

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 14

In this chapter some cautions are given against the use of some rites and ceremonies in mourning for the dead, with the reason thereof, (^{<6540>}Deuteronomy 14:1,2) and instructions about what are lawful to be eaten, and what not, whether of beasts, fishes, or fowl, (^{<6548>}Deuteronomy 14:3-21), and concerning eating one sort of tithes both at the place God should choose, and within their own gates, (^{<6542>}Deuteronomy 14:22-29).

Ver. 1. *Ye are the children of the Lord your God*, etc.] Some of them were so by the special grace of adoption, and all of them by national adoption; which was the peculiar privilege of the people of Israel, and laid them under great obligation to honour and obey the Lord their God, who stood in the relation of a father to them, and they of children to him, (^{<3006>}Malachi 1:6). The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it “beloved children”; so the apostle calls the saints; the “dear children of God”, who therefore ought to be followers of him, (^{<4811>}Ephesians 5:1) and for a like reason this relation is observed here, namely, to quicken a regard to the exhortations of the Lord, his cautions, commands, laws, and ordinances, particularly to what follows:

ye shall not cut yourselves; for the dead, as appears from the next clause, as the Heathens did, who not only tore their garments, but their flesh in several parts of their bodies, in their mouths, cheeks, breasts, etc. ^{f132}; and used other extravagant signs of mourning, which the apostle cautions against, (^{<5043>}1 Thessalonians 4:13) and were condemned by the Heathens themselves ^{f133}. Though some think this refers to incisions the Heathens made in their flesh to the honour of their gods, cutting the names of them therein to whom they devoted themselves; or lashing their bodies at the worship of them, as the worshippers of Baal did when they called upon him, (^{<1188>}1 Kings 18:28) and so the Jerusalem Targum,

“make not marks, marks,”

that is, here and there, in many places, or bruises black and blue by striping and beating themselves, for strange worship, or at it, in honour of their

gods; but the former sense seems best to agree with what follows; (see ^{<BEB>}Leviticus 19:28),

nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead; by shaving the forepart of their head or their eyebrows, or both, which used to be done in lamentations for the dead; (see ^{<HAB>}Jeremiah 16:6,7) if this could be thought to have any respect to rites and ceremonies used in the worship of dead and lifeless idols, the customs of the Egyptians might be referred to, who are said to shave their heads and their eyebrows in their sacred rites to Isis ^{f134}.

Ver. 2. *For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God*, etc.] Set apart by him from all other people, and devoted to his worship and service, and many of them were sanctified and made holy in a special and spiritual sense; and therefore should not conform to the customs of Gentiles, whether in their extravagant mourning for the dead, or in their religious services; (see ^{<BUB>}Deuteronomy 7:6),

and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people, above all the nations that [are] upon the earth; to be his peculiar treasure, to be his peculiar servants and worshippers, to enjoy peculiar blessings and privileges, and behave in a peculiar manner different from all other people; and have no connection with them, especially in things sacred; and, in order to keep them a distinct peculiar people from all others, a peculiar diet was appointed them, that so being prohibited to eat such things as others did, they might be kept out of their company and conversation, and so from being drawn into their idolatrous practices; the rules concerning which follow; (see ^{<BUB>}Deuteronomy 7:6).

Ver. 3. *Thou shall not eat any abominable thing*.] That is so either in its own nature, or because forbidden by the Lord; what are such are declared in the following verses.

Ver. 4. *These are the beasts which they shall eat*, etc.] That is, which they might lawfully eat of, which were allowed for their food; for they were not obliged to eat of them if they did not choose it:

the ox, the sheep, and the goat; which were creatures used in sacrifice, and the only ones, yet nevertheless they might be used for food if chosen.

Ver. 5. *The hart, the roebuck, and the fallow deer*, etc.] All of the deer kind, and very agreeable food; harts were very common in the land of

Canaan and parts adjacent; Aelianus says ^{f135} harts are bred in the great mountains in Syria, Amanus, Lebanon, and Carmel: the roebuck, or “dorcas”, from whence a good woman had her name, (~~408~~ Acts 9:36) is spoken of by Martial ^{f136} as very delicious food, and so are fallow deer; the word “jachmur”, here used, having the signification of redness in it, may be used for that sort which are called red deer: it is observed that in the Arabic language it is used for an animal with two horns, living in the woods, not unlike an hart, but swifter than that; and it is asked, is it not the “aloe” or “elch” ^{f137}?

and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois; the wild goat is reckoned by Pliny ^{f138} among the half wild creatures in Africa; according to the philosopher ^{f139} there are none but in Syria, on which Canaan bordered, and were very remarkable ones, having ears a span and nine inches long, and some reached to the ground. The Hebrew name for this creature is “akko”; and there is a fourfooted wild beast, by the Tartarians called “akkyk”, and by the Turks “akoim”, and which with the Scythians and Sarmatians are to be met with in flocks; it is between a hart and a ram, its body whitish, and the flesh exceeding sweet ^{f140}; it seems to be the same with the “tragelaphus”, of which there were in Arabia, as Diodorus Siculus ^{f141} says; the next is the “pygarg”, which we so render from the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, or white buttocks, so called from the hinder part of it being white; a species of the eagle with a white tail is called a “pygarg”, but here a four footed animal is meant; and which is mentioned as such, along with hinds, does, and goats, by Herodotus ^{f142}, Aelian ^{f143}, and Pliny ^{f144}: it has its name “dishon”, in Hebrew, from its ash colour, and the “tragelaphus”, or goat deer, has part of its back ash coloured, and has ash coloured spots or streaks on its sides ^{f145}; some take it to be the “strepsiceros”, a kind of buck or goat with writhed horns, which the Africans, as Pliny says ^{f146}, call “addaca”, which is thought by some to be a corruption of “al-dashen”, so Junius; the Targum of Jonathan takes it for the “unicorn” or “rhinoceros”; and the Talmudists say ^{f147} that the unicorn, though it has but one horn, is free, i.e. lawful to be eaten: the “wild ox” was common in Arabia; Strabo ^{f148} speaks of multitudes of wild oxen in some parts of Arabia, on the flesh of which and other animals the Arabians live; in the Septuagint version it is called the “oryx”, which is a creature that has but one horn, and divides the hoof ^{f149}, and so might be eaten; (see Gill on “~~2510~~ Isaiah 51:20”), the last, the “chamois”, has a French name, and is a creature of the goat kind, from

whose skin the chamois leather is made; in the figure of its body it seems to approach very much to the stag kind ^{f150}; perhaps it is the same with the “cemas” of Aelian ^{f151}, mentioned by him along with roebucks. Some take it to be the “tarandus”, of which Pliny says ^{f152} it is of the size of an ox, has a head bigger than a hart, and not unlike it; its horns are branched, hoofs cloven, and is hairy like a bear. In the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan this is the “pygarg”; these several sorts of beasts were allowed to be eaten; the three first there is no difficulty about them, but the other seven it is hard to determine what they are, at least some of them. Dr. Shaw ^{f153} thinks that the deer, the antelope, the wild bear, the goat deer, the white buttocks, the buffalo, and jeraffa, may lay in the best claim to the “ailee”, “tzebi”, “yachmur”, “akkub”, “dishon”, “thau”, and “zomer”, here.

Ver. 6-8. *And every beast that parted the hoof*, etc.] In this and the two following verses two general rules are given, by which it might be known what beasts were fit for food and what not; one is if they parted the hoof, and the other if they chewed the cud, such might be eaten; but such that only chewed the cud, but did not divide the hoof, as the camel, hare, and coney, might not be eaten; and so if they divided the hoof, and did not chew the cud, as the swine, they were alike unlawful; (See Gill on “^(B10B)Leviticus 11:3-8”),

Ver. 9, 10. *These ye shall eat of, all that are in the waters*, etc.] The fishes there, even such as have fins and scales, but they that have not were not to be eaten: (See Gill on “^(B10B)Leviticus 11:9-12”).

Ver. 11. *Of all clean birds ye shall eat.*] Which the Targum of Jonathan describes, everyone that has a craw, and whose crop is naked, and has a superfluous talon, and is not rapacious; but such as are unclean are expressed by name in the following verses, so that all except them might be reckoned clean and fit for food. Maimonides ^{f154} observes, that only the number of the unclean are reckoned, so that all the rest are free.

Ver. 12-18. *But these are they of which they shall not eat*, etc.] Jarchi observes, that the unclean birds are particularly mentioned, to teach that the clean sort are more than the unclean, and therefore the particulars of the fewest are given: these are all the same names as in (^(B11B)Leviticus 11:13-19), excepting one, “the glade”, (^(B14B)Deuteronomy 14:13) which is a kind of kite or puttock; the Jerusalem Targum renders it the vulture, and the Targum of Jonathan the white “dayetha” or vulture; and Aristotle says ^{f155} there are two sorts of vultures, the one small and whiter, the other

larger and of many forms or colours; in Hebrew its name here is “raah”, and is thought to be the same with “daah” in (^{<B114>}Leviticus 11:14) there translated the “vulture”, which has its name there from flying, and here from seeing, for which it is remarkable; (see ^{<B37>}Job 28:7) and the letters **d** and **r** are pretty much alike, and are sometimes changed, but there is another here, in (^{<B43>}Deuteronomy 14:13) mentioned, the “dayah”, which is not mentioned in (^{<B10>}Leviticus 11:1-47), though some think it the same with the “ayah”, rendered both here and there the “kite”; perhaps it means another sort of vulture, the black vulture, as the Targum of Jonathan.

Ver. 19. *And every creeping thing that flieth is unclean*, etc.] Which the Targum of Jonathan thus paraphrases;

“all flies and wasps (or hornets), and worms of lentiles and of beans, which are separated from food, and fly as birds, they are unclean;”

(See Gill on “^{<B12>}Leviticus 11:20-21”).

Ver. 20. *But of all clean fowls ye may eat*.] Even of all fowls, but those before excepted; Aben Ezra instances in the locust, as being a clean fowl, that might be eaten; and so the Targum of Jonathan is

“every clean locust ye may eat;”

(see ^{<B12>}Leviticus 11:22).

Ver. 21. *Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself*, etc.] This law is repeated from (^{<B75>}Leviticus 17:15),

thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; not to the proselyte of righteousness, for he might not eat of it any more than an Israelite, and if he did, he was obliged to wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and was unclean until the evening, as in (^{<B75>}Leviticus 17:15) but to a proselyte of the gate, who took upon him, as Jarchi observes, not to serve idols, one that has renounced idolatry, but has not embraced the Jewish religion; such an one might eat of things that died of themselves, or were not killed in a proper manner. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call him an uncircumcised stranger or proselyte, who had not submitted to circumcision, as the proselyte of righteousness did:

or thou mayest sell it unto an alien; an idolater, one that was neither a proselyte of righteousness nor of the gate, an entire alien from the commonwealth of Israel; one that was occasionally in the land of Canaan, or was travelling in it or through it, to such an one it might be sold:

for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; separated from all others, and devoted to his service, and therefore must live on clean, food and good meat, and not eat what others might:

thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk; this is the third time this law is mentioned; refer to the notes, (see Gill on “^{<4239>}Exodus 23:19”), (see Gill on “^{<4345>}Exodus 34:26”); the reason of which repetition, the Jewish writers say ^{f156}, is, that it is once said to forbid the eating it, a second time to forbid any use of it or profit by it, and a third time to forbid the boiling of it.

Ver. 22. *Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed*, etc.] This was a different tithe from that which was made and given to the Levites, and out of which a tithe was taken and given to the priests, and which they only ate of; but this, as appears by the following verse, was what the owners themselves ate of, and so the tithing was left to be made by them themselves, and which they were to be sure to make, and to make it truly and faithfully:

that the field bringeth forth year by year; being ploughed and sowed yearly, the produce of it was to be tithed yearly; the Jewish writers ^{f157} observe on this, that it must be what the earth produces, and is fit for food: and it must be thy seed, which is especially thine, and is not common, but has an owner, and this excludes mushrooms, etc. which thou sowest not, and therefore cannot be called thy seed.

Ver. 23. *And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there*, etc.] (see ^{<6115>}Deuteronomy 12:5) there the tithe of all the fruits of the earth was to be eaten; this is the second tithe, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi, and which is more particularly described as follows:

the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil: (see ^{<6127>}Deuteronomy 12:7 (See Gill on “^{<6117>}Deuteronomy 12:7”)):

and the firstlings of thine herds, and of thy flocks; of which see the note on the above place:

that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always; which such a constant practice would inure unto; (see ^{<B1012>}Deuteronomy 10:12).

Ver. 24. *And if the way be too long for thee*, etc.] The way from the place where any Israelite might live:

to carry it; the tithe and the firstlings, it would be too expensive or too troublesome in any way that could be devised:

or if the place shall be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there; which by the event appeared to be the city of Jerusalem, and this from some parts of the land of Canaan was very distant:

when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee; with a large increase of the fruits of the earth, and of flocks and herds.

Ver. 25. *Thou shalt then turn it into money*, etc.] The tithe, which would be lighter and easier carriage:

and bind up the money in thine hand; put it into a bag or purse, and tie it up and carry it in the hand; which some think was ordered, that it might not be mixed with other money; but it seems only to have respect to journeying, and making it fit for that. The Jewish writers ^{f158}, some of them, give a different sense of the word we render “bind up”, and interpret it of marking the silver, or impressing a form, figure, or image on it with the hand; they mean that it must be coined money; so Maimonides ^{f159}, they may not profane the sacred tithe with money not coined, nor with money not current, nor with money which is not in a man’s power; for it is said,

in thine hand; which the man is possessed of and is his own property:

and shalt go unto the place which the Lord that God shall choose; carrying the money along with him, for which he sold the tithe.

Ver. 26. *And thou shall bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after*, etc.] He might buy what provision he would with it, what he best liked, and was most agreeable to his appetite:

for oxen, or for sheep; he might purchase beef or mutton, or any other sort of meat that could be got, and was lawful to be eaten, as before directed:

or for wine, or for strong drink; to drink with his food, whether wine or any other liquor; the Targum of Jonathan is, wine new or old, which he

chose; but the latter, strong drink, Aben Ezra says, was a liquor made of honey and of dates, of wheat and of barley:

or for whatsoever thy soul desireth; whether eatable or drinkable:

and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God; he having put his name in that place; and dwelling there, as the Lord did in the temple of Jerusalem:

and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household; eat their food with cheerfulness and gladness, making a feast of it and keeping it as such, he and his whole family, his wife and children, or as many as were with him; and all males were obliged to appear at the three grand yearly festivals, and it was at one of these this was to be done.

Ver. 27. *And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him*, etc.] As not from giving him the first tithe, as Jarchi remarks, so he was not to forget him in this; he was not to leave him behind, but take him with him to partake of this entertainment:

for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee in the land: (see ^{<f162>}Deuteronomy 12:12).

Ver. 28. *At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year*, etc.] This, according to Aben Ezra, was a third tithe, and did not excuse the second tithe; so says:

“I gave the third tithe to the repair of the temple,” (Tobit 1:7)

as in one copy, but, according to another, to the stranger, fatherless, and widow, which better agrees with what follows; but the Jewish writers generally understand this as the same with the second tithe, which on the two first years from the sabbatical year was carried to Jerusalem, or money in lieu of it, with which provisions were bought and eaten there, but on the third year were eaten in their own cities with the poor, and in the stead of the other; so says Maimonides ^{f160}, on the third and sixth years from the sabbatical year, after they have separated the first tithe they separate from what remains another tithe, and give it to the poor, and it is called the poor’s tithe, and not on those two years is the second tithe, but the poor’s tithe, as it is said, “at the end of three years”, etc. and still more expressly elsewhere ^{f161}; after they have separated the first tithe every year, they separate the second tithe, (^{<f162>}Deuteronomy 14:22) and on the third and

sixth years they separate the poor's tithe instead of the second; and this was done, not at the latter end of the third year, but, as Aben Ezra interprets it, at the beginning; for the word used signifies an extremity, and the beginning of the year is one extremity of it as well as the latter end of it:

and lay it up within thy gates; not to be hoarded up, or to be sold at a proper time, but to be disposed and made use of as follows.

Ver. 29. *And the Levite, because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee*, etc.] Shall come and take the first tithe, according to Jarchi; but though this he was to do, yet is not what is intended here, but he was to partake of the second tithe, or what was in the room of it, the poor's tithe, with whom he is here joined:

and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come; and take the second tithe, as the above writer rightly interprets it, and which he says is the poor's of this year; (see ^{<5122>}Deuteronomy 12:12,18),

and shall eat and be satisfied; make a plentiful meal, eat freely as at a feast; and, as the same writer observes, they were not obliged to eat it at Jerusalem, according to the way they were bound to eat the second tithe of the two years, that is, the two preceding this:

that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest; as might be expected, when his commands, and particularly those respecting the tithes and firstlings, were obeyed.