

Deuteronomy

Lesson 9

Chapter 12

Once the Jordan River had stopped flowing upstream at a place called *Adam*, the Nation of Israel would be crossing on dry ground into a land filled with unholy holy places of the Canaanites. (Joshua 3:16). This crossing would be nothing compared to the crossing at the Red Sea. The danger in this crossing would not be from the hundreds and hundreds of feet of water walls on each side of them that they could not survive if they fell. Instead, the danger laid ahead in the land of the Canaanites. But the threat was not found in the Canaanite people; the LORD had that covered for Israel. The danger was in the belongings and articles of belief that would be left behind on the land when the Canaanites were utterly destroyed.

VIII. Moses' Summary of the Promised Land Laws

A. Laws for the Holy Places

1. Carefully Observe

The time for the crossing of the Jordan River was near, and it was also time for Moses' summary of the Promised Land laws that the Nation of Israel would be required to follow if she wanted to be blessed by the LORD and not cursed. Moses begins with the laws of the Canaanites' holy places and those that the Israelites will set up. These laws are to be carefully observed. Chapter 12, verse 1. *"These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth."* (12:1).

Back in Chapter 4 verse 1, Moses said, *"Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you"* (4:1). Israel could not take the Promised Land and be successful unless it followed the LORD statutes and judgments precisely. The Hebrew word for *statutes* is *choq*, and it means *something prescribed* (legally). The Hebrew word for *judgments* is *misphat*, and it means *dooms*. Doom is the penalty for breaking something that is *lawfully prescribed*. The Promised Land was a gift to Israel, as long as they lived on earth if they carefully observed the LORD's statutes and judgments.

2. Utterly Destroy

The Canaanites and all their clans had been in the land a long time. If the time markers in the book of Genesis are correct, and I believe they are because Moses was instructed personally by the LORD on Mount Sinai what to write in Genesis, then the Canaanites had been owners of Canaan Land for about one thousand and four years. During that time, the Canaanites had abandoned everything they knew about the God of Noah. The land of Canaan was filled with false religious idols at every turn. Because of that, the LORD had a very specific and instruction for Israel, utterly destroy their places of worship. Verse 2. *"You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. ³ You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place. ⁴ You shall not act like this toward the LORD your God."* (12:2-4).

Altars, pillars, Asherim, and images designed to worship the unholy imaginary gods were to be obliterated. The altars could be as simple as a pile of random stones or as elaborate as precisely cut bricks. Upon these altars, everything imaginable would be offered, including humans. Their pillars, a massive column, if we saw them today, we would call them *monuments*. We would find them engraved with an epitaph to the god of that high unholy place. The Asherim was a carved wooden

disgusting sexual totem-like pole to the virginal goddess of the moon. She was the equivalent to the Assyrian *Ishtar* from which we obtain the word Easter. She was the Canaanite fertility goddess. The worship of this goddess was weekly, if not daily. Her favor was needed for a bountiful production of crops in their religion. Engraved images were the likeness of these man-made gods. All were against the Ten Commandments of the LORD.

3. Faithfully Seek

a) The LORD's Chosen Place for Each Tribe

With the unholy places of Canaan destroyed, the LORD was to faithfully seek the LORD's chosen location for each tribe to worship. Verse 5. *"But you shall seek the LORD at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come."* (12:5).

From north to south and east to west, the Promised Land would be too big for every tribe to travel to a centrally located Tabernacle complex to offer their worship and praise. For that, the LORD would choose several places in each tribal area for the people to bring their offering. They would need to go to the Tabernacle complex that, in Joshua's book, we will learn will be stationed at Gilgal for seven years while the Promised Land was being conquered, and later it would move to Shiloh through the time of the book of Judges.

b) The LORD's Chosen Place for Each Offering

Indeed, once the Promised Land was conquered, some would be close enough to take their gifts to the LORD at Shiloh after all the tribes had settled in on their tribal lands, but for most, it would be too far. Therefore, each tribal area a specific place, the LORD's chosen location for each offering of each tribe. What would be offered at these places of worship? Verse 6. *"There you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock."* (12:6).

We know about all these offerings from our study of Leviticus chapters 1 through 7, except for the one called *"the contribution of our hand."* A thorough search of all commentaries at my disposal tells me that this must have been difficult to understand by even the most learned theologians of the past. Some suppose that it means a heave offering, waved over the Brazen Altar but not placed on the Brazen Altar. I agree and would say that is what the LORD means by this phrase. It was an offering that was then cooked by boiling, baking, or roastings and then eaten by the priests and their families and any of the donors and their families. If the wave offering is what is meant here, it, too, is covered in Leviticus chapters 1 through 7.

c) The LORD's Chosen Place for Each Meal

With a chosen place for each offering, we come to the chosen place for each meal. Verse 7. *"There also you and your households shall eat before the LORD your God, and rejoice in all your undertakings in which the LORD your God has blessed you."* (12:7).

And so, we have come to the place where the LORD permits each family to eat of some of the offerings presented at the high holy places of the LORD in a fellowship meal as a time of rejoicing in all the LORD has blessed the donor and his family with each season of each harvest and each new animal birth.

d) The LORD's Chosen Place for Each Thought

And then we find the LORD's chosen place for each thought. Things had to change from the way things were at Plains of Moab. Verse 8. *"You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes..."* (12:8).

During the days of wilderness life for Israel, the one Tabernacle complex could not service the whole nation's offerings. Therefore, the morning burnt offering on the Brazen Altar was for the entire nation rather than a single tribe of the nation. But with the LORD choosing a place or two or

maybe more in each tribal area, a burnt offering would be required at each location each morning. That was a new way of thinking, a new way of thought. The wilderness offered more freedom to Israel's people to do their meals and offer the way they wanted because of the restricted way of life. They had the laws of life in the Promised Land given to them at the end of their first year out of Egypt, but they could not live and practice those laws until they took possession of the Promised Land. For forty years, the LORD fed them their daily meals. For forty years, the LORD took little from their herds to feed the Levitical line compared to what would be needed in the Promised Land. For forty years, the LORD accepted a token offering from the people in the offerings that covered all the people in the camp. But that was about to change. Everyone would be responsible for following the command of the LORD personally in the Promised Land. But why?

(1) Because You are Not There

The LORD would require things to be different in the Promised Land, and the Nation was in for a shock because they were not there yet. Verse 9. *"... for you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you."* (12:9).

For forty years, the nation has been in unrest at the foot of Mount Sinai, living in tents, collecting manna each day, not farming crops, barely tending herds and flocks, reliant on the LORD for every need of each day. But when they arrived at their *resting place* in the Promised Land, things would be different. Each family will have to step up. But to do what?

(2) Because You Will be There

(a) Attend the LORD's Place with Your Offerings

The LORD's chosen place for each thought in the Promised Land will require that each family attend to the LORD's place with its offerings. This will be new. From the general offerings that cover the whole nation to the specific offerings that cover each family, life was about to change. Heads of families had to be responsible for their gifts to the LORD. Verse 10. *"When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security, ¹¹ then it shall come about that the place in which the LORD your God will choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the LORD. ¹² And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you."* (12:10-12).

The whole family, man, woman, boy, girl, and all the employees of each family, man, women, boy, and girl, must worship and participate in the giving to the LORD. Oh yes, the Levites who were stationed at each designated place of worship had families too, and they needed compensation for their service. Their families survived through the offering of the people. They could not be forgotten.

(b) Avoid the Cultic Place with Your Offerings

But then, as we have seen before, the LORD knows the nature of the humans He created. He had placed in them the ability to be tempted just like you, and I have today. Human nature has not changed a bit. Verse 13. *"Be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every cultic place you see, ¹⁴ but in the place which the LORD chooses in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you."* (12:13).

In laziness, a tribe's man of Israel might say, "Here is an altar, let's use it. No need to sweat with our brow when someone else has already done the work for us. This one will do just fine." "Do not do it in that cultic place," the LORD warned. Take your offering to the LORD's chosen place. "Follow My commands," the LORD said to them.

e) The LORD's Chosen Place for Each Meal

(1) Your Meals Within the Gate

Then, in taking care of the families in the Promised land, we come to the LORD's Chosen place for each meal. It would be different too. The meals in the wilderness were somewhat communal. But not so in the Promised Land with each family on its own parcel of land farm and their homes within the gates of the villages built by the Canaanites. Verse 15. *"However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your gates, whatever you desire, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and the deer. ¹⁶ Only you shall not eat the blood; you are to pour it out on the ground like water."* (12:15-16).

Wherever the family resides in the Promised Land, the family could eat whatever the LORD had provided that was approved foods for the Nation of Israel. But did you notice, the blood was still off-limits? It would be required to be poured on the ground as it had always been with the LORD's instructions for the past forty years.

There is an interesting phrase in verse 15 that might pass by is misinterpreted. "... *the unclean and the clean may eat of it...*" This phrase is not talking about clean and unclean foods; it is talking about clean and unclean people. In the general sense, Jews were considered clean, and all the rest of the humans on the earth were deemed to be unclean. In the New Testament, the Jews could not even put their foot on the unclean steps of Pilate's palace without becoming unclean for seven days and forfeiting the right to participate in the seven-day observance that followed the Passover.

(2) Your Tithe Before the LORD

Eating the meals in each home of in the Promised Land, instead of eating in the more communal setting of the wilderness, was one thing, but when it came the eating the part of the tithe that was permissible, the law required that tithe to be before the LORD. Verse 17. *"You are not allowed to eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or new wine or oil, or the firstborn of your herd or flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the contribution of your hand. ¹⁸ But you shall eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all your undertakings. ¹⁹ Be careful that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land."* (12:17-19).

We do not notice here that all these offerings are seasonal, which is why the LORD required them to be taken to the place He had chosen as the high and holy place in the tribal area. Not all towns and villages had such high and holy places. The grain offering occurred at harvest time. Wheat is harvested in early to mid-July. Spring barley comes in August. Winter barley comes in April or May. Olives come in late August through November. Grapes come in August and October. Cattle come in the early Spring. As you can see, the parade to the Holy Places of the LORD would be regular through the seasons, and indeed there would be enough given to the LORD to provide for the whole host of Levites, which included the priestly line too, for their needs of rations for each year.

(a) When You Need Not Go to Holy Place

(i) Partake of the Meat

Now the LORD knew what was about to take place and just how big the Promised Land would eventually grow, and for that, He made provisions when the high and holy places of His choosing were just too far away. So, He told the nation when they need not go to the Holy place to partake in the meat. Verse 20. *"When the LORD your God extends your border as He has promised you, and you say, 'I will eat meat,' because you desire to eat meat, then you may eat meat, whatever you desire. ²¹ If the place which the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, then you may slaughter of your herd and flock which the LORD has given you, as I have commanded you; and you may eat within your gates whatever you desire. ²² Just as a gazelle or a deer is eaten, so you will eat it; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it."* (12:20-22).

The purpose of taking the meat of the tithe to the holy place was to worship the LORD. But the LORD understood that distance could be a problem for travel to His places. Therefore, He allowed the clean foods of the offerings to be slain and eaten inside the city and village gates and hence inside the homes of each family *“Just as a gazelle or deer is eaten, so you will eat it.”* The gazelle and deer were wild animals and were not part of the offering system. Yet, they were clean foods that the families of the Nation of Israel could eat daily. When it came time for the tithe of the domestic animals, the ox, sheep, goat, doves, or pigeons, they could be slain and eaten at the home just as if they were being taken far away to the specially chosen place of the LORD to eat as a gift to Him. Notice also that when these tithes were prepared to eat, the clean and the unclean could eat them. This again references the Jews and the non-Jews being able to partake in the meat of these animals.

(ii) Pour Out the Blood

Nevertheless, just the blood could not be consumed in the Tabernacle complex; it could not be consumed at home. In the process, the offeror had to pour out the blood on the ground. Verse 23. *“Only be sure not to eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh.”* ²⁴ *You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the ground like water.* ²⁵ *You shall not eat it, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you, for you will be doing what is right in the sight of the LORD.”* (12:23-25).

“... for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh.” We have seen this before. When the family of Noah came off the Ark, and the LORD changed their diet to allow them to eat every living creature that moved on the earth, He said, *“Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood”* (Genesis 9:3-4). All bodily functions rely on the blood to live. It is the basis of physical life. When the blood is diminished from its required volume in each body, death comes calling.

(b) When You Must Go to the Holy Place

Once again, knowing human nature, knowing that man would take the excuse that he lived too far away from the holy place of the LORD, the LORD would not let the man off the hook. Every year there was a time when the man had to go to the holy place. *“Only your holy things which you may have and your votive offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses.”* ²⁷ *And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the flesh, and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, and you shall eat the flesh.”* (12:26-27).

If you will remember from our study in Leviticus, the word “votive” means *vow*. Both “votive” and “vow” mean “a binding promise made to God, often as part of a plea for safety, military victory, or a family.”² So, if a common person brought a *sacrifice of peace offering* as a *vow* to the LORD, based on something he was asking the LORD to do, it was a votive or vow offering. The leftovers of a *sacrifice of peace offering* attached to a votive or vow could be eaten by the priest the day of the offering and the following day but not on the third day. If there were any leftovers left on the third day, those leftovers must be burned instead of consumed. If you were going to make a *vow* to the LORD, which required the *sacrifice of peace offering*, it had to be made at the LORD’s chosen holy place, the tribal area. The offering was a holy thing to the LORD.

² Crocker, L. K. (2016). [Vows, Religious in the Ancient World](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

f) The LORD's Chosen Place for Each Command

Finally, there was the LORD's chosen place for each command. Verse 28. *"Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God."* (12:28).

The LORD was serious about His commands. Keeping the LORD's commands was the "good and right" thing to do in the LORD's eyes for the Nation of Israel, but the LORD also expected that the nation would listen to and follow His commands. In the Promised Land, the LORD had a command – keep My commandments.

(1) Do Not Inquire About Foreign Commands

In keeping the commandments of the LORD, we come to this command. Do not inquire about foreign commands. Verse 29. *"When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land,³⁰ beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?'"³¹ You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods."* (12:29-31).

All religions, all belief systems in some sort of gods, all have commands that must be followed. The same was true for the Canaanite worship that Israel was to destroy utterly. The one thing the LORD demanded of Israel concerning the practices of the Canaanites worship was, "Do not learn the practices of the Canaanite worship." Sadly, we know the rest of this story. Israel will fail miserably, fail to complete the task, and fail to keep the LORD's command. She will lose her land because of it.

(2) Do Not Change the LORD's Commands

The LORD was adamant with the Nation of Israel. Therefore, He told them, "Do not change the LORD's commands." Verse 32. *"Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it."* (12:32).

A little change here in this procedure, a little change there. It will make it better. Surely the LORD will not mind. Let us make the exciting. This new young group thinks we are so out of date. We talk about the commands of the LORD. They want to talk about the desires of their flesh. Let us tell them about their desires, and let us help them get on with it. Surely the LORD will forgive. We all must experience the life you know. Youth will be youth. Get those desires out while you are young. What will they hurt? You have all the rest of your life to repent and get right. Let us water down the services and make them more sensual. That is what the worldly people like, and that is what we want in the worship. Let us change the music to revelry like the worship before the golden calf. Jumping and hooping, hollering, and yelling. That will make the LORD happy, and if it does not, He is just out of touch. We are the new generation, and we know how we want to worship our god. Not so fast, young ones. "... you shall not add to nor take away from ..." the command of the LORD.

Chapter 13

4. Diligently Avoid

a) The False Prophet

But staying true to the LORD and His commands might be difficult when the new preacher arrives, and he seems to have it all right; at least you like what you are hearing. The LORD says to diligently avoid the false prophet when he arrives and leads astray. Chapter 13, verse 1. *"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder,² and the sign or the wonder comes true,*

concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them' (13:1-2).

The new dreamer has taken the town by storm and dangles all his carnal desires in front of all the carnal people, and every once in a while, he says, "I will always preach the Bible." The crowd roars. None of his messages are grounded in a true understanding of the Word of God. He talks a bit, picks a word out of a verse that will allow him to transition to what he wants to talk about, tells you what the word means in Hebrew or Greek, and off he drives to the carnal world and his soapbox for the day, abandoning the context of the passage in the context of the word of God. The church is growing; he must be of God. He must be a godly man. He must be a theologian. He has his favorite theologian that he quotes every week. Even his favorite theologian would disagree with his spin of theology and said so a hundred and fifty years before the dreamer was even born. But the numbers are rising. But he is leading the town to a different god, a god that says, "you will be saved, you will not be saved."

What a barbaric god that is! I want the God who says, "I give the choice to you. Choose Me as your Savior, and I will be Your God." When I stand before the LORD in eternity, the reason I will be with the LORD is because of the foolishness of preaching when I heard the Gospel message about Jesus. I put my trust in the Gospel Message about Jesus. I believe in the Gospel message about Jesus. Because, He said, "Whosoever believes in Me shall not perish but have everlasting life." He wants me to choose Him. He is waiting for me and you to make that decision. He is a big God willing to allow everyone to make his or her own personal decision. And when we stand before Him, those who chose Him will be in eternity with Him. Those who chose Him not will be sent away from His presence for all eternity. Those who follow the dreamer and think they are part of the elect chosen may or may not make it to eternity with the LORD. But the whole basis of whether the LORD chooses you or you chose the LORD affects every other doctrinal belief in the system. If you are off with the nature of your god by one degree, you will miss heaven by the width of eternity.

(1) Plug the Ear

So too, the LORD warned the Nation of Israel not to listen to the words of a dreamer who wanted to introduce them to a different god. Verse 3. "... *you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*" (13:3).

Does the LORD bring situations to test our love for Him? Absolutely. The test comes from the LORD, but the test is for us. What is in our heart? What is in our soul? Can we be swayed? Can we be moved? Can our beliefs be led astray? The LORD says, plug the ears – "... *you shall not listen.*"

(2) Pursue the LORD

Instead of listening to the dreamer, pursue the LORD. Verse 4. "*You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.*" (13:4).

Do not listen to the dreamer; listen to the LORD. Four things you must do. First, keep His commandments. Second, listen to His voice. Third, serve Him. Fourth, cling to Him. Those four things are the safety net for all believers. Whether you are standing on the east side of the Jordan River in the Plains of Moab ready to cross over into the Promised Land in 1424 BC or standing amid a Covid 19 virus, thirty-four hundred forty-six years later in 2021 AD, the formula is the same. These four things you must do to stay straight in the will of the LORD. "... *keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.*"

(3) Purge the Evil

However, in 1424 BC, the LORD's instruction to the Nation of Israel was much harsher than we can enact today; they were to destroy such dreamers utterly. Verse 5. "*But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought*

you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you.” (13:5).

We still must purge the evil from our midst, from our congregations, but to do so, all we can do in America is send them on their way.

b) The Family Participant

The LORD was serious about the faithfulness of all the Nation of Israel's people to Him and Him alone. His penalty for seeking other gods was severe, and that included unfaithful family participants. Verse 6. *“If your brother, your mother’s son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’ (~~whom neither you nor your fathers have known~~),⁷ of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end),⁸ you shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him.⁹ ‘But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.¹⁰ So you shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.¹¹ Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you.” (13:6-11).*

Death was the penalty for engaging in the worship of the gods. For the time of the taking of the Promised Land and after that for Israel, the penalty was physical death. Now that we have the whole counsel of the LORD from Genesis to Revelation, we know, the penalty for the worship of other gods is also eternal death.

c) The Futile Proselytizer

Among every group, some futile proselytes have a new perspective on how to worship god, but not the true God. They have Jewish blood, but they seek to persuade people to desert their allegiance or service to the LORD for the new-fangled belief. Verse 12. *“If you hear in one of your cities, which the LORD your God is giving you to live in, anyone saying that¹³ some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’ (~~whom you have not known~~)” (13:12-13).*

Other verses call the “worthless men” *troublemakers, scoundrels, wicked, children of Belial, corrupt, debased*. All these terms apply aptly to the intent of the LORD in this instruction. The run-in packs. They create a mutiny. They do it in secret. They expose their plan only when they have accomplished their goal. All seems well, but only the unfaithful faithful to the mutiny know until it is too late to put a stop to their goal. The handful has seduced the city, not by taking the city, but by taking control. Here he is, our new god, our new pastor, our new leader, vote for him; he is the real deal. He is a giant among theologians. Yet there is one problem. He is not true to the LORD God.

(1) Officially Inspect

What shall we do with such scoundrels appear? Officially inspect. Verse 14. *“... then you shall investigate and search out and inquire thoroughly. If it is true and the matter established that this abomination has been done among you....” (13:14).*

No stone can be unturned. No YouTube can be dismissed. No book can be ignored. No article can be discharged. No review can be neglected. No sermon can be excused. If the corrupt men have invaded, the LORD has a remedy.

(2) Utterly Destroy

In the Nation of Israel, in that holy ground of the Promised Land, the LORD would allow no other gods to exist. For the wicked, no matter how personable or nice they are, the penalty was the same for all – utterly destroy. Verse 15. *“... you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it and all that is in it and its cattle with the edge of the sword.” (13:15).*

I hope you just caught what the LORD said to do to the scoundrels and all the inhabitants of the city that had followed them. They and all their possessions were to be taken to the edge of the city and destroyed with the sword's edge. Everything they own that lives, even their cattle.

(3) Totally Consume

But that was not the end of this for these scoundrels and their followers and their city. Everything they owned that did not live was to be totally consumed. Verse 16. *“Then you shall gather all its booty into the middle of its open square and burn the city and all its booty with fire as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God; and it shall be a ruin forever. It shall never be rebuilt.”*¹⁷ *Nothing from that which is put under the ban shall cling to your hand, in order that the LORD may turn from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion on you and make you increase, just as He has sworn to your fathers,*¹⁸ *if you will listen to the voice of the LORD your God, keeping all His commandments which I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the LORD your God.”* (13:16-18).

The city with all the belongings is to be demolished and pile in the middle of the city square and offered as a burnt offering to the LORD. That meant it was burned to ashes. Also, the town was never to be rebuilt in the Promised Land.

What was the reward for the tribe of Israel who self-regulated its own villages and cities? The LORD’s mercy, compassion, and the promise that He would increase that tribe. But the LORD included the “if” that seems to be in every instruction He gives. He will do His part and keep His promise if the nation will “... *listen to the voice of the LORD your God, keeping all His commandments....*” Only by keeping those two things will the Nation of Israel be “*right in the sight of the LORD.*” Where are you today in the sight of the LORD? If you were a Jew in the days of the conquering of the Promised Land, would you be in a right standing with LORD, or would you in jeopardy of being utterly destroyed by members of your own nation because of your view of the LORD and His commandments. I wonder about you. Do you?