

Clough Deuteronomy Session 30
Deuteronomy 12:15-31; Guarding Israel's Unity in Yahweh Worship
Fellowship Chapel; 5 October 10

Getting back to chapter 12, if you look at the handout we have the outline there, we're on chapter 12 and you'll see that about 8 lines up from the bottom where I have 12:1-26:19, that's that second half and just to review, that second half of Moses' exposition is loving Yahweh with the soul. And the Hebrew word for soul there is nephesh, and I said at the beginning that you want to watch that word because people tend, when they hear the English word "soul" to think of it in Greek terms, that is, as the immaterial part of man. The Hebrew mind didn't think that way. So in the Old Testament, when you see the word "soul," and we're going to see a passage tonight that will prove that, they're not just talking about the immaterial part of man, they're talking about man as the sum of the immaterial spirit and the physical material body together. An easy way to think of it is to think of the creation account in Genesis 2 where we have God making a body and then after He makes the body then He goes ahead and breathes into that body, that material body, a spirit and Adam becomes, in the Hebrew text, a living person, a nephesh. So that's the Hebrew noun for that.

So now if you'll look on the outline, we're on chapter 12, jumping down one row there, where we're talking about the theological unity of Israel's tribes. Now this is Deuteronomy 12:1-31. And on the old outline I had verses 1-32, and I changed that tonight because after I got looking at it it turns out that the Hebrew text and the English text vary in how they break the chapter. We'll get to that in a little bit.

The last time we met, two weeks ago, dropping down another line in that outline, Deuteronomy 12:1-4; 12:5-14, we did both of those sections; it was elimination of "cultural pluralism," central unification of the Jewish tribes, so I want to review that because as we look at chapter 12 we're going to see things in it that have implications for how we visualize the Kingdom of God. So I want to just review that.

You'll see the two words, "statutes" and "judgments," right under the box on the handout and there's a blank there; remember, the meaning of the words statute, the best way of thinking about it is it marks out the boundaries of what are acceptable choices; the boundaries, in other words, they're positive commands, the statutes are positive. Then the word "judgments," that's case law, and you don't see much of that in chapter 12, we will in chapter 13. And case law is where Moses says if this happens then do this; so he's setting up the judicial processes for the local governments, the local tribes.

And remember that the statutes and judgments in this second half, from chapter 12 thru chapter 26, they're carrying out the implications of the Ten Commandments. Don't divorce this half of Deuteronomy from the previous. We went through Mount Sinai, the Ten Commandments and so forth and we'll go through that again, but all these statutes and judgments are to show what the Ten Commandments look like when they are applied in a social situation.

So, following again on the handout, Deuteronomy 12:1-4 and if you look at the text in chapter 12 you'll see that it says, "These are the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe...." And verse 2, "You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods," so verse 2, verse 3, verse 4, you remember, represent the destruction of the art of pagan worship. And so they were go into all the cultic centers and destroy the cultic centers, wipe out the pagan rituals, the pagan tools for their ritual performances. We want to explain why this is. Every once in a while you'll have somebody pick on these sections of the Bible and say what a horrible, backward book the Bible is because it has all this genocide and destruction. If somebody does that to you just remember that the genocidal passages in the Bible, where they went into the conquest to destroy the peoples, those peoples had hardened their hearts, they were like Pharaoh, they were people that worked out in history one of the most perverse religious cultures in human history and they had to be eliminated. And that chapter, that period, isn't talking about genocide, like the Muslims going into anybody and killing them, it's talking about a narrow area, geographically confined area for their inheritance. And the moral and ethical justification for those actions is that there you see revealed in the conquest the ethics of the final judgment in history. In other words, what God is showing as He sets up the Kingdom of God in the theocratic sense historically, He starts by bringing in the ethics of final judgment. We're used to the ethics of grace but in that period it was the ethics of final judgment; and it was suspended, after the conquest that wasn't the kosher thing to do any more.

But now under A, elimination of cultural pluralism, just by way of review, the Old Testament theocracy, that whole period, dating from about 1400 BC to the fall of the kingdom in about 600 BC, we're talking about eight centuries of time; during those eight centuries of time in human history there's this phenomenon of the Theocratic kingdom. Never in human history before and never in human history after has the world ever seen anything like this; this is a special period of eight centuries in which you have a politically historically observable laboratory illustration of what the Kingdom of God looks like. This is what does history look like when God rules politically. So that's point 1, Yahweh rules politically over a nation. And we're reminded when we see that that Israel in history is the only nation, as Dr. Albright of Johns Hopkins archeology department pointed out, it is the only nation in human history that ever had a contract with God. The United States doesn't have it, no European country has it, no Asian country has it, no South American country, no one ever, no Middle Eastern country has it; this was an absolutely unique phenomenon in history. So Yahweh rules politically over this nation.

Number 2, the social, economic and religious features are structural features of the Kingdom of God in the future Millennium. These details, and this is why I'm going to spend time on some of these details because we're trying to understand what, in the future, when the Kingdom of God is established at the return of Jesus Christ, what sort of thing does that look like. So when we look at these details they're not casual things that God just kind of did at that point in history. We tend to think that just because it was ancient history these principles no longer apply, like principles change with the calendar or some sort.

2 + 2 is 4 for them, 2 + 2 is 4 for us. So the social, economic and religious features are revelations of what the Kingdom of God looks like or what the Ten Commandments imply for human society.

Then we have point 3, they therefore constitute wisdom for today. If we are going to participate as Christian citizens in our country we ought to look at these wisdom principles and Deuteronomy 4, remember, Moses said people will look upon this law and say what nation has a law so wise as this nation. And we're not being pedantic here because history shows... history shows that Western civilization, in the areas where Western civilization has prospered it has done so, not because of its inheritance of Greek and Roman culture, but rather because of Christian influences that brought the Bible and did away with a lot of the pagan perversions in Roman culture. That's why the West became wealthy, economically, and powerful; it's because the idea that history has predictability. You can't operate a business if you can't forecast the future, and you can't forecast the future if there's not a process that you can extrapolate or some knowledge of how history works. Paganism had no concept of a progressive history, it was just a cyclic thing. And paganism could never develop a real capitalist free market system; it could never develop a freedom system. And so that all came about in the West because of the wisdom of Deuteronomy.

Now we had these slides that we've seen, and slide 1, just to quickly review, the Ten Commandments, this is a chiasm, remember, we went in the Ten Commandments and we noticed this chiastic structure to the Ten Commandments. And we've gone through that a number of times and so we move from that slide to the next one; this is the design that implied by that chiasm. In other words, if you're going to have a Kingdom of God that operates socially there is an order that has to be followed. And this order will be followed and is followed in history. And it starts out at the bottom level which deals with the first, second and tenth commandments, which are the commandments of chapter 12; that's why chapter 12 fits into this whole thing. You can't build, this is like a layer cake, you can't build the upper layers of the society if you don't get the foundation established correctly. And so chapter 12 is doing that; that's the purpose of chapter 12. It's dealing with the heart allegiance to God, not as an abstraction of the Ten Commandments, just giving you the bare naked commandment, but here in chapter 12 we see the flesh fleshed out, we see the first, second and tenth commandments actually worked out, what they look like.

And that's the one that we're looking at here. When we get into chapter 13 we're going to go up one layer. So here's what's going on in the flow of the book of Deuteronomy.

Next, the next slide, we've gone through this one and here again we want to see that there's a reason for this design. If you look at the heart as how people think, if you're going to deal with that, then here's what we're working with. The politics are up here at level 4, underneath that are the ethics, underneath that, epistemology or how do you know truth, and underneath that is what is reality or metaphysics. And you can't escape this.

Let me give you two illustrations of why you can't escape this thing. Let's deal with abortion, just quickly. We have a divided society today

over the issue of abortion. We have it divided in the courts, we have a tremendous cultural cleave between the issue of abortion and choice. Now that is a political discussion, but watch what happens. How do you decide that question? Yelling at each other? Voting? No, that doesn't resolve the issue because it's not a political issue, primarily. It's always talked about in terms of politics but you've got to go down one layer underneath the politics, there are two different ethical views going on here. There's an ethical view that the fetus just simply is not worth a value to protect and it's good not to protect it. So we have a cleavage between ethics. That's why we have a political difference.

Well, how do you resolve the ethical difference and understand the ethical difference. You come down one layer and deal with the issue of truth, how do you know things to be true, how do you know things to be false, and then the metaphysics. And what we're dealing with here is a fetus in a woman's womb considered to be life that is to be protected, or isn't it? Is it just sort of like a tumor or part of the woman's body that does not merit protection. That's a metaphysical question and you can't vote it out of existence, and you can't sit there and yell at each other; the discussion has to go down and drill down at a deeper profound level. And in the conversations sometimes it would help if what we would do when people talk politically is say just wait a minute, this is not a political question, the question is the sum and substance of the fetus, that has to be decided or you never get to square one politically. And what's happening in our culture is we never drill down to level 2, 3 and 4, we're sitting up there at level 1 yelling at each other at the political level and it's not a political question; it can't be resolved politically. I'll give you another example, homosexuality, the other biggie today where we have cultural cleavage. And so people are saying, some say well, it's unethical to discriminate against people that can't help this pattern, and you're being cruel, you're just not right here, it's an ethical appeal. Both sides are appealing to an ethic. Notice this, both sides think they're right so they are both saying ethic A or ethic B. So now we drill down one level, so now let's go down to the truth and the metaphysical area, down here, and the issue in homosexuality is very similar to [the] fetus. The question is, is homosexuality a chosen lifestyle or is it a constitutional stuff that nobody can choose? That's the sum of the argument and you can sit and yell at each other all the time politically but that's not where the issue is. And when have you ever heard these issues discussed down at this lower level? We don't. And that's because of the triviality of the discussion that's going on.

So as we move through the book of Deuteronomy that's why we keep drilling down to this level here because Moses insists on the issue of Yahweh or idolatry. Don't think of that as something that's just ancient and irrelevant to today. What they're dealing with, they call it idolatry, but we have it today. This here, the epistemology and metaphysics is a terrifically theological thing. Metaphysically you have basically only two choices; either there is a Creator/creature distinction or there isn't. If there isn't it's just an impersonal universe. So there's not fifteen answers here, there's only two: either there's a Creator/creature or there isn't, and if there isn't then the universe is just an impersonal "it." That's the basic metaphysic. Once you start there and you can move from there to your answers. But people have to understand where they are coming from at these deeper levels and that's why idolatry is such a

critical thing and that's why in these first four verses Moses is saying you've got to go out and you've got to clean out the idolatrous religion. In our terms it means straighten up this mess, if you don't straighten this up you will never get the Kingdom of God.

So, going on then, down at the bottom it says the treaty form of Deuteronomy implies, the arrow means implies, in the Kingdom of God, God is King, remember, He is the King, with a throne and will not tolerate treason by His subjects aligning themselves with other god-kings. Yahweh is simply the King of this national entity. So that's the first four verses.

And then we dealt, last time, in verses 5-14, and the issue there is the Jewish tribes are to come to a location and we said that that gets involved with a concept of sacred space. Remember the theme of a sacred space, you see it early in Genesis where God created, He has the garden of Eden, that is sacred space, physical space, dimension, X, Y and Z, and that's where He shows up. And then He shows up at various places in the Bible, Abraham has this encounter with God at Bethel, the Hebrew word "Beth" means house, "El," God, the house of God. That's why that place got the name. So there were these places that were sacred and they were marked out because those were where God appeared at certain points in time.

So now in the Kingdom of God he's trying to create sacred space and they've got a problem with polytheism and paganism. So if you hold the place I want to show you some of the thinking of the ancient world so you understand why this is such a big deal. So let's turn to 2 Kings 17; there's an incident that happened centuries and centuries later; this happened after the exile of the Northern Kingdom, and in those days the policy of conquering people to make sure there were not insurrections, what they would do is they would move different populations into the land to settle it. So in 2 Kings 17 we have the problem of verse 24, the king of Assyria, now the Assyrians have conquered the north, this was after 721 and the Northern Kingdom has fallen. "Then the king of Assyria brought people," notice what he's doing, he's bringing people from Babel, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel," so now you have... it's a migration, a forced migration of a population, bringing with them different religions and different cultures. But look what happens; watch what happens here because this gives you an insight into how these people are thinking. "...and they took possession of Samaria and they dwelt in its cities. [25] And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them." So now we have Yahweh, it's His land, and therefore He is exercising the cursing provisions of the Mosaic Law Code. So, now these Gentiles, they can't understand why are the animals attacking them here.

[26] "So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, 'The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land. [27] Then the king of Assyria said, 'Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there;" one of the Jewish priests, "let

them go, dwell there, and teach them the rituals of the God of the land." Now see that phrase, three times, "God of the land." Now that is fundamental in the theology of the Old Testament; it is fundamental in the theology of paganism. In polytheism, where you have many gods you have the concept that there's a god that controls this area, this acreage, there's a god who controls this acreage, there's another god that controls this acreage and so on. So when you go into these different regions geographically you have to come to terms with the god of those regions. So what they're saying is in one sense God is manifesting Himself in the kingdom as a god of the region, the god of that sacred space. So therefore, when they come into and conquest, the pagans, God wants them to remove the visages, the artistic visages of that paganism so that there will not be any confusion about who the God of the Israel region, or land, is. He wants it cleaned out.

And we mentioned, and we won't spend a big time here but if we can have the next slide, this was the map of Israel, here's the Northern Kingdom in orange, the Southern Kingdom here in green, and you remember, and this is vital to think about because it has very pertinent applications today. What you have here is an incident in which the Northern Kingdom, Jeroboam, he was king, and he would not trust the Lord to prosper him, particularly what he was concerned about was that the central sanctuary, chapter 12, the central sanctuary was in Jerusalem. So where was the central sanctuary? Was it in the green or was it in the orange? It was in the green. So now he's king of the orange area, the northern kingdom, so what does that mean for his people? Where are they going to have to go three times a year? Down to the green area. So what do you suppose he's thinking at a politician? He's thinking wait a minute, this is creating an allegiance with the king of the south so now my people are going to have divided allegiance to me. So his solution, which is called the sins of Jeroboam, repeated repeatedly in the rest of the Bible, what he conceived of was a political scheme whereby the state took over religion and used religion for political purposes. So now he establishes these two areas, Bethel and Dan, two historic places, God did not authority that, God's sacred space was here in Jerusalem, but he insisted on developing his own religion as a tool of the political state. And this is universal among Gentile nations.

Inevitably you have the state playing religion and it's a theme that you'll see today. It's why Adolf Hitler during the Nazi Reich, the first thing that Hitler did was to attack the German evangelical churches to secure the allegiance of the church to the state so the church and the religious people become subject to state control. So don't think of this as some just sort of ancient sweet Bible story for the kids in Sunday School. We're having a profound thing here. So now when you read Deuteronomy 12 what we're on guard for as we observe the text is to ask ourselves, where is the state power and coercion in the establishment of this central cultist. Does God work this way or do only Gentile nations work this way. Because, remember, whenever you have the state, by definition the symbol of the state is the sword, so if you're going to do that then you're going to have coercion, because that's what the government is, it's coercion to restrain evil; so are you going to use the force of coerciveness power, political power, to define religious zones.

Okay, let's go back now to Deuteronomy 12; the next slide, to show you how permeating this was in the ancient world look at the right picture here on this slide, and I think I have it on your handout, this is a pillar in Egypt and on the pillar is the hieroglyphic message in the Egyptian language. But on the side of it there's a name here, and those hieroglyphics denote a certain Pharaoh. But what's interesting about the artwork here is the theology of the art. Remember, art carries theological messages and on the left side, or on the top here you have the symbol for heaven, and on the bottom of this you have the symbol for earth. Now what do you suppose is going on here? And along the sides you have these two vertical lines and if you look carefully they do not touch heaven and they do not touch the earth; they are the Egyptian scepters which denote state authority. Now what do you think this artist is communicating? What political thought is going on into this art? And this is typical of Egypt. You've got the Pharaoh's name, you've got the symbol for heaven and the symbol for earth, and you have the symbols for government power and authority. What is it saying, exactly? Pharaoh is a mediator between heaven and earth. In other words, the state defines religion, the state is superior to religion.

So there's a central thing going on here because in the first and second commandments what does it say? "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." And that includes the state, and that includes Pharaoh and that includes everyone else. So when the first and second and tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," when those work out in a political social context, you will see that the power of the state is broken under Old Testament law. There is no authorization for the state to interfere with religion.

So we have, then, the families come there and this sets us up for Deuteronomy 12:12, the tail end of the last section. He's talking about one of these three annual pilgrimages; he says, "And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God," that is at the place where He sets His name, "you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants..." and "you will rejoice there," you will rejoice, it's a time of celebration. God wants people to enjoy Him. The Westminster Confession of Faith, what is the end of man? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever. So it's joy there.

Now tonight we're looking from verse 15 down to verse 28 and here we've already covered the festivities that come but now we're looking at what doesn't come to the central sanctuary. So there's a distinction between the local festivities and the central festivities and there's political and religious implications to what we're looking at. Before we get to Roman numeral II in your outline it says; "Where is state coercion observed in the text?" there is no monarchy; at this point there is no monarchy in Israel. People come, they're commanded to come to the central sanctuary but the point is that they're not forced by the monarch to do that, which means what? It means it's choice, it's up to the individual to choose to come. Yes, God will be displeased if they don't come and yes, they will experience cursings, but the point is there's no politics involved here. This is strictly between the Jewish people and their God; no king, no higher authority, not even Moses intervenes in that relationship. So the local cleansing of pagan art forms used in worship by local communities, they are to clean up the places, they are all over Israel's conquered land. So the point is that it has to be taken care of

and nobody is using a sword to force it. And that's why I say there must be metaphysical and epistemological agreement for there to be a common ethic and political unity.

And also, verse 12 points out they come as families; the only tribe mentioned in verse 12 is the Levites and that's because the Levites had to be economically supported by the families in each city or each area. The Levites had no inheritance of their own, they had no land of their own, they had no capital assets of their own, so that meant that they were basically charity cases. They were teachers but they had to be supported by the families. But what's missing in verse 12 is the tribal names, other than the Levites that were charity cases there are no tribes there. What does that tell you? It tells you that the people don't come to the central sanctuary by tribe, they come to the central sanctuary by individual families. When they fight a war they come by tribe but when they come to worship God it's the individual in the family that do that.

Okay, now we're on verses 15 and following. Let's look at some observations in the text here. If you'll follow me in verse 15 we'll just kind of skim this. "However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike. [16] Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water. [17] You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock," so forth and so on, or any of those offerings. ["of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand."] Verse 18, "But you must eat them before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord your God chooses," so forth and so on, ["you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all to which you put your hands."]

And then in verse 19, "Take heed to yourself that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land." And then verse 10, it's a repetition, "When the Lord your God enlarges your border as He has promised you, and you say, 'Let me eat meat,' because you long to eat meat, you may eat as much meat as your heart desires. [21] If the place where the Lord your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, then you may slaughter from your herd and from your flock which the Lord has given you, just as I have commanded you, and you may eat within your gates as much as your heart desires. [22] Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them. [23] Only be sure that you do not eat the blood," see, it's a repetition of the case, he does say twice, the Bible does that often, by the mouth of two or three witnesses. ["... for the blood is the life; you may not eat the life with the meat. [24] You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth like water. [25] You shall not eat it, that it may go well with you and your children after you, when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord."]

And then in verse 26, "Only the holy things which you have, and your vowed offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the Lord chooses. [27] And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the

altar of the Lord your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out..." so forth and so on. So how do you summarize that section of the text? It's telling you that there's a distinction in what is eaten, where it is eaten, by whom it is eaten, and when it is eaten. So why is this eat, eat, eat, eat thing in here all the time? Because that is the communion, as it were, the festivities and under the old law, while they were out in the wilderness there was a mandate that if you killed an animal, Leviticus 17, we won't have time to go there tonight, but in Leviticus 17:3-5 the point there is that if, in the wilderness, where they are now when Moses is talking to them, they were not permitted to slaughter animals and not bring them to the central sanctuary, because it was close. And there was a reason for that, because by not allowing local slaughter of animals and eating them it prevented the adoption of pagan religion because the pagans also sacrificed to their gods. So by requiring that every animal, whether it was a sacrificial animal or not to be brought to the sanctuary, there was a discipline against that kind of religious thing. So this whole thing has to do with the first amendment.

Now in chapter 12 let's look at some of the details of this. Look at verse 15, notice what it says here, It says, "However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates," that's the local places, that's not talking about the central location, that's talking about the local cities. Notice it says, "whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you;" that's talking about economic blessings and it's saying that what they can bring is a proportion of their economic blessings. And by the way, this violates the socialist principle; there's nowhere in verse 15 does it say they all come with the same quantity, the same kind of animal, they do not do that, they come as God blessed them. In other words, there's economic inequality there and there's nothing unjust about economic inequalities in spite of the Marxism that you're getting in the schools and the community colleges. From the Bible standpoint economic inequality is not a function of unjustness, unless it's due to criminal activity, of course.

Okay, so you bring "whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing" that God has given you, and "the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike." There's two things I wasn't clear on last time; there's the clean and the unclean people and there are the authorized animals and the unauthorized animals. There are certain animals that were not to be brought to the central sanctuary. And these could be eaten locally, no problem, but they wouldn't bring them to the central sacrifice. And by "the clean and the unclean," now let me take you to a passage to show you what this is talking about. They're not talking about someone, necessarily, who has sinned. The "clean and the unclean" refer to ceremonial rituals and to give you an example of that, if you'll hold the place and turn to Leviticus 12, here's an example of what they are talking about when they say "clean and unclean." And you say well, why were people considered clean and unclean, what is going on here? It was because Israel was a special nation, God had a contract with them and He wanted to reveal certain principles. So it's like you're in a play or a drama and certain people play a certain role in the drama or play and it doesn't mean their character is like that, it means they're play acting that character. So God has these rules and rituals that he has.

So if you look in Leviticus 12, here's a ritual after childbirth. The feminists would have a ball with this chapter. "Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [2] 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying: If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. [3] And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. [4] She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days." It's thirty-three plus seven, there's forty days, "She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled." That's what it means to be ceremonially unclean, it's not saying this woman sinned. It's a blessing to have a child. But from the ceremonial point of view she was unclean. [5] "But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity and she shall continue in the blood of her purification sixty-six days."

Now you say well, why is there a distinction between male and female here. I'm not sure why, but since it's in the same context as circumcision on the 8th day, what did we learn last time about circumcision on the 8th day? Was it randomly chosen? Or was circumcision on the 8th day related to chemistry in the body of the baby? And sure enough, the prothrombin, which is the clotting factor in blood for a baby peaks on the 8th day at 110% of its normal plain and then fades off. So if you circumcise anything outside the 8th day you're running a problem of hemorrhage. And so there's a reason why circumcision is done on the 8th day unlike the hospitals today. There was a reason there and my point in bringing this up is that Moses certainly didn't know about prothrombin and vitamin K, so the point is that God authorized this thing and it turns out that it wasn't just arbitrary ceremony, it was related to something physiological in the body that Moses didn't know about. And I'm not so sure, when it's talking about this division between a woman who has borne a son versus a woman who has borne a daughter that there isn't some reason physiologically for this, that it doesn't mirror something that we haven't studied yet. But one sure thing it shows is that there is a distinction sexually between male and female, it is not smeared together in some sort of a homosexual spectrum of continuity; there's a clear distinction going on here.

So going back, then, to Deuteronomy 12. They are able to eat certain things. Now what else do we notice in the text. We notice something else repeated here. And it has to do in verse 16 and it's repeated several other times, you will not eat the blood, you will pour it on the earth like water. [16, "Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water."] Now that mandate goes back to Noah, it goes back prior to the days of Moses and here's some insight into why. Blood, in the Hebrew mentality, was the pars pro toto or the part for the whole of life. Life could not be conceived without blood and physiologically blood is the carrier of nutrition and the carrier of the affluent of cell metabolism, so blood is very critical, and God considers blood, physical blood, to be a picture of life itself. So that's number one thing to remember.

Number two is why is it that when you kill an animal to eat it, you're given permission to eat it, from Noah on vegetarianism is not mandated, so you have permission to eat the meat. But you're not supposed to, after you kill an animal just eat the meat with the blood in it. You're

supposed to get rid of the blood and pour it on the ground. Why is that? Here's my suggestion. I suggest that this itself is a metaphor to teach us a theological truth, that when we kill an animal to eat it we have basically said that I survive because of the sacrifice of an animal. Now what is that setting us up for mentally? I live because someone dies for me.

It was a former Muslim terrorist, Walid -- what was that guy, Jik, that we talked to in Houston that time -- I forgot. Walid Shoebat? He was a former Lebanese Muslim terrorist, and he was telling us one day about after he became a Christian he didn't quite understand the cross and understand until he ate at McDonalds. And you wonder, how did he have a theological breakthrough eating a hamburger at McDonalds. Because after he had become a Christian he was sitting there munching on this hamburger and he realized an animal had to die that I might live. That's a picture of Jesus Christ dying on the cross that I might live. And that's how Walid got his soteriology straightened out: by eating a hamburger at McDonalds. Now I'm not suggesting that everybody that eats hamburgers at McDonalds has a theological breakthrough, but the point is that this is how fine-tuned our life structure is. And of course, the only time where in the Scriptures it does say "eat the blood" is the Lord Jesus Christ, when He says, in John 6, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood you have no life in you. And that's commemorated in communion. We don't just have the bread, we also have the cup. God, as it were, is saying never mind, this animal is not the final sacrifice, you don't eat the blood of that, but when My Son dies, then do that. So there's a lot of theology wrapped up in a simple dietary imperative here. So again, as you work your way through the book of Deuteronomy understand that underneath here and involved in these words there's lots of stuff, lot of big ideas going on here.

So let's continue, it says in verse 17 and 18, it says that "You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock," all of that list in verse 17 and the first part of 18, that list refers to things that were sacrificed and brought to God. Physically through His space in Jerusalem or wherever He set His name, four or five other places besides Jerusalem. So, then it says, [18] "But you must eat them before the Lord your God in the place" where He puts His name. Notice Jerusalem isn't named yet because it hasn't happened yet. Then it says, "you and your son and your daughter, our male servant and your female servant, and the Levite," see, it's the same thing, they're coming as individuals, they're coming as families, they're not coming tribally, they're coming in families, except the Levite because he had to be economically supported. When they traveled they had to provide travel funds for the Levite from their village to come with them to this central place. "Take heed," he says in verse 19, don't "forsake the Levite," they were part of the... and by the way, again, there's no enforcement from a king here; this all was an appeal to families to obey what God was telling them. The power of the state sword does not hold over this. This is all an appeal to the individual heart.

Now verse 20 and following of course is a repetition, an idea, it has exception however, when you get in the text of the Bible and you see a story repeated, what you want to think about is when the second version of

the story comes, what's different from the first story. Don't just look at what's parallel, that's obvious. It's obvious that we've got a parallel here, but where are there little twists and turns in the phraseology? Because remember, Moses is speaking this; he's speaking it to people, many of whom were illiterate so he had to repeat himself. But he puts a little zing on the second version of the story and immediately you see it in verse 20. Verse 20 isn't in the first part, but here in the second part, "When the Lord your God enlarges your border as He has promised you, and you say, 'Let me eat meat,'" this is the same kind of notice we saw back earlier in our studies.

Remember back in Deuteronomy 1 he kind of comes up with this almost casual observation, he says remember when we had to change leadership, remember it was all me, and then we had to have a whole bunch of secondary and tertiary leadership. Why was that? Because God had expanded the population. Now why was that little casual remark? It wasn't just talking about management principles or managerial structure to the nation, he adds, I had to change the managerial structure because why? Because the population expanded. What was the population expansion interpreted as? He used the term, "you have become like sand on the seashore." Now that phrase ought to ring a bell because that's talking about the Abrahamic Covenant. So in that little notice back in Deuteronomy 1 it looks like on the surface he's talking about a shift in leadership, but he has this little phrase he attaches there so they're reminded of the continuity of God's work in their lives, that God had blessed them, He had blessed them so much that He had to change the leadership structure.

Well, here's the same thing in verse 20, it's a reminder of the faithfulness of Yahweh. Yahweh has promised that He will give them this land, and so He says, "When the Lord your God enlarges," as He promised you, so forth, so forth, and now we're going to change a little bit who goes where and when you have your festivities, whether it's local or central. So he basis this whole chapter 12, the reason he has to readapt the protocols of sacrifice, worship and festivities is because God blessed them, He brought them into the land. So see the blessing, the blessing is all underneath this next narrative, it goes on. And so we need not have to go through every verse between 20 and 28 because it's a repetition of the previous section.

So that brings us down to Roman numeral III, [someone asks a question, can't hear.] Yeah, it should be forsake not. And also, at the end of that, you look at verse 28, before we go any further, oh, where Milt just pointed out in the handout, 12:18b-19, see, there's a blank there, the idea there is there was no national civil covenant at this time. My point in making that is that since the enlightenment, including our own country, the theory of John Locke and the theory of political thought is a social contract, the government is established by a social contract. Well, there's no social contract here, and that should ring a bell in our political thinking, why wasn't there a social contract? Because there was a divine contract. Israel was unique, the contract was between God and the nation, it's not a contract between the tribes, it's a contract vertically with their God. And that's what marks out Israel's difference, that's why Israel can't be compared to any nation, there's just a difference in structure.

Okay, now look at the end, verse 28, toward the end here, "Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God." That gets back to the blessing and cursing thing. And, of course, sadly speaking, they didn't do well because they violated the principles of chapter 12, which in turn are what? Chapter 12 carries out the implications of which three of the Ten Commandments? One, two, and ten. So to violate these protocols is to violate the first, second and tenth commandment. That's what a violation looks like in actual practice.

Now we have the last thing, Roman III, the warning against cultural pluralism, now didn't we have a warning before about cultural pluralism? Yeah, the destruction in verses 1-4. So what do you suppose, as you look at how Moses is speaking here in chapter 12, what would you infer is his emphasis? The first four verses of his speech, this section, deals with destruction of the art work, the architecture, the locations of pagan worship. The last verses that he has in this passage deal with the same threat, the threat of pagan worship. So if the first part of it is threat of pagan worship and the last part is threat of pagan worship, what is his emphasis? Threat of pagan worship. That's the text of chapter 12.

Now let's look at verse 29 and 31, I've cut off verse 32 because verse 32 in your English is actually verse one of the next chapter in the Hebrew. And besides, verse 32 completely changes the subject so you know that something's going on here. Verse 32, as we will see next week, is directly tied to the trial of the false prophet. So, 29 through verse 31. It says, "When the Lord your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land," now verse 30, "take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'Gee, how did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.'" Why would they think that way? What passage did I take you to in Kings, that passage we went to in Kings, 2 Kings 17, remember, the title for deities in the pagan mind? gods of the land. So when they come in and take over this land, remember, it's an economy that's agricultural, so what do you suppose the businessman, basically the whole center of their economy is concerned with? Agricultural prosperity and that was what pagan worship was all about, the fertility things and all the rest of them, it's all business related.

And so if they were coming into this new land the tendency would have been gee, you know, if things aren't going right in my crop, it must be because somehow I've offended the gods of the land. And Yahweh, you know, He got us out in the desert, He was up there in the wilderness wanderings and He dealt with us in Egypt, but you know, this is different, I'm in the land now, I've got my farm, I've got my investment, I've got to have a return on my investment and I can't afford to jeopardize things so I'd better make sure that I don't offend the gods of the land. That's why it was a continuing threat.

So here it says, verse 10, "take heed to yourself," now if you look this phrase up, "take heed to yourself" it occurs seven times in the book of Deuteronomy and three of the seven times are in this chapter: verse 13, verse 19 and verse 20. And of course now that tells you something else,

that tells you the emphasis and tells you the importance that Moses is attaching to this command. [31] "You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way;" see, it was syncretistic, God doesn't want you to worship that way, and you say well, isn't that being picky? Now look at the next verse and you see it wasn't being picky, "for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods." That is what Canaanite religion is all about and that was one of the reasons why the genocide was ordered.

Unfortunately, as we know from history of the Old Testament, in your notes I have the kings, Solomon built a high place for Molech, and in your notes you'll notice a little note there in parenthesis, notice in the word "Molech," that's one of the deities, that's one of the names the Jews called him, we're not sure that that name the pagans used; we think that the word "Molech" was a nasty word that the Jews created themselves to describe pagan gods. And here's why. If you count the consonants in the word "Molech," M, l, and the ch is k, so it's M-l-k, now M-l-k normally in Hebrew would be the word for king, but what they did is they changed the vowels, instead of Molech, you see that in Melchizedek, Melchizedek, he's the king of righteousness, there's M-l-k again, but it's M-e-l-e-k, so what the Jews did is they took the two "e" vowels out and they replaced them with "o" and "e" and those vowels come from the Hebrew word, boshet which is the word shame, for abomination. So it's sort of a snotty way, it's sort of a name calling device to refer to a pagan deity, a Molech. A Molech was a despicable abomination substitute for a king.

So what does Solomon do? He makes a high place for Molech. Can you believe this? Why is this king on earth makes a place for Molech and then Ahaz and Manasseh actually burn their children as sacrifices for this god. Now parents, can you imagine taking your daughter or your son and what would make you want to burn your child and sacrifice him to god. What do you suppose would be going through your head there? It would probably be to assuage guilt or to... because you fear condemnation you want to placate the deity. And of course, we have that same thing today in the various religions; Islam thinks nothing of sacrificing their children to their god in holy war; abortion is a sacrifice of children, don't think this is ancient history, it's still going on; the mentality is still basically there.

So here we have, and I've got those points in your outline, page 3:

State religion demands total allegiance. That's why the politicians and the state want to capture religion, because it is a tool, a powerful tool to ensure their power.

Second, state religion is demonic, God is not in state religion, He never has been. When the Church has tried to combine with the state it's always been a disaster, down through history; always been a disaster. Satan spreads death, not life, we know that theologically, so if state religion is demonic, what then does state religion do? It therefore is destructive of life, it always is. So this is the lesson we're getting out of this text of Moses, it's not just a story of ancient history.

And finally, look at the conclusion, where's the sacred space today? In John 4 the Lord Jesus talks to a Samaritan woman and she says: where should we worship, where is the sacred space, on this mountain in Samaria or down in Jerusalem with you Jews. And Jesus answers her, He says the Jews are right, the sacred space is in Jerusalem, but the time is coming and now is about to happen when the sacred space will be in the human heart; this is the dispensation of the Church, so that's why there's no sacred space physically until the return of Christ. So we have, then, the idea in John 4 of the sacred space changing but what implication does that have in the light of chapter 12? What can we say about this?

What have we just covered? Let's just summarize quickly. Chapter 12 is talking about purging false religion and it's influences and protecting that sacred space of the holiness of God. Well, if the holiness of God in the sacred space is in the heart of every regenerate person, then this says that that space has to be respected and protected. The holiness of God and the indwelling Holy Spirit, that is just like the Old Testament physical picture here; it's got to be protected, and God is not going to accept all kinds of syncretism and everything else that go on in our heads, and that's why that quote, finally, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, pull down the strongholds and so forth in our hearts and we all have those; we are all doing this mentally in our heart what these people had to do physically in the various high places. We're doing that all the time, at least if we're growing in the Lord.

So finally, in the Millennial Kingdom it's going to be the sacred space return to Jerusalem, Ezekiel 40-48, and in the eternal state where there's no need for light because God's glory fills it all. So history is moving forward, we're going to get there, it's just a torturous road sometimes to get there, but right now chapter 12 is a depiction in a physically visible... you can run a film in your mind, sort of a "U-tube" thing in your mind of what was going on and then that becomes an aid or a tool to think about what the battle is in our hearts to deal with and protect the holy space of God, the indwelling Holy Spirit has created at regeneration.