

# Worship in the Wilderness

Deuteronomy 12.1-13.18

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## Introduction

- “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.
- 1. “These are the statutes and rules -- vs. 1 – opens us a much larger section (12-26), but what follows is primary: how to (or the rules governing) worship
- 2. that you shall be careful to do -- He declares his goal—to govern conduct: “Keep them by doing them<sup>1</sup>
- 3. in the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess, -- He links his instructions with the gift of land
- 4. all the days that you live on the earth. -- He identifies the context to which they apply: They are to be obeyed “as long as they live in the land.”<sup>2</sup>
- the balance of the passage separates into 2 parts: the practice of worship and the place of worship

## Explanation of the Text

1. vs. 2-7 – the practice of worship
  - purity – vs. 2-4
  - place – v. 5
  - person – vs.6-7

2. vs. 8-14 – the place (centrality) of worship
  - unifying effect of worship – vs. 8-11
  - worship as celebration – v. 12
  - refocusing effect of worship – vs. 13-14

## Implications of the Text

1. how we worship matters – no idols
  - vs. 4; 8 --
  - Hebrews 12.28-29
  - when we design our worship services, who are we trying to impress?
2. who we worship matters – The Lord your God –
  - the Lord appears 11 times in 14 verses
  - Matthew 4.10
  - we have to be careful that we don’t start worshipping ourselves
3. the presence of God in worship is critical – God is the host
  - vs. 7a; 12 --
  - Psalm 95
  - it might not be physically practical for us to do this, but we can practice the attitude; we can bow our hearts before God
4. unity is essential for acceptable worship
  - vs. 7b; 12b
  - everyone, all together; pilgrimage feasts – 3 times a year people were required to meet
  - Colossians 3.16

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<sup>1</sup> Block, D. I. (2012). *The NIV Application Commentary: Deuteronomy*. (T. Muck, Ed.) (p. 303). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

## 5. worship is a celebration

- vs. 7 and 12
- eating a meal together was part of ratifying a covenant
- All of these offerings had to be brought to the central sanctuary. In cases where they were eaten, as at the great annual festivals, the eating was thus *before the Lord*, i.e. in the Lord's presence. These were occasions of happy rejoicing and thanksgiving for God's blessing on all their undertakings (lit. 'the putting forth of your hand'). This injunction to *rejoice* on such occasions occurs elsewhere in Deuteronomy (14:26; 16:11, 14, 15; 26:11).<sup>1</sup>

## 6. worship is conscious and intentional

- vs. 4
- 1Corinthians 14.40
- this implies that there is a right way and a wrong way to worship

## Conclusion

God lays down the law when it comes to worship...

- worship is a lifestyle
  - Romans 12.1-2
- YHWH is the central focus of our worship
  - worship must be pure and central
- pure worship is
  - focused on God
  - designed to please God
  - validated by the presence of God
- centralized worship
  - brings people together
  - to celebrate
  - with purpose

- we design services with God in mind, not the neighborhood or target demographic
- worship is a perpetual attitude of adoration and thankfulness to God for who He is and all that He has done, is doing and will do.

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<sup>1</sup> Thompson, J. A. (1974). [\*Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary\*](#) (Vol. 5, pp. 186–187). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

