

SESSION #30 (5 October 2010); Deut 12:15-31; Guarding Israel's Unity in Yahweh Worship

I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW

1:1-5	Introduction to God's spokesman, the 1 st Prophet Moses
1:6 - 4:40	1 st Exposition of the Torah = <u>motivation</u> to obey from (1) <u>past gracious actions</u> of Yahweh and (2) <u>sovereign destiny</u> of the nation (<u>future gracious actions</u> of Yahweh)
4:41-49	Editorial comment on context of 2 nd Exposition of the Torah
5:1 - 26:19	2 nd Exposition of the Torah = proper response to Yahweh in heart and soul
5:1 - 11:32	Loving Yahweh with <u>all the heart</u>
12:1 - 26:19	Loving Yahweh with <u>all the soul</u> (<i>nephesh</i> =life)
12:1-31	Theological unity of Israel's tribes
12:1-4	Elimination of "cultural pluralism"
12:5-14	Central unification of the Jewish tribes
12:15-28	Distinction between local festivities and central festivities
12:29-31	Warning against "cultural pluralism" revived

"statute" = marking out [boundaries] of what are acceptable choices (chap 12)

"judgments" = case law ("if. . . then") (chap 13)

These carry out the [implications] of the Ten Commandments in all of society

A. Elimination of Cultural Pluralism (12:1-4)

OT Theocracy = period of historical revelation of the Kingdom of God

1. Yahweh rules [politically] over a nation
2. Social, economic, and religious features are [structural] features of the Kingdom of God in the future Millennium (not mere casual and now obsolete features)
3. Constitute [wisdom] (Deut 4) for today
 - effect on ancient paganism to produce Western civilization
 - strong influence in the non-Western world via Diaspora

Principle: Kingdom of God depends upon a heart allegiance that responds to the Word of God; it *cannot be brought in by coercion of civil authority* (e.g., Marxism & Islam); hence its postponement in the OT and again in NT

Treaty-form → in the Kingdom of God, God is [King] with a [Throne] and will not tolerate [treason] by His subjects aligning themselves with other god-kings.

B. Central Unification of the Jewish tribes --political problem of ancient idolatry (12:5-14)

- Polytheism typical of ancient paganism—geographical regions controlled by localized deities (e.g., **2 Kings 17:24-28, 32-34**)
- Conquest implied the triumph of the conquering nation's god over the vanquished nation's god.
- Priesthoods & royalty were strongly unified so the state & religion were one (**1 Kings 12:25-33**)

Details that challenge that pagan view

Israel is God's tool to "interrupt" paganized Noahic civilization which is exposed for what it is at Babel ("kingdom of man") = *use of state coercion to bring in fallen man's notion of a "just society."*

Where is state coercion observed in the text here? (no central monarchy)

Local cleansings of pagan art forms used in worship by [local] communities. If the religious facilities and objects were left, they would communicate demonic perversions of God's nature (1 Cor 10:14-22).

There must be metaphysical and epistemological agreement for there to be a common ethic and political unity.

12:12 rejoice (as families) *Israel fought as tribes, but worshipped as families.*

II. DISTINCTION BETWEEN LOCAL FESTIVITIES AND CENTRAL FESTIVITIES (Deut 12:15-28)

Theological implications:

God is holy and not to be accessed at [any arbitrary place]

God provides [access] so He is nearer to His people than any other religion (**Deut 4:7**)

A. Observations on the text

B. The text expounded

12:15 however

Moses is altering previous statutes to adapt to the change in location (wilderness camp vs. spread-out in the new land). Cf **Lev 17:3-5**

in all the desire of your soul (*nephesh*) [note the Hebrew meaning > Greek idea]

according to the blessing of Yahweh your God which he has given to you

Picture of economical results of labor when done as unto the Lord

clean and unclean may eat

Ritual cleansing ordained for Israelites to create theological drama.

gazelle. . .

"clean" (sacrificial) and "unclean" (hunted game) animals can be eaten

12:16 not eat the blood

Noahic mandate because blood is the *sine qua non* of life.

Authorized sacrifice protocol pours blood on the altar of God as atonement for sin.

12:17-18a must eat them in the place

Worship only at the central sanctuary

12:18b-19 forsake not the Levite

Families had to support economically the priesthood both locally and in the 3 annual central sanctuary festivities.

Social units: individual, family, Levite, tribe, and national theological allegiance to Yahweh. No national [civil covenant] ("social contract") as in Enlightenment political theory.

12:20-28 repetition (Moses' uses "2-witness" structure like other biblical authors)

enlarge your border. . . too far from you

Subtle reference to God's blessing (like Moses' mention in **Deut 1** that Israel's population growth forced an altered leadership structure) so here Israel's conquest forces an alternation in festivities.

that it may go well with your children

Repeated in vv 25,28.

III. WARNING AGAINST CULTURAL PLURALISM REVIVED (Deut 12:29-31)

Cut off v32; in Hebrew text it's part of chapter 13 and should be

Structure of chapter: **12:1-4; 29-31** form the start and end of this periscope.

12:30 take heed to yourself

7X in Deuteronomy, 3X in this chapter!! (vv 13,19, 30)

curiosity = depravity of the human heart (10th commandment not to "covet" provisions that God hasn't given = 1st, 2nd commandments)

Practice in **2 Kings 17:26** = fascination with local deities' effects upon welfare of people.

12:31 burn their sons and daughters

Lev 20:1-5 show Molech worship (*mlk* = king; *o-e* from *bosheth* = shame)

Solomon builds a high place for Molech; Ahaz and Manasseh sacrificed their own children (**2 Chron 28:3; 2 Kings 21:6**).

2 Kings 17:13-18 claims that this worship led to exile of northern kingdom.

Logic:

- State religion demands total allegiance
- State religion is demonic
- Satan spreads death, not life
- State religion therefore destroys life

To gain the approval of pagan deities, children would be sacrificed in a complete reversal of the biblical model that God the Father sacrifices His Son;

God didn't even permit Abraham to do it as the biblical picture of a sacrificial "only begotten son."

Examples of Molech and child sacrifice today:

1. Fundamentalist Islam today engages in this abomination of sacrificing their children to their god.
2. Abortion today sacrifices children for the convenience of parents.
3. Entrusting children's education to the pagan state sacrifices children in absolute trust of the government's coerced curricula.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this dispensation of the Church Age, the "sacred space" is the human heart.

John 4:19-24

Jesus vindicates the Jewish side of the controversy instead of the Samaritan side.

"in spirit" = personal relationship involving understood communication

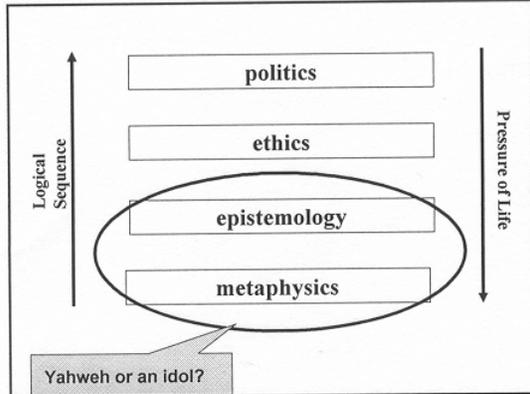
"in truth" = reality encompassing what lies beyond mere appearance

Indwelling of the HS in every regenerate believer.

2 Cor 10:4-5

- Battle to pull down the inner strongholds of the heart
- Not to return as a dog to its vomit by seeking the past worldly patterns of life.

Millennial Kingdom will have the sacred space restored to Jerusalem (**Ezk 40-48**).
 Eternal State will have the sacred space never to be removed again in the New Jerusalem like the Garden of Eden (**Rev 21-22**)



Shall I Bow To My Creator?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YES! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ancient monotheism - ancient Israel - Bible - Fundamentalism • CREATOR/creature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God man nature - everlasting distinctions • PERSONAL SOVEREIGN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ultimate responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ancient myths - eastern religions - western philosophy - modern theology • Continuity of Being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - nature > gods > man - transmutation / evolution • IMPERSONAL FATE / CHANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ultimate victimization
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