

Deuteronomy 12:13-14

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-12/deuteronomy-1213-14/>

The requirements for worshipping the LORD when living in the Promised Land are brought to a close. Moses emphasizes the importance of obeying these commands to the letter.

Once again, Moses commanded Israel to *be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every cultic place you see*. The word *cultic* is not in the Hebrew text, but it can be inferred from the context. In v. 2, the word “places” refers to the locations where the Canaanites worshipped their pagan gods and goddesses. This is probably the case in this verse. The Suzerain LORD does not want His vassals to worship, celebrate, and rejoice in places that were dedicated to other gods. This included “high mountains, hills and every green tree” ([Deuteronomy 12:2](#)).

Instead, the Israelites were to worship *in the place which the LORD chooses in one of their tribes*. They were to worship Him only in the places He specified ([Deuteronomy 12:5](#)), where the LORD chose. It was *there* the people *shall offer their burnt offerings, and there you shall do all I command you*.

The LORD wants obedience from His covenant people. They did not have to guess as to how to worship Him. To worship the pagan deities was to embrace self-seeking, with its child sacrifice and immorality. Each person bribed the false god to get their way. The True God demanded His people to stay far from such paganism, and worship only Him. Only in this way could Israel be a place filled with self-governing people who sought to love their neighbor as themselves.

Biblical Text:

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.