

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

Deuteronomy 12–14

Introduction

12:1 These are the statutes and ordinances you must be careful to obey as long as you live in the land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given you to possess.

No God but Yahweh—Destroy All Idolatrous Places of Worship

2 You must by all means destroy all the places where the nations you are about to dispossess worship their gods—on the high mountains and hills and under every leafy tree.

3 You must tear down their altars, shatter their sacred pillars, burn up their sacred Asherah poles, and cut down the images of their gods; you must eliminate their very memory from that place.

Proper Worship of Yahweh at the Central Sanctuary

4 You must not worship the LORD your God the way they worship.

5 But you must seek only the place he chooses from all your tribes to establish his name as his place of residence, and you must go there.

6 And there you must take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the personal offerings you have prepared, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks.

7 Both you and your families must feast there before the LORD your God and rejoice in all the output of your labor with which he has blessed you.

8 You must not do like we are doing here today, with everyone doing what seems best to him,

9 for you have not yet come to the final stop and inheritance the LORD your God is giving you.

10 When you do go across the Jordan River and settle in the land he is granting you as an inheritance and you find relief from all the enemies who surround you, you will live in safety.

11 Then you must come to the place the LORD your God chooses for his name to reside, bringing everything I am commanding you—your burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, the personal offerings you have prepared, and all your choice votive offerings which you devote to him.

12 You shall rejoice in the presence of the LORD your God, along with your sons, daughters, male and female servants, and the Levites in your villages (since they have no allotment or inheritance with you).

13 Make sure you do not offer burnt offerings in any place you wish,

14 for you may do so only in the place the LORD chooses in one of your tribal areas—there you may do everything I am commanding you.

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

15 On the other hand, you may slaughter and eat meat as you please when the LORD your God blesses you in all your villages. Both the ritually pure and impure may eat it, whether it is a gazelle or an ibex.

16 However, you must not eat blood—pour it out on the ground like water.

17 You will not be allowed to eat in your villages your tithe of grain, new wine, olive oil, the firstborn of your herd and flock, any votive offerings you have vowed, or your freewill and personal offerings.

18 Only in the presence of the LORD your God may you eat these, in the place he chooses. This applies to you, your son, your daughter, your male and female servants, and the Levites in your villages. In that place you will rejoice before the LORD your God in all the output of your labor.

19 Be careful not to overlook the Levites as long as you live in the land.

20 When the LORD your God extends your borders as he said he would do and you say, “I want to eat meat just as I please,” you may do so as you wish.

21 If the place he chooses to locate his name is too far for you, you may slaughter any of your herd and flock he has given you just as I have stipulated; you may eat them in your villages just as you wish.

22 Like you eat the gazelle or ibex, so you may eat these; the ritually impure and pure alike may eat them.

23 However, by no means eat the blood, for the blood is life itself—you must not eat the life with the meat!

24 You must not eat it! You must pour it out on the ground like water.

25 You must not eat it so that it may go well with you and your children after you; you will be doing what is right in the LORD’s sight.

26 Only the holy things and votive offerings that belong to you, you must pick up and take to the place the LORD will choose.

27 You must offer your burnt offerings, both meat and blood, on the altar of the LORD your God; the blood of your other sacrifices you must pour out on his altar while you eat the meat.

28 Pay careful attention to all these things I am commanding you so that it may always go well with you and your children after you when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

No God but Yahweh—Do Not Imitate Idolatrous Worship Practices

29 When the LORD your God eliminates the nations from the place where you are headed and you dispossess them, you will settle down in their land.

30 After they have been destroyed from your presence, be careful not to be ensnared like they are; do not pursue their gods and say, “How do these nations serve their gods? I will do the same.”

31 You must not worship the LORD your God the way they do! For everything that is abhorrent to him, everything he hates, they have done when worshiping their gods. They even burn up their sons and daughters before their gods!

32 You must be careful to do everything I am commanding you. Do not add to it or subtract from it!

Don't Be Enticed by False Prophets

13:1 Suppose a prophet or one who foretells by dreams should appear among you and show you a sign or wonder,

2 and the sign or wonder should come to pass concerning what he said to you, namely, “Let us follow other gods”—gods whom you have not previously known—”and let us serve them.”

3 You must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer, for the LORD your God will be testing you to see if you love him with all your mind and being.

4 You must follow the LORD your God and revere only him; and you must observe his commandments, obey him, serve him, and remain loyal to him.

5 As for that prophet or dreamer, he must be executed because he encouraged rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt, redeeming you from that place of slavery, and because he has tried to entice you from the way the LORD your God has commanded you to go. In this way you must purge out evil from within.

Don't Be Enticed by Your Family and Friends

6 Suppose your own full brother, your son, your daughter, your beloved wife, or your closest friend should seduce you secretly and encourage you to go and serve other gods that neither you nor your ancestors have previously known,

7 the gods of the surrounding people (whether near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other).

8 You must not give in to him or even listen to him; do not feel sympathy for him or spare him or cover up for him.

9 Instead, you must kill him without fail! Your own hand must be the first to strike him, and then the hands of the whole community.

10 You must stone him to death because he tried to entice you away from the LORD your God, who delivered you from the land of Egypt, that place of slavery.

11 Thus all Israel will hear and be afraid; no longer will they continue to do evil like this among you.

Don't Be Enticed by Your Fellow Citizens

12 Suppose you should hear in one of your cities, which the LORD your God is giving you as a place to live, that

13 some evil people have departed from among you to entice the inhabitants of their cities, saying, “Let's go and serve other gods” (whom you have not known before).

14 You must investigate thoroughly and inquire carefully. If it is indeed true that such a disgraceful thing is being done among you, 15 you must by all means slaughter the inhabitants of that city with the sword; annihilate with the sword everyone in it, as well as the livestock.

16 You must gather all of its plunder into the middle of the plaza and burn the city and all its plunder as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. It will be an abandoned ruin forever—it must never be rebuilt again.

17 You must not take for yourself anything that has been placed under judgment. Then the LORD will relent from his intense anger, show you compassion, have mercy on you, and multiply you as he promised your ancestors.

18 Thus you must obey the LORD your God, keeping all his commandments that I am giving you today and doing what is right before him.

Forbidden Mourning Practices

14:1 “You are the sons of the LORD your God. You shall not cut yourselves or make any baldness on your foreheads for the dead.

2 For you are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Clean and Unclean Animals

3 “You shall not eat any abomination.

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

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

6 Every animal that parts the hoof and has the hoof cloven in two and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat.

7 Yet of those that chew the cud or have the hoof cloven you shall not eat these: the camel, the hare, and the rock badger, because they chew the cud but do not part the hoof, are unclean for you.

8 And the pig, because it parts the hoof but does not chew the cud, is unclean for you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their

carcasses you shall not touch.

9 “Of all that are in the waters you may eat these: whatever has fins and scales you may eat.

10 And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you.

11 “You may eat all clean birds.

12 But these are the ones that you shall not eat: the eagle, the bearded vulture, the black vulture,

13 the kite, the falcon of any kind;

14 every raven of any kind;

15 the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind;

16 the little owl and the short-eared owl, the barn owl

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

18 the stork, the heron of any kind; the hoopoe and the bat.

19 And all winged insects are unclean for you; they shall not be eaten.

20 All clean winged things you may eat.

21 “You shall not eat anything that has died naturally. You may give it to the sojourner who is within your towns, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. “You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.

The Festival Tithe

22 “You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year.

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

24 And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the LORD your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the LORD your God chooses, to set his name there,

25 then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the LORD your God chooses

26 and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household.

27 And you shall not neglect the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you.

The Charity Tithe

28 “At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns.

29 And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

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