

Text: Dt 12.1-32

THEOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY¹

1. **Consider:** a review of God’s faithfulness (1.6–4.40)
2. **Covenant:** an exposition of the law (5–26)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3. **Commence:** preparations for renewing the covenant (27.1–28.68)
4. **Commit:** an exhortation to obedience (29.2–30.20)

Chapter 5 gave us the Ten Commandments, one writer² thinks that the rest of the “Covenant” sermon is a meditation on each of the Commandments in succession:

| Major Issues | Godward | Manward |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Authority | Commandment 1 Expounded in Dt 6-11 | Commandment 5 Expounded in Dt 16.18-18.22 |
| Dignity | Commandment 2 Expounded in Dt 12 | Commandments 6, 7, 8 Expounded in Dt 19.1-24.7 |
| Commitment | Commandment 3 Expounded in 13.1-14.21 | Commandment 9 Expounded in 24.8-16 |
| Rights and Privileges | Commandment 4 Expounded in 14.22-16.17 | Commandment 10 Expounded in 24.19-26.15 |

Dt 5.7 ¶ ‘You shall have no other gods before Me.

Dt 5.8 ¶ ‘You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

Following John Walton’ theory, we look to Deuteronomy 12 to see if the chapter indeed discusses idolatry as its main theme.

¹ Adapted from an outline in Lawrence O Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion*, electronic ed. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), 117.

² John H. Walton, “Deuteronomy: An Exposition of the Spirit of the Law,” *Grace Theological Journal* 8, no. 2 (1987): 214ff.

According to our practice, let's notice the paragraph divisions and settle on a theme for each one:

1. 1-7, theme: you shall tear down all idols and worship the Lord in an exclusive location
2. 8-14, theme: you shall change your practice from the wilderness practice to the settlement practice
3. 15-19, theme: distinction between food at home and food for sacrifice
4. 20-27, theme: procedure for eating meat at home
5. 28, theme: Listen to the Lord
6. 29-31, theme: do not imitate the idolatry of the nations
7. 32, theme: The Law is permanent

Compare the second commandment (Dt 5.8) with this chapter. Where do we see a link? **Second commandment: no idols; 12.1-4, you shall destroy all idols you encounter**

Why would pagans worship in "high places" (a term frequently used in the OT)? **Because they thought of their gods as "higher" than them, so high places symbolize that concept**

What did God offer to counter pagan high places? **One exclusive location for worship (the tabernacle) as the only appropriate place to conduct worship ceremonies**

In the wilderness, God required the Israelites to slaughter animals at the tabernacle (Lev 17.3-6). This would not be practical as they settled widely across the land. What was God allowing when the practices were changed in Dt 12? **They were allowed to slaughter animals anywhere, as long as they didn't offer them as sacrifices, and didn't consume the blood**

Why was God so careful in these laws for Israel? (see 29-31) **The Israelites would be tempted to join with pagan practices if they didn't make a strong distinction from them in their worship practices**

Verse 32 is Verse 1 of Ch 13 in the Hebrew Bible. It is a transition verse, summing up the preceding and launching what follows.

What are some applications we can make concerning the practice of NT religion? (various answers!)

1. There is always a danger of syncretism (joining God's practices with the world's practices); Christian worship should be distinct from worldly celebration
2. God demands exclusive loyalty: Christians need to be careful to keep God first in life and thought
3. Christians should destroy things in their life that demand loyalty to the world instead of to God