

# DEUTERONOMY

STUDY FIVE | CHAPTER 11:8-12:14




NEW HOME,  
NEW HABITS

## INTRODUCTION

This is a tricky passage to tackle in one study because it bridges two very large sections of Deuteronomy. First, Moses outlines the basic principles of the relationship between God and his people. The rest of Moses' second sermon will focus on how Israel should behave in the Promised Land, beginning with Deuteronomy 12.1. You might well wonder: why all these details? It's because the land isn't just land, it's God's land; the place where the LORD will dwell. That means it is set apart for his purposes (holy).

Chapter 11 revisits many of the themes we encountered earlier, but focuses on the new home that Israel is being given, and sets before them the two paths we encountered in Study #1: the way of life (blessings) and the way of death (curses). In Chapter 12, the people are introduced to the new habits of this renewed relationship, and God extends an invitation to meet and eat with him. From this context, Israel will be given the remainder of the laws in Deuteronomy. Placing these two themes of land and worship next to each other is very intentional.

## STUDY FRAMEWORK

-  Bible Passage
-  Study Notes + Study Questions
-  Prayer

# Bible Passage

## DEUT 11:8-12:14

### CHAPTER 11

- 8 You shall therefore keep the whole commandment that I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and take possession of the land that you are going over to possess,
- 9 and that you may live long in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give to them and to their offspring, a land flowing with milk and honey.
- 10 For the land that you are entering to take possession of it is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated it, like a garden of vegetables.
- 11 But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven,
- 12 a land that the LORD your God cares for. The eyes of the LORD your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.
- 13 And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,
- 14 he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil.
- 15 And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full.
- 16 Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them;
- 17 then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land

will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the LORD is giving you.

- 18 You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.
- 19 You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.
- 20 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,
- 21 that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.
- 22 For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, loving the LORD your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him,
- 23 then the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you.
- 24 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours. Your territory shall be from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea.
- 25 No one shall be able to stand against you. The LORD your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you on all the land that you shall tread, as he promised you.
- 26 See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse:
- 27 the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today,

- 28 and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.
- 29 And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.
- 30 Are they not beyond the Jordan, west of the road, toward the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oak of Moreh?
- 31 For you are to cross over the Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you. And when you possess it and live in it,
- 32 you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the rules that I am setting before you today.

## CHAPTER 12

- 1 These are the statutes and rules that you shall be careful to do in the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth.
- 2 You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.
- 3 You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You shall chop down the carved images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place.
- 4 You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way.
- 5 But you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go,

- 6 and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.
- 7 And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your households, in all that you undertake, in which the LORD your God has blessed you.
- 8 You shall not do according to all that we are doing here today, everyone doing whatever is right in his own eyes,
- 9 for you have not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance that the LORD your God is giving you.
- 10 But when you go over the Jordan and live in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies around, so that you live in safety,
- 11 then to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell there, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, and all your finest vow offerings that you vow to the LORD.
- 12 And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male servants and your female servants, and the Levite that is within your towns, since he has no portion or inheritance with you.
- 13 Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place that you see,
- 14 but at the place that the LORD will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.

# Study Notes

## BACKGROUND

Ancient Agriculture: When God promises in 11.14 that “he will give the rain for your land in its season,” He is making a serious commitment. Two or three bad years of low rainfall could mean starvation for a village in Iron Age Palestine.

The Sacrificial System: In 12.10-14 we get some rules about the place of sacrifice. A good way to think about this ceremony is as a barbecue with and dedicated to the LORD. The very best is offered up to him, and the remaining portions of food are enjoyed in remembrance and celebration of how God has provided for them.

This is another big passage. Here is one way to divide it:

- Chapter 11 - New Home (breakdown by Daniel Block)
  - > 11.8-12: The Gift of the Land
  - > 11.13-21: The Test in the Land
  - > 11.22-25: The Promise of the Land
  - > 11.26-31: The Opportunity of the Land
- Chapter 12 - New Habits
  - > 12.1-4: God’s Invitation - False Worship
  - > 12.5-14: God’s Invitation - True Worship

## IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

- Prior to this passage, at the start of chapter 10, Israel is reminded of the covenant renewal which God undertook even in spite of their idolatry. Remembering God’s graciousness, Israel is admonished to “circumcise [their] heart,” and love God wholeheartedly.

- We’re dropping into the middle of an argument here, since v.8 begins with “therefore.” Read Deut 10.12-11.7 to help fill in the context.

## IN DEUTERONOMY

- 11.12 “A land that the LORD your God cares for...” The land is both an expression of God’s providence and of Israel’s relationship with Him. The choice of the verb “cares for” (darash) is unique and denotes a particular, loving attention.
- 11.26 “I am setting before you a blessing and a curse” is the basis of the covenant renewal ceremony in Deut 27.
- 12.5 “The place that the LORD your God shall choose” is a phrase that occurs 11 times in Deuteronomy, always with respect to proper worship. Right worship is a crucial part of this book!
- 12.7 “You shall rejoice!” is a recurring theme when Deuteronomy speaks about worship, e.g. 12.18; 14.26; 16.11-14; 26.11; 27.7.

## IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- 11.30 “beside the oak of Moreh” is a little detail with profound significance. In Genesis 12 the oak of Moreh is where God reveals himself to Abram and enters into covenant. The nearby town of Shechem also plays a big role in the early history of Israel (e.g. Gen 33.18; Josh 24.25 and 24.32; Jdg 9.6).

## IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- As with last week’s study in Deuteronomy 8, there is a clear connection to Hebrews 4, especially in Deut 12.9
- Read John 4.21-24 for Jesus’ fulfillment of Israel’s place of worship.

# Study Questions

## WHAT DOES IT SAY?

This passage breaks into two major sections. What is the focus of each section? How are they related to each other?

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Pay attention to the verbs in this passage. What is God doing? What is Israel supposed to do?

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What is the Lord's relationship to the land? What do we learn about the purpose of the land?

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## STUDY TIPS

- Ⓐ Pray
- Ⓑ Look closely
  - Commands
  - Descriptions of God or His People
  - Words and phrases
  - Repetitions, Contrasts, Surprises
  - Big Bible Words
  - Characters
  - Dialogue – who is talking to whom?
  - Setting (timeline and place) – does it change?
- Ⓒ Look at the context
  - What kind of writing is this? (eg. narrative, poetry, teaching)
  - How does the dialogue progress?
  - Divide the passage into its natural sections, looking for transitions in setting, speaker, or theme can help with this
  - Create a heading for each section
  - Summarize the section in your own words
- Ⓓ Share
  - In your small group share something you noticed

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Read 10.12-11.7

10.12-13 and 11.13 talk about loving and serving. What do you think the relationship between loving and serving God is?

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Chapter 12 begins a new section where the LORD lays out detailed laws for living in the land, both vertical (with regard to God) and horizontal (with regard to neighbour). What are some of these laws? Why would this new section begin with rules about worshipping the LORD rightly?

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What is the character of right worship (see 12.7 and 12.12 in particular), and how does it connect to loving and serving God?

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## STUDY TIPS

### Ⓐ Look at the context

- Read the passage immediately before and after
- How does the context help us understand the meaning of the text?
- Look up cross references.
- How do they help us better understand the passage?
- In your small group share how the context has added to your understanding of this week's passage.

### Ⓑ Summarize the big idea

- So, what's the main idea of the passage? How would you title this passage?
- In your small group share the main idea

### Ⓒ Stop to pray

- Thank God for all he has already revealed to you, and ask him to help you see Jesus more clearly, and love him more deeply, through the next steps of your study.



## WHAT DOES IT REVEAL?

Entering into and enjoying God's presence is the key to this passage. Why does God care how Israel worships? What does this say about God? What does this say about us?

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Read John 4:19-26. How do the lessons of today's passage apply to Christian worship today?

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## HOW WILL I RESPOND?

Our hearts need constant reminding of the blessings & curses God lays before us. How do you "lay up" God's Word in your heart and soul?

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How does knowing that God's great desire is to meet with his people help you worship joyfully?

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## Prayer

Take time to say back to God the things which he has been teaching you here in this passage. Ask for his help in making them a reality in your life.