

Second Mosaic Speech: Specific Covenant Stipulations – Part 1 (February 1406 BC)

Deuteronomy 12–14

Introduction

12:1 “These *are* the rules and the regulations that you must diligently observe in the land that Yahweh, *the* God of your ancestors, has given to you to take possession of it, *during* all the days that you *are* living on the land.

No God but Yahweh—Destroy All Idolatrous Places of Worship

2 You must completely demolish all *of* the places there where *they* served their gods, *that is*, the nations whom you *are* about to dispossess, on the high mountains, and on the hills and under each leafy green tree.

3 And you shall break down their altars, and you shall smash their stone pillars, and their Asherah poles you must burn with fire, and the images of their gods you shall hew down, and you shall blot out their names from that place.

Proper Worship of Yahweh at the Central Sanctuary

4 You shall not worship Yahweh your God like this.

5 But only to the place that Yahweh your God will choose from all *of* your tribes to place his name there as his dwelling shall you seek, and there you shall go.

6 And you shall bring there your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and your donations and your votive gifts and your freewill offerings and the firstling of your herd and your flock.

7 And you shall eat there before Yahweh your God, and you shall rejoice in all your endeavors, you and your family *in* which Yahweh your God has blessed you.

8 “You must not do *just* as we *are* doing here today, each according to all that is right in his eyes.

9 For you have not come up to now to the resting place and to the inheritance that Yahweh your God *is* giving to you.

10 But you will cross the Jordan, and you will settle in the land that Yahweh your God *is* giving you as an inheritance, and he will give rest to you from all your enemies from all around, and you will live securely,

11 and then *at* the place that Yahweh your God will choose, to let his name dwell there, there you shall bring all *the things* I *am* commanding you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and your donations, and all *of* the choice *things*, your votive gifts that you vow to Yahweh.

12 And you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God, you and your sons and your daughters and your slaves and your slave women and the Levite who *is* in your towns, because there is not for him a plot of ground and an inheritance with you.

13 “Take care for yourself so that you do not offer your burnt offerings at *just* any place that you happen to see,

14 but only at the place that Yahweh will choose among one of your tribes; there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all *the things* that I *am* commanding you.

Animals Eligible for Sacrifice Could Now be Eaten Locally (see Leviticus 17:1–11) / The Perpetual Sanctity of Blood

15 “But whenever you desire you may slaughter, and you may eat meat according to the blessing of Yahweh your God that he has given to you in all *of* your towns; the unclean and the clean may eat it *just* as *they would* the gazelle and as the deer.

16 Only the blood you must not eat, *but* on the ground you must pour it like water.

17 You are not allowed to eat in your towns the tithe of your grain and your wine and your olive oil and the firstborn of your herd and your flock and all *of* your votive gifts that you vowed and your freewill offering and your donations.

18 But only before Yahweh your God you shall eat it, at the place that Yahweh your God will choose, you and your son and your daughter and your slave and your slave woman and the Levite who *is* in your towns, and you must rejoice before your God in all your undertakings.

19 Take care so that you do not neglect the Levite all *of* your days on your land.

20 “When Yahweh your God enlarges your territory *just* as he has promised to you, and you say ‘I want to eat *some* meat,’ because you want it, whenever you desire you may eat meat.

21 If the place that Yahweh your God will choose to put his name there is *too* far from you, and you slaughter any of your herd and any of your flock that Yahweh has given to you *just* as I have commanded you, then you may eat whenever you desire in your towns.

22 Surely *just* as the gazelle and the deer is eaten, so *both* the unclean and the clean together may eat it.

23 Only, be sure not to eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the meat.

24 You shall not eat it, *but* on the ground you shall pour it out like water.

25 You shall not eat it, so that it will go well for you *and* your children after you, because *then* you will *be* doing what is right in the eyes of Yahweh.

26 Only your holy objects that are yours and your votive gifts you must carry and you must bring to the place that Yahweh will choose.

27 And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood on the altar of Yahweh your God, and the blood of your sacrifices you shall pour out on the altar of Yahweh your God, but the meat you may eat.

28 Be careful to obey all these things that I *am* commanding you, so that it will go well for you and for your children after you forever, because then you will *be* doing what is good and right in the eyes of Yahweh your God.

No God but Yahweh—Do Not Imitate Idolatrous Worship Practices

29 “When Yahweh your God has cut off the nations whom you *are* about to go to, to dispossess them before you, and you have dispossessed them, and you live in their land,

30 take care so that you are not ensnared into imitating them after their being destroyed from before you, and so that you not enquire concerning their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods, and *thus* I myself want to do also.’

31 You must not do so toward Yahweh your God, because of every detestable thing they have done for their gods Yahweh hates, for even their sons and their daughters they would burn in the fire to their gods.

32 All of the things that I *am* commanding you, you must diligently observe; you shall not add to it, and you shall not take away from it.”

Don’t Be Enticed by False Prophets

13:1 “If a prophet stands up in your midst or a dreamer of dreams and he gives to you a sign or wonder,

2 and the sign or the wonder comes *about* that he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods (those whom you have not known), and let us serve them,’

3 you must not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer, for Yahweh your God is testing you to know whether you love Yahweh your God with all of your heart and with all *of* your inner self.

4 You shall go after Yahweh your God, and him you shall revere, and his commandment you shall keep, and to his voice you shall listen, and him you shall serve, and to him you shall hold fast.

5 But that prophet or the dreamer of that dream shall be executed, for he spoke falsely about Yahweh your God, the *one* bringing you out from the land of Egypt and the *one* redeeming you from the house of slavery, in order to seduce you from the way that Yahweh your God commanded you to go in it; so *in this way* you shall purge the evil from your midst.

Don’t Be Enticed by Your Family and Friends

6 “If your brother, the son of your mother or your son or your daughter or your wife whom you embrace or your intimate friend in secrecy says, ‘Let us go and let us serve other gods!’ *gods* that you and your ancestors have not known,

7 from *among* the gods of the people who are around you, those near you or those far from you, from *one* end of the earth and up to the *other* end of the earth,

8 you must not give in to him, and you shall not listen to him, and your eye shall not take pity on him, and you shall not have compassion, and you shall not cover *up* for him.

9 But you shall certainly kill him; your hand shall be first against him to kill him and next the hand of all *of* the people.

10 And you shall stone him with stones and let him die, for he tried to seduce you from Yahweh your God, the *one* bringing you from *the* land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.

11 And all *of* Israel shall hear, and they shall fear, and they shall not continue to act according to this evil thing in your midst.

Don’t Be Enticed by Your Fellow Citizens

12 “If you hear in one of your towns which Yahweh your God *is* giving to you to live in, *someone* saying that

13 worthless men have gone out from your midst and have seduced the inhabitants of their town, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods!’ whom you have not known,

14 then you shall inquire and examine and interrogate thoroughly, and, look! *It is* true; the thing has actually been done, this detestable thing in your midst,

15 *then* you shall certainly strike down the inhabitants of that town with the edge of *the* sword; you shall destroy it and everything in it, its domestic animals with *the* edge of *the* sword.

16 And *then* you shall gather all of its booty into the middle of its public square, and you shall burn the town and all *of* its war-booty totally for Yahweh your God, and it shall be a pile of rubble forever; it shall not be built again.

17 And let not something cling to your hand from the things devoted to destruction, so that Yahweh may turn back from his burning anger, and he may show compassion to you and he may *continue* to show compassion and *so* multiply you just as he swore to your ancestors,

18 if you listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, to keep all *of* his commandments that I *am* commanding to you today *so as* to do the right *thing* in the eyes of Yahweh your God.”

Forbidden Mourning Practices

14:1 “You *are* children of Yahweh your God; *therefore* you must not gash yourself, and you must not make your forehead bald for *the* dead.

2 For you *are* a people holy to Yahweh your God, and you Yahweh has chosen to be a treasured possession from *among* all *of* the peoples that are on the surface of the earth.

Clean and Unclean Animals

3 You shall not eat any detestable thing.

4 These are the animals you may eat: ox, sheep, goats,

5 deer, gazelle, roebuck, wild goat, ibex, antelope, and mountain sheep.

6 And any animal having a split hoof and *so* a dividing of the hoof into two parts and that chews the cud among the animals—that *animal* you may eat.

7 Only these you may not eat from those chewing the cud and from those having a division of the hoof: the camel and the hare and the coney, because they chew the cud, but they *do* not divide the hoof; they are *therefore* unclean for you.

8 And *also* the pig because it has a division of the hoof but does not chew the cud; it *is* unclean for you; from their meat you shall not eat, and you shall not touch their carcasses.

9 “This *is what* you shall eat from all that *is* in the water: everything that has fins and scales you may eat.

10 But anything that does not have fins and scales, you may not eat, *for* it *is* unclean for you.

11 “All *of the* birds *that are* clean you may eat.

12 Now these *are* the ones you shall not eat any of them: the eagle and the vulture and the short-toed eagle,

13 and the red kite and the black kite or any kind of falcon,

14 and any *kind* of crow according to its kind,

15 and the ostrich and the short-eared owl and the seagull and the hawk according to its kind,

16 the little owl and the great owl and the barn owl,

17 and the desert owl and the carrion vulture and the cormorant,

18 and the stork and the heron according to its kind and the hoopoe and the bat.

19 And *also* all *of the* winged insects; they *are* unclean for you; you shall not eat *them*.

20 You may eat any clean bird.

21 “You shall not eat any carcass; you may give it to the alien who *is* in your towns, and he may eat it, or you may sell *it* to a foreigner, for you *are* a holy people for Yahweh your God; you may not boil a kid in its mother’s milk.

The Festival Tithe

22 “Certainly you must give a tithe *of* all the yield of your seed, which comes forth from your field year after year.

23 And you shall eat before Yahweh your God in the place that he will choose to make to dwell his name there the tithe of your grain, your wine and your olive oil and the firstling of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to revere Yahweh your God always.

24 But if the distance is too great for you, *so* that you are not able to transport it, because the place that Yahweh your God will choose to set his name there, it is *too* far from you, when Yahweh your God will bless you,

25 then *in that case* you may exchange for money, and you shall take the money to your hand and go to the place that Yahweh your God will choose.

26 You may spend the money for anything that you desire, for oxen or for sheep or for wine or for strong drink or for anything that you desire, and you shall eat *it* there before Yahweh your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.

27 And *as to* the Levite who *is* in your towns, you shall not neglect him, because there is not a plot of ground for him and an inheritance *along* with you.

The Charity Tithe

28 “At the end of three years you shall bring out all *of* the tithe of your yield for that year, and you shall store *it* in your towns.

29 And *so* the Levite may come, because there is no plot of ground for him or an inheritance with you, and the alien *also may come* and the orphan and the widow that *are* in your towns, and they may eat their fill, so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all *of* the work of your hand that you undertake.”

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