De 12:6,11,18 Nu 5:9,10 18:19
- thy vows: Ge 28:20 Lev 22:18-33 1Sa 1:21-24 Ps 66:13-15
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**Only your holy things which you may have and your votive offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses** (see [bahar/bachar](#)) - **Holy things** refers to those things mentioned in Dt 12:17.

**Deuteronomy 12:27** "And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the flesh 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 flesh.

- thy burnt: Lev 1:5,9,13 17:11
- and the blood: Lev 4:30 17:11
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the flesh 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 flesh.**

**NET Note** - These other sacrifices would be so-called peace or fellowship offerings whose ritual required a different use of the blood from that of burnt (sin and trespass) offerings (cf. Lev 3; 7:11–14, 19–21).

**Deuteronomy 12:28 "Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.**

- Ex 34:11 Lev 19:37 2Ch 7:17 Ne 1:5 Ps 105:45 Eze 37:24 Joh 15:3,10,14
- Observe: De 24:8
- that it may: De 12:25
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 4:40 "So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that **it may go well** ([yatab/yatav](#)) with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

Deuteronomy 5:29 'Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that **it may be well** ([yatab/yatav](#)) with them and with their sons forever!

Deuteronomy 6:3 "O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that **it may be well** ([yatab/yatav](#)) with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

Deuteronomy 6:18 "You shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that **it may be well** ([yatab/yatav](#)) with you and that you may go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore to give your fathers,

**Be careful** ([shamar](#); Lxx - [phulasso](#) in [present imperative](#)) **to listen to all these words which I command you, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God** - This charge is a call to obedience which is the way of blessing. (cf repeated emphasis in Dt 4:9, 15, 23; 6:12; 8:11; 11:16; 12:13, 19, 28, 30; 15:9; 24:8)

**Well** (do good, be merry, prosper) ([03190](#)) [yatab/yatav](#) means to be good, to be well, to be pleasing. To be made well, happy, cheerful, joyful. **Yatab** refers to the blessed, happy, wholesome life of YHWH's people. Again, covenant obedience is linked to blessing and longevity in the land. This total obedience is admonished to successive generations i.e., forever. Using the same language of Ru 3:1 (security ... be well [well = yatab]) Boaz is described as having a sense of well being which is most readily explained by the full harvest in contrast to previous years of famine (cf. Jdg 18:20-note). Yatab is often used in idiomatic expressions with heart (as in current verse) where it means to be pleased or to be happy. It is often used in idiomatic expressions with heart ([lēb](#)), meaning to be pleased or to be happy (Jdg. 18:20; 19:6, 9; Ruth 3:7); and with eyes, to be pleasing to someone else (i.e., pleasing or good in their eyes Ge. 34:18; 1 Sa 18:5). **Yatab/yatav** is found first in the story of Cain and Abel, where it is used twice in one verse: "If you do **well**, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do **well**, sin is crouching at the door" (Ge 4:7)

**Yatab in Deuteronomy** - Deut. 1:23; Deut. 4:40; Deut. 5:16; Deut. 5:28; Deut. 5:29; Deut. 6:3; Deut. 6:18; Deut. 8:16; Deut. 9:21; Deut. 12:25; Deut. 12:28; Deut. 13:14; Deut. 17:4; Deut. 18:17; Deut. 19:18; Deut. 22:7; Deut. 27:8; Deut. 28:63; Deut. 30:5; Jos. 22:30;

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#### Deuteronomy 12:28 Obedience Brings Blessing - Faith's Checkbook - C H Spurgeon

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

THOUGH salvation is not by the works of the law, yet the blessings which are promised to obedience are not denied to the faithful servants of God. The curses our Lord took away when He was made a curse for us, but no clause of blessing has been abrogated.

We are to note and listen to the revealed will of the Lord, giving our attention not to portions of it, but to "all these words." There must

be no picking and choosing, but an impartial respect to all that God has commanded. This is the road of blessedness for the father and for his children. The Lord's blessing is upon His chosen to the third and fourth generation. If they walk uprightly before Him, He will make all men know that they are a seed which the Lord has blessed.

No blessing can come to us or ours through dishonesty or double dealing. The ways of worldly conformity and unholiness cannot bring good to us or ours. It will go well with us when we go well before God. If integrity does not make us prosper, knavery will not. That which gives pleasure to God will bring pleasure to us.

**Deuteronomy 12:29 "When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land,**

- **cut off:** De 9:3 19:1 Ex 23:23 Jos 23:4 Ps 78:55
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess**([yarash](#)), **and you dispossess** ([yarash](#)) **them and dwell in their land** - Note again not IF but **WHEN**, so certain is it that Yahweh will cut off the pagan nations and Israel will **dwell in their land**.

**Utley** on **cuts off** - The VERB means YHWH eliminated people by killing them (cf. 19:1; Josh. 23:4; 2 Sam. 7:9; Jer. 44:8). This indicates that YHWH is fighting Israel's battles.

**Cuts off** (destroy) ([03772](#)) **karath** literally means to cut, to cut off or to sever an object from its source or cut into parts and implies a violent action. For example, Zipporah "**cut off** her son's foreskin." (Ex 4:25) **Karath in Deuteronomy** - The first 3 uses refer to cutting a covenant - Deut. 4:23; Deut. 5:2; Deut. 5:3; Deut. 7:2; Deut. 9:9; Deut. 12:29; Deut. 19:1; Deut. 19:5; Deut. 20:19; Deut. 20:20; Deut. 23:1; Deut. 29:1; Deut. 29:12; Deut. 29:14; Deut. 29:25; Deut. 31:16;

**Deuteronomy 12:30 **beware** that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?'**

- **that** : De 7:16 Ex 23:31-33 Lev 18:3 Nu 33:52 Jdg 2:2,3 2Ki 17:15 Ps 106:34-38 Eze 20:28
- How did: Jer 10:2 Eze 20:32 Ro 12:2 Eph 4:17 1Pe 4:3,4
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

## WARNING AGAINST ENSNAREMENT

**Beware** ([shamar](#); Lxx - [prosecho](#) - [present imperative](#)) **that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?'** - This warning reminds me of the old saying '[Curiosity killed the cat!](#)' As subsequent history would prove curiosity did kill (destroy) Israel!

Inquisitiveness can be dangerous,  
especially when it extends to things one does not need to know about.

This warning recalls Paul's warning in Romans

For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I **want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil.** (Ro 16:19+, cf Eph 5:3-11, 12+)

In Israel's curiosity there is almost a sense of making a provision for the flesh as Paul warns (commands) against in Ro 13:14

But **put on** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **provision** (see [pronoia](#)) for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

**Comment:** We see an illustration of obedience to this command (which somewhat parallels destruction of all vestiges of idolatry) in Acts 19:19+ (magic books burned!)

**Wiersbe** - The British essayist Samuel Johnson called curiosity “one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect,” and certainly our children and grandchildren learn because they’re curious about life and the world they live in. Someone defined a child as “an island of curiosity surrounded by a sea of question marks.” However, there are some areas of human knowledge that are dangerous to investigate, for God wants His people to be “wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil” (Rom. 16:19, NASB). We don’t have to experience sin to learn how deadly it is. Inquisitive Israelites who investigated the despicable religious practices of the Canaanites were in danger of tempting themselves and giving Satan opportunity to move in. As we mature in the faith and become grounded in the Word, we can carefully study the philosophies and ideas that are held by various religious groups, but only so that we might better share the Gospel with them. Missionaries must know the religious mind-set of the peoples to whom God sends them so they can communicate effectively with them. This is also true when we study the so-called “classics” that are often filled with moral filth and attacks against the Christian faith. “Beware of the atmosphere of the classics,” wrote Robert Murray M’Cheyne to a friend. “True, we ought to know them; but only as chemists handle poisons—to discover their qualities, not to infect their blood with them.” With God’s help, it’s possible for Christian students to practice contact without contamination, but they had better “watch and pray” lest they are tempted and fall into sin. (Be Equipped)

**Coakley** - In keeping with the theme of destroying all vestiges of Canaanite worship practices (v. 2), Moses stated again that in addition to tearing down and burning all their religious symbols, the people were not to engage in the religious practices of the Canaanites, even out of curiosity. They chanced becoming ensnared in following after these gods and even incorporating some of their abhorrent pagan rituals into their worship practices.

**Utley** - “do not inquire after their gods” The VERB means “to seek after”: 1. YHWH in 12:5; 4:29; Jer. 10:21; 29:13 2. Canaanite gods in 12:30; 2 Chr. 25:15, 20; Jer. 8:2

**Ensnared** (05367) (**naqash**) meaning to strike, to strike down, to knock, to bring down. This word is associated with hunting birds, and therefore it is often translated to ensnare. It is always used with the connotation of a subject attempting to destroy the object. A by-form of yāqōsh and qūsh, nāqash means “to become ensnared.” The verb occurs only once in the Qal stem, in a Psalm that proclaims that the wicked will be ensnared by the work of their own hands (Ps. 9:16). In the only occurrence of nāqash in the Niphal (passive) stem, Moses warns Israel not to become ensnared by the gods of the pagan nations they would dispossess (Deut. 12:30). The two occurrences in the Piel (intensive) and the sole occurrence in the Hithpael (causative) stem speak of laying snares for someone’s life (1 Sa. 28:9; Ps. 38:12; 109:11).

**Naqash** - 5v - ensnared(1), lay snares(1), laying a snare(1), seize(1), snared(1). Deut. 12:30; 1 Sam. 28:9; Ps. 9:16; Ps. 38:12; Ps. 109:11

Paul gives a NT parallel in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1

**Do not be bound** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 “Therefore, **COME OUT** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) FROM THEIR MIDST AND **BE SEPARATE** ([aorist imperative](#)),” says the Lord. “AND **DO NOT TOUCH** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 “And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty. 1+ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

**Deuteronomy 12:31** "You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

- **You:** De 12:4 18:9 Ex 23:2 Lev 18:3,26-30 2Ki 17:15-17 21:2 2Ch 33:2 2Ch 36:14
- **their sons:** De 18:10 Lev 18:21 20:2 Jer 7:31 32:35 Eze 20:31 23:27 Mic 6:7
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

**ABOMINABLE CHILD  
SACRIFICE**

**You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for** (explains why not behave that way) **every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods** - One cannot read this and fail to see the modern analogy of the "sacrifice of living souls" in the evil practice of abortion ([See current worldwide rate -- it is shocking!](#)) If you find the widespread practice of child sacrifice amazing, then you need to ponder into how great a depth of depravity the sinful human heart can plunge when it turns away from the true and living God Who made babies and children in His image! Add to that the fact that their hearts have become so deceived to think that offering a life to a dead idol has any benefit. Thank God for the Cross, the Gospel, salvation and a new mind that can think and see the way God sees things - right-side up, not up-side down!

**MacArthur** - The Word that God had given to Israel through Moses was complete and sufficient to direct the people. Thus, this law, the gift of God at Horeb, could not be supplemented or reduced. Anything that adulterated or contradicted God's law would not be tolerated (cf. Dt 4:2; Pr 30:6; Rev 22:18, 19).

**Guzik** - This referred to the practice of Molech worship, where Canaanites offered up their children by placing them alive on a burning hot metal statue of Molech, while drum beats drowned out the screams of the tortured infants.. Israel had a tragic history of following after this horrible god Molech.

- At the least, Solomon sanctioned the worship of Molech, building a temple to this idol (1 Kings 11:7).
- King Ahaz of Judah gave his own son to Molech (2 Kings 16:3).
- One of the great crimes of the northern tribes of Israel was their worship of Molech, leading to the Assyrian captivity (2 Kings 17:17).
- King Manasseh of Judah gave his son to Molech (2 Kings 21:6).
- Up to the days of King Josiah of Judah, Molech worship continued, because he destroyed a place of worship to that idol (2 Kings 23:10).

**TSK** - The unnatural and horrid practice of offering human sacrifices not only existed, but universally prevailed among ancient nations. We have already (Lev 20:2) referred to the custom among the Phoenicians and Carthaginians, descendants from the Canaanitish nations, of sacrificing their children to Moloch, or Saturn; and we will now cite a passage from [Diodorus Siculus](#), (lib. xx.) which immediately precedes that already produced relative to this barbarous custom. He states that the Carthaginians imputed their being besieged by Agathocles to the anger of Saturn, because, instead of sacrificing the best of their own children, as formerly, they had sacrificed children bought for that purpose. "In haste, therefore, to rectify their errors, they chose 200 of the noblest children, and publicly sacrificed them! Others, accused of irreligion, voluntarily gave themselves up, to the number of no less than 300!"

**Utley** - YHWH is clearly saying to Israel that if they practice the same abominable fertility rites, He will remove them from the land (cf. 7:4; Lev. 18:24–30) as He did the Canaanites (cf. Gen. 15:16–21). YHWH "hates" idolatry (cf. 12:31; 16:22 - YHWH prohibits the worship of Molech (BDB 574), the Canaanite (Ammon) fire god, who was worshiped by sacrificing the first born child of every family in the community in order to insure fertility. His name (as used by Israelites) is a Hebrew pun on the consonants for "king" and the vowels for "shame." Israel is warned about this god early and often (cf. Lev. 18:21; 20:2, 3, 4, 5; 1 Kgs. 11:7; 2 Kgs. 23:10; Jer. 32:35; Micah 6:7). This worship was often characterized by the phrase, "passing through the fire" (cf. 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kgs. 16:3; 17:17, 31; 21:6; Ps. 106:37; Jer. 7:31; 19:5).

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#### **QUESTION - [What does the Bible say about child sacrifice?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The horrific practice of child sacrifice has been committed throughout the world for thousands of years. Generally, the sacrifice of a child was intertwined with the worship of a pagan deity, often a fertility god. Worshipers sought to obtain a blessing from their god(s) or to confirm or complete a vow taken in the name of the god.

Ancient Aztecs, Incas, and a few other peoples in South and Central America practiced child sacrifice. The same for the Druids of Europe. The city of Carthage in North Africa contains evidence of child sacrifice related to the worship of Ba'al Hammon, a god imported from Phoenicia. Many Roman writers refer to this barbaric act in Carthage.

The Bible contains the heart-breaking tale of child sacrifice practiced in the name of [Molech](#) (also spelled Moloch or Molek), a god of the [Ammonites](#). Molech worship was practiced by the Ammonites and Canaanites, who revered Molech as a protecting father figure. Images of Molech were made of bronze, and their outstretched arms were heated red-hot. Living children were then placed into the idol's hands and died there or were rolled into a fire pit below. Some sources indicate a child might also be "passed through the fire" prior to the actual sacrifice in order to purify or baptize the child. Molech worship occurred in the Hinnom Valley near Jerusalem. Because of this, the valley became associated with the idea of Tophet, or hell (Isaiah 30:33; Jeremiah 19:12; Mark 9:45).

God prohibited Israel from child sacrifice in general and Molech worship in particular. Leviticus 20:2-5 states, "Say to the Israelites: 'Any Israelite or any foreigner residing in Israel who sacrifices any of his children to Molek is to be put to death. The members of the community are to stone him. I myself will set my face against him and will cut him off from his people; for by sacrificing his children to Molek, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. If the members of the community close their eyes when that man sacrifices one of his children to Molek and if they fail to put him to death, I myself will set my face against him and his family and will cut them off from their people together with all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molek.'" Many other Old Testament passages affirm God's zero-tolerance for child sacrifice.

**Sadly, [King Solomon](#) became involved in this horrendous practice, as recorded in 1 Kings 11:4-11,**

"As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD. . . . On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. . . . The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command."

Later, the evil king Manassah offered his own son as a sacrifice (2 Kings 21:6), as did King Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:1-4). The people of Judah participated in this crime against their own sons—a sin so "detestable" that God said it had never even crossed His mind (Jeremiah 32:35). Child sacrifice was one reason for the [Babylonian captivity](#) (verse 36).

Some critics of the Bible point to the story of [Abraham](#), who laid his son Isaac on an altar and prepared to sacrifice him as directed by God (Genesis 22:1-14). However, in this case, God was [testing](#) the obedience and faith of Abraham. **God stopped him from actually following through and provided a ram as a substitute sacrifice.**

Today, child sacrifice is practiced throughout the world. There has been a resurgence of child sacrifice in Uganda. Witch doctors have been implicated in the mutilation and death of children who were killed in an effort to bring good fortune and wealth to those willing to pay for it. There is also a correlation between child sacrifice and modern-day [abortion](#). Unprecedented numbers of children have been "sacrificed" at the hands of abortionists for the sake of convenience, immorality, or pride. Hundreds of thousands of babies have been killed so that their parents can maintain a certain lifestyle. God hates "hands that shed innocent blood" (Proverbs 6:17), and **we can be sure that God will judge this horrendous sin.** [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### Related Resources:

- [Who was Moloch/Molech/Molek? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Chemosh? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 12:32 "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it."**

- **shalt not:** De 4:2 13:18 Jos 1:7 Pr 30:6 Mt 28:20 Rev 22:18,19
- [Deuteronomy 12 Resources](#)

### **FOLLOW YAHWEH'S COMMANDS METICULOUSLY**

**Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it-** Note that this verse is designated as 13:1 in the Hebrew text and there acts as an introduction to the discussion of false prophets.

**Coakley** - Israel was to follow meticulously the Lord's commands without adding or taking away from them. This last verse in chap. 12 (v. 32) best fits as the introduction to the next section as it does in the Hebrew Masoretic text.

**Utley** - "you shall not add nor take away from it" God is serious about obedience to His word (see note at 4:2). However, Deuteronomy shows some adaptation of the laws of the desert period. We must apply the truths of the Bible for every new age and culture. God revealed Himself to a particular culture at a particular time. Some of it is related only to that time and people (e.g., holy war, polygamy, slavery, subjugation of women), but much of it is timeless truth to be applied to every age (for a discussion of how to distinguish between the eternal and the cultural, see Fee and Stuart, *How To Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, pp. 149–164 and Gordon Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, pp. 1–36).

**NET Note - Do not add to it or subtract from it** This prohibition makes at least two profound theological points: (1) This work by Moses is of divine origination (i.e., it is inspired) and therefore can tolerate no human alteration; and (2) the work is complete as it stands (i.e., it is canonical).

**NET Note** - Beginning with Deut 12:32, the verse numbers through Dt 13:18 in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (BHS), with 12:32 ET = 13:1 HT, 13:1 ET = 13:2 HT, 13:2 ET = 13:3 HT, etc., through 13:18 ET = 13:19 HT. With Dt 14:1 the verse numbers in the ET and HT are again the same.

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## Test The Teachers

READ: Proverbs 30:1-6

Revelation. To some people, it's more than just the name of the last book of the Bible. To some self-promoting preachers, revelation is something God personally gives to them. In most cases, however, what they say God has given them contradicts His teachings in the Bible.

Have you ever been exposed to those who claim to have had a special "revelation" or "word" from God? If so, be careful. Unless what a person proclaims as truth can be verified by the clear teaching of the Bible, it is personal opinion at best and heresy at worst—not divine revelation.

The Scriptures warn us not to add to nor take away from what God has revealed to us in His written Word. Deuteronomy 4:2 tells us, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it." Similar warnings are found in Deuteronomy 12:32, Proverbs 30:5-6, and Revelation 22:18. It is indeed a precarious position for a person to put himself in—claiming to add to God's inspired Book.

If someone attempts to teach a doctrine not found in the Bible, beware—no matter how polished and well-known the person is. Test the teachers you hear by God's Word. If they talk of receiving a revelation, make sure they aren't violating God's clear warnings. — Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God's Word must verify the truth  
Of what is wrong and what is right,  
And test what seems so real to me  
Of feelings, sense, and sight.  
—D. De Haan

**Test all teaching by the truth of God's Word.**