

# Deuteronomy 14 Commentary

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[Moses on Mt Nebo](#) (Deuteronomy 34:1+)

Listen to [Mt Nebo](#), as you Ponder How Moses' [May Have Felt](#)

Deuteronomy by [Irving Jensen](#)- used by permission

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Source: Ryrie Study Bible

## Deuteronomy

Dt 1:1-4:43	Dt 4:44-26:19	Dt 27:1-34:12
Moses' First Discourse	Moses' Second Discourse	Moses' Third Discourse
Historical Review	Legal Exposition	Prophetical Promises
Looking Back 40 Years	Looking Up What God Expected of Israel	Looking Ahead What God Will Do for Israel

Recapitulation of Wanderings	Rehearsal of Israel's Law				Ratification of Israel's Covenant		Historical Appendices
Remembrance of the past	Commandments for the Present				Dt 27:1-30:20 Blessing and Cursing		Dt 31:1-34:12 Death of Moses
Take Heed Don't forget	Ten Commands	Related Commands			Two Choices Affecting the Future		Moses' Parting Words
Dt 1:1-4:43 Looking Back	Dt 4:44-11:32 Exposition of Decalogue	Dt 12:1-16:17 Ceremonial Laws	Dt 16:18-20:20 Civil Laws	Dt 21:1-26:19 Social Laws	Dt 27:1-28:68 Ratification of Covenant	Dt 29:1-30:20 Terms of Covenant	Dt 31:1-34:12 Moses' Song, Blessing, Death
<b>Plains of Moab</b>							
<b>ca. 2 Months</b> <b>Moses: Author</b> (Except Dt 34)							

**Deuteronomy 14:1 "You are the sons of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave your forehead for the sake of the dead.**

- **sons of the LORD:** Ge 6:2,4 Ex 4:22,23 Ps 82:6,7 Jer 3:19 Ho 1:10 Joh 1:12 11:52 Ro 8:16 9:8,26 2Co 6:18 Ga 3:26 Heb 2:10 1Jn 3:1,2,10 5:2
- **you shall no** Lev 19:27,28 21:5 Jer 16:6 41:5 47:5 1Th 4:13
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

**Related Passages:**

Jeremiah 16:6 "Both great men and small will die in this land; they will not be buried, they will not be lamented, **nor will anyone gash himself or shave his head for them**

Leviticus 19:27-28+ **'You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads**nor harm the edges of your beard. 28 'You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the LORD.

**Comment** - These were the profane practices of the Canaanites who inhabited the land into which Israel was soon to go. The needed to be alert not to fall into these futile, pathetic practices.

Leviticus 21:5+ 'They shall not make any baldness on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts in their flesh.

1 Kings 18:27-29 It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened." 28 So they cried with a loud voice and **cut themselves** according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them. 29 When midday was past, they raved until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.

**Comment on Elijah's Confrontation with Pagan Priests** - With regard to these possibilities we may quote the words of Clericus: "Although these things when spoken of God are the most absurd things possible, yet idolaters could believe such things, as we may see from Homer." The priests of Baal did actually begin therefore to cry louder than before, and scratched themselves with swords and lances, till the blood poured out, "according to their custom" (מִלְּפִי הַמָּוֶת). Movers describes this as follows (Phönizier, i. pp. 682,683), from statements made by ancient authors concerning the processions of the strolling bands of the Syrian goddess: "A discordant howling opens the scene. They then rush wildly about in perfect confusion, with their heads bowed down to the ground, but always revolving in circles, so that the loosened hair drags through the mire; **they then begin to bite their arms, and end with cutting themselves with the two-edged swords which they are in the habit of carrying**. A new scene then opens. One of them, who surpasses all the rest in frenzy, begins to prophesy with signs and groans; he openly accuses himself of the sins which he has committed, and which he is now about to punish by

chastising the flesh, takes the knotted scourge, which the Galli generally carry, lashes his back, and then cuts himself with swords till the blood trickles down from his mangled body." The climax of the Bacchantic dance in the case of the priests of Baal also was the prophesying (הַתְּנַבֵּא), and it was for this reason, probably, that they were called prophets (נְבִיאִים). This did not begin till noon, and lasted till about the time of the evening sacrifice (עֵד עֵד לְעֹלוֹת, v. 29). עֹלוֹת הַבֵּנֶה, "the laying on (offering) of the meat-offering," refers to the daily evening sacrifice, which consisted of a burnt-offering and a meat-offering (Ex 29:38ff.; Nu 28:3-8), and was then offered, according to the Rabbinical observance (see at Ex 12:6), in the closing hours of the afternoon, as is evident from the circumstances which are described in vv. 40ff. as having taken place on the same day and subsequently to Elijah's offering, which was presented at the time of the evening sacrifice (v. 36). (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament)

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### Utley has a good outline for 14-16 - CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS TO 14:1–16:17

- A. Deuteronomy 14:1–2 is a preliminary affirmation that Israel, as YHWH's unique people (cf. Ex. 19:5–6), must live like it!
- B. Deuteronomy 14:3–16:17 is a recapitulation of some main covenant requirements of God's people set forth in Exodus—Numbers
1. Clean vs. unclean food in 14:1–21 is originally found in Lev. 11:1–23.
  2. Tithes in 14:22–29 are originally given in Num. 18:21–29.
  3. Debt cancellation in 15:1–11 is originally given in Lev. 25:8–38.
  4. Freeing Hebrew slaves in 15:12–18 is originally given in Lev. 25:38–55.
  5. Redeeming the firstborn in 15:19–23 is originally given in Exod. 13:1–16.
  6. The three annual pilgrim feasts in 16:1–17 are originally given in Lev. 23:4–8 and also Num. 28:16–29:40. (Outline from Old Testament Theology, by Paul R. House, p. 184)

**Keil** - The Israelites were not only to suffer no idolatry to rise up in their midst, but in all their walk of life to show themselves as a holy nation of the Lord; and neither to disfigure their bodies by passionate expressions of sorrow for the dead (vv. 1 and 2), nor to defile themselves by unclean food (vv. 3–21). Both of these were opposed to their calling. To bring this to their mind, Moses introduces the laws which follow with the words, "ye are children to the Lord your God." The divine sonship of Israel was founded upon its election and calling as the holy nation of Jehovah, which is regarded in the Old Testament not as generation by the Spirit of God, but simply as an adoption springing out of the free love of God, as the manifestation of paternal love on the part of Jehovah to Israel, which binds the son to obedience, reverence, and childlike trust towards a Creator and Father, who would train it up into a holy people

**You are the sons of the LORD your God**- It is interesting that in introduction of these personal practices, this is the first time the Israelites were called sons of the LORD your God, which speaks of their special familial relationship to God. Israel was distinct from the pagans and were to be different in their practices.

**THOUGHT** - What a motivating statement! If that was to motivate Israel to pursue holiness, how much more should 1 John 3:1+ motivate us beloved? "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." And Peter adds "**IF (SINCE** - First Class Conditional Statement - assumed true) **you address as Father** the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, **conduct** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves in fear during the time of your (**SHORT**) stay on earth;" (1 Peter 1:17+, cf 2 Cor 6:18 "I will be a Father to you and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty"). If the truth of these Scriptures doesn't tug at you soul and incline your heart (Josh 24:23, Ps 119:36, 112, cf Ps 141:4) toward holiness for the sake of Your Father, I don't know what will!

**John Trapp** adds - "Ye should therefore do nothing unworthy of such a Father. Antigonus being invited to a place where a notable harlot was to be present, asked counsel of Menedemus what he should do? He bade him only remember that he was a king's son, and do accordingly."

**Utley** - Notice the family metaphors used as covenant terminology (cf. 1:31; 8:5; 32:5). See Special Topic: [Fatherhood of God](#). Note the three special titles for the Israelites used in vv. 1–2.

**You shall not cut yourselves nor shave your forehead for the sake of the dead**- The heathen nations not only did these things in honour of their gods, but in grief for the death of a relative. While this refers to a custom related to the dead, as noted above there was clearly a custom of cutting which was the pagan way of appeasing and appealing their so-called gods.

**MacArthur** has an interesting comment - The practice of making deep gashes on the face and arms or legs, in times of grief, was universal among pagans. It was seen as a mark of respect for the dead, as well as a sort of propitiatory offering to the gods who presided over death. The Jews learned this custom in Egypt and, though weaned from it, relapsed into the old superstition (cf. Isa 22:12; Jer 16:6; 47:5). Tattoos also were connected to names of idols, and were permanent signs of apostasy. (MacArthur Study Bible - Note on Lev 19:27-28)

**Utley** - This was a pagan worship practice (either to get the attention of the deity or cause feelings of mourning for the dead, cf. Lev. 19:28; 21:5; 1 Kgs. 18:28; Jer. 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37). "**shave your forehead**" This ("making baldness, BDB 901) also refers to the mourning rites of surrounding nations (cf. Jer. 16:6; 41:5; Ezek. 27:31; 44:20). In contrast (1) Israeli priests were not allowed to shave at all (cf. Lev. 21:5) and (2) Israelites were not even allowed to trim their beards (cf. Lev. 19:27). Many of the laws of Israel were given in direct opposition to regular Canaanite practices!

for the sake of the dead" The mourning rites described are connected to: ancestor worship or Ba'al worship (the dying [winter] and rising [spring] nature god of the Canaanite pantheon)

**NET Note** - Do not cut yourselves or shave your forehead bald. These were pagan practices associated with mourning the dead; they were not to be imitated by God's people (though they frequently were; cf. 1 Ki 18:28 = THESE WERE PROPHETS OF BAAL; Jer 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; Hos 7:14 [LXX]; Mic 5:1). For other warnings against such practices see Lev 21:5; Jer 16:5.

**BSB** - (vv. 1,2) The highest honor to any created being comes in the identification "children of the Lord." As His children, the Israelites were to avoid any identification with the worshipers of pagan deities through disfiguring their bodies (v. 1) or defiling themselves by unclean food (vv. 3-21). This divine sonship was based upon the election of Israel to be a "holy people" unto Yahweh, an adoption based upon God's unbounded love and unmerited favor. God also purposed to use Israel by making this nation a channel of His promise to all men. A similar task has been passed on to the church (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9).

**Ryrie** - Vs. 14:1 These signs of mourning for the dead, which were practiced by the Canaanites as an acknowledgment of the divinity of the dead person, were strictly forbidden to God's people (cf. Lev. 19:27-28; Jer. 16:6).

**Deere** - The other nations had peculiar and superstitious beliefs about dying and the dead. Some even worshiped dead spirits. The precise significance of the rituals mentioned here (Deut. 14:1)—laceration and shaving the head for the dead—is unknown today. But cutting oneself was a sign of mourning (cf. Jer. 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37). However, it is clear that these practices reflected beliefs about the dead that conflicted with faith in the Lord, the ultimate Source of life. Therefore when a loved one died, the Israelites were to demonstrate their faith in the Lord by refraining from these pagan practices. Today Christians may demonstrate even greater faith when a believing loved one dies (cf. 1 Thes. 4:13–18).

**Thompson** - "The cutting of the body and the shaving of the head were common mourning rites in the ancient Near East and are referred to in many places in the Old Testament (Isaiah 3:24; 15:2; 22:12; Jeremiah 16:6; 41:5; Ezekiel 7:18; Amos 8:10; Micah 1:16). The mutilation of the body persists still in some countries, e.g. in New Guinea, where a mourner, especially a woman, removes a joint of a finger, and in extreme cases, more than one finger joint." (TOTC)

**Guzik** points out that "Among Christians today, there is something wrong if our burial customs are just as the rituals of the ungodly." Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:13: But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. We may certainly mourn the passing of our loved ones, but as those who have eternal hope in Jesus, we should be different in our mourning. (**ED: IN FACT WE SHOULD HAVE REJOICING - YES WE ARE SAD THEY ARE GONE, BUT YES WE ARE FILLED WITH JOY THAT THEY ARE WITH JESUS - THE LOST WORLD IS WATCHING AND THIS PARADOXICAL BEHAVIOR WILL THROW THEM FOR A LOOP SO TO SPEAK. SOME MAY BE STIMULATED TO INQUIRE FURTHER AS TO THE SOURCE OF OUR JOY WHICH IS IN FACT A PERSON, JESUS!**)

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### **Utley - SPECIAL TOPIC: GRIEVING RITES**

The Israelites expressed sorrow for the death of a loved one and for personal repentance, as well as corporate crimes, in several ways:

1. tear outer robe, Gen. 37:29, 34; 44:13; Jdgs. 11:35; 2 Sam. 1:11; 3:31; 1 Kgs. 21:27; Job 1:20
2. put on sackcloth, Gen. 37:34; 2 Sam. 3:31; 1 Kgs. 21:27; Jer. 48:37
3. take off shoes, 2 Sam. 15:30; Isa. 20:3
4. put hands on head, 2 Sam. 13:9; Jer. 2:37
5. put dust on head, Josh. 7:6; 1 Sam. 4:12; Neh. 9:1
6. sit on the ground, Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 26:16 (lay on the ground, 2 Sam. 12:16) Isa. 47:1
7. beat the breast, 1 Sam. 25:1; 2 Sam. 11:26; Nah. 2:7
8. cut the body, Deut. 14:1; Jer. 16:6; 48:37

9. fast, 2 Sam. 1:16, 22; 1 Kgs. 21:27
10. chant a lament, 2 Sam. 1:17; 3:31; 2 Chr. 35:25
11. baldness (hair pulled out or shaved), Jer. 48:37
12. cut beards short, Jer. 48:37
13. cover head or face, 2 Sam. 15:30; 19:4

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**QUESTION - [What does the Bible say about self-harm / self-mutilation / cutting?](#)**

**ANSWER** - What we think of as self-harm today—behaviors like cutting or burning—is generally not the same type of self-mutilation we read about in the Bible. **Much of the self-mutilation in the Bible was related to pagan idol worship.** But we do see biblical occurrences of self-harm being related to demonic oppression, which can certainly still be the case in some situations today. Whatever the cause of self-harming behaviors today, biblical truth is helpful and relevant. Those who are self-injuring and those who have a friend or loved one struggling with self-harming behaviors can find truth, hope, and encouragement in God's Word.

In the Old Testament, self-mutilation was a common practice among false religions. First Kings 18:24–29 describes a ritual in which those who worshiped the false god Baal slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom. Because of the traditions of pagans, God made a law against this sort of practice. Leviticus 19:28 says, "Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD." In the New Testament, cutting oneself was associated with someone who was possessed by demons (Mark 5:2–5). It was characteristic of behavior caused by evil spirits.

Self-harm as we generally talk about it today is deliberate harm to one's body as a way to deal with emotional pain, anger, or frustration. Some describe feeling numb and harming themselves to at least feel something. For some the physical pain induced by self-injury functions as a brief release of emotional pain or other emotional energy. For others, the physical pain is a distraction from emotional pain they are feeling. Some use self-harm as a means of punishing themselves for a perceived fault; for others, the harm is related to feeling a sense of control over one's body, emotions, or life circumstances. Some people self-harm a few times and stop; for others, it becomes a pattern of behavior. Though self-harm is usually not done with suicidal intention, the intensity of the harming behavior can increase. While the act of self-harm may temporarily resolve the emotional angst, the relief is generally short-lived. Guilt and shame often follow. ([www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/self-injury/symptoms-causes/syc-20350950](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/self-injury/symptoms-causes/syc-20350950), accessed 1/28/2021; and [www.covingtonbh.com/disorders/self-harm/signs-symptoms/](http://www.covingtonbh.com/disorders/self-harm/signs-symptoms/), accessed 1/28/2021.)

You might recognize self-harming behaviors in someone by noticing scratches, bruises, burn marks, or cut marks on his or her body. You might see patterned scars as evidence of past harming behavior. You might also notice he or she wears long sleeves or pants even in hot weather. Too, you'll likely notice emotional signs such as difficulty in relationships or talking about feeling hopeless or helpless. Self-harm tends to be more associated with teenagers and young adults, but it occurs in all age groups and genders. Self-harm is often associated with disorders like anxiety, depression, bipolar, post-traumatic stress, borderline personality, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and eating disorders. If you think someone you know is self-harming, take the behavior seriously. Gently talk to them about your concern and suggest they seek help (such as from a professional Christian counselor, school counselor, or medical care provider). If your child is self-harming, you can also talk with his or her school counselor, pediatrician, or other medical provider. (ibid.)

Clearly, self-harm is not a healthy coping mechanism and is not God's desire for people. Self-harm does not and will not resolve the underlying issues that prompt the behavior. So, what will help?

First, this is not a journey to walk alone. It is important for people engaged in self-harming behaviors to seek help (for instance, from a Christian counselor). Though it can be scary, it can also be helpful for the sufferer to confide in a trusted friend or mentor who can encourage and aid in healing. If your child is struggling with self-harm, you, as the parent, may also need some support through the journey. Try not to take your child's struggle personally. Extend compassion and mercy before anger and disappointment. Do not hesitate to reach out to trusted friends, or even a counselor, who can encourage you as you support your child.

Next, it will be important to recognize what is prompting the behavior so that the truth of God's Word can be spoken into the situation. Self-harm is often a symptom of not being able to adequately cope with one's emotions or the result of past abuse or trauma. It may also be a symptom of [spiritual oppression](#). God is more than big enough for our emotions. He sees and understands our pain. Tuning our minds to the truth of who God is and the way He sees us helps us to navigate life in a fallen world. God is also big enough to free us from any spiritual oppression. In fact, only He can do so, thus turning to Him is paramount.

The biggest step of healing is to put your trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior if you have not already done so. On our own, we are separated from God and without hope. But God provided a way for us to be in relationship with Him—Jesus Christ (John 3:16–18). Jesus is fully God and fully human. He lived a perfect life. He died on the cross to pay the price for our sins. Then He rose back to life, proving He is who He says He is and that His sacrifice was sufficient payment for us (1 Corinthians 15:3–7; Philippians 2:5–11). When we put our faith in Him, we become a child of God (John 1:12–13). All the things we have done that go against God are

forgiven (Ephesians 1:3–10). Not only that, but we are given the Holy Spirit to live inside us (Ephesians 1:13–14). God invites us into relationship with Him. In Him our lives have meaning and purpose. We still endure the hardships of this world, but we know that one day God will make the world new (John 16:33; James 1:2–4; 1 Peter 1:6–9; Revelation 21–22). We have hope that we will be with Him throughout eternity. We also know that He is with us every day of our lives (John 14:15–21, 26–27; 16:12–15; Matthew 28:20). We are not alone!

Even people who know Jesus as Savior struggle with difficult emotions and negative ways of dealing with them, like self-harm. But we need not be ashamed. God sees the pain, and He can help us through. We need to remind ourselves of who God is and who we are in Him. We find out who God is and what He says about us by reading His Word. For example, see Genesis 1:1, Genesis 16:13, Exodus 3:14, Psalm 103, Psalm 136, Psalm 139, Hebrews 13:5–6, 8, Isaiah 40, James 1:16–17, 1 John 4:8–10, and Revelation 4. The Bible also shows us how we can pour out our emotions to God. We can bring our pain to Him in prayer. See Psalm 42, Psalm 46, Psalm 62, the book of Job, the book of Lamentations, 1 Kings 19, Habakkuk 3, Luke 11:9–13, Hebrews 4:14–16, and 1 Peter 5:7, for example. God also gives us the family of believers to encourage us and walk alongside us (Galatians 6:2, 9–10; Hebrews 10:19–25; Romans 12:15; James 5:13–16; John 13:34–35). So reach out to fellow believers for support.

Also important will be finding practical ways to stop engaging in the harming behavior. Things like praying, journaling, doing artwork, going for a walk, calling a friend, taking a shower, or simply allowing oneself to cry can be helpful replacement activities when the urge to harm oneself arises. A counselor can help you come up with a good plan to help curb the damaging behaviors while also helping you learn better coping mechanisms for emotional stress.

Self-harm is a serious issue, but it is not insurmountable. Healing and recovery are possible with God along with the support of loved ones, medical professionals, and trusted spiritual advisors. ANSWER - [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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Deuteronomy 14:1-21

You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean. - Leviticus 10:10

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

One day, the Pharisees and teachers of the law spotted Jesus' disciples eating with ceremonially unclean hands. Immediately, they pounced, accusing them (and by implication, Jesus) of disregard for the Law. In response, Jesus put things into perspective and condemned the leaders' hypocrisy. He explained to the crowd that, spiritually speaking, "clean" and "unclean" are not about external factors-- these are the issues of the heart. They're not about human traditions or lists of dos and don'ts. What makes a man "unclean" is not what he eats, but his sinful desires (Mark 7:1-23).

In that case, what's the significance of today's reading? The key ideas behind the Law's classification of some foods as "clean" and others as "unclean" are identity and purity. God gave Israel instructions which would set them apart as His holy people (Dt 14:1, 21).

Certain prohibitions in this chapter were to keep Israel from idolatry. Cutting and shaving, for instance, were customs associated with pagan funeral rites (Dt 14:1). Other rules related to keeping other provisions in the Law. Not eating an already dead animal, for example, would keep people from eating blood, which was forbidden.

Making a distinction between "clean" and "unclean" foods dates at least as far back as Noah (Ge 7:2), though the reasons for these restrictions remain mysterious. Some commentators hold that the prohibitions reflect health or hygiene concerns, and others that the forbidden animals were used as symbols or sacrifices in pagan religions. Neither claim has been shown to be true across the board. Rather than seeking a pragmatic explanation, it's best to view the Israelite diet as one more way prescribed by God to set His people apart and to testify to the world of their special relationship with Him (cf. Lev. 11).

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

The Pentateuch's teachings on "clean" and "unclean" were rooted in the identity of Israel. Since the nation had been chosen by God, there were certain things that were appropriate or not appropriate for them to be and to do.

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Deuteronomy 14:1-29

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. - 1 Corinthians 10:31

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

The story has been told about a little boy who refused to eat prunes when they were served to him. The boy's mother sent him to his room with a shake of her finger and the admonition, "God is angry at you!" A thunderstorm broke out while the boy was serving his

punishment. As the storm raged, the mother began to feel a little remorse for being so stern with her son. Thinking that the crashing thunder and flashing lightning might have frightened him, she decided to open the door and peek into his room. When she did, the mother saw the boy standing at the window. As he contemplated the fury of the storm he muttered to himself, "What a big deal to make over a few prunes!"

We may be tempted to draw a similar conclusion after reading today's passage. The dietary laws described in the Law of Moses seem strange, if not a little petty, to us. Why should God care if His people ate animals with a split hoof or not? Was it really so important to their spiritual life that the seafood they ate had fins and scales on it?

These laws served three important purposes. First, many of them had a basis in health concerns. The prohibition against eating pork, for example, was wise in a culture where eating poorly cooked pork could be deadly. Second, many of these dietary laws made the difference between holy and unholy living more vivid to God's people by declaring as unclean many animals to which Hebrew culture had a natural aversion.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Read 1 Corinthians 10:23–33. Like the Corinthians, our questions about what constitutes godly living sometimes concern matters not explicitly addressed in Scripture. In such cases the path of holiness is more difficult than simply examining the shape of an animal's hoof. The Corinthian believers were not bound by the dietary regulations of the Law of Moses, yet food became a "spiritual" issue in their congregational life. Can you think of similar matters that affect the life of your congregation? What does it mean for you to live as a child of God in such circumstances?

**Deuteronomy 14:2 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.**

- De 14:21 Dt 7:6 Dt 26:18,19 28:9 Ex 19:5-6 Lev 11:45 Lev 19:2 Lev 20:26 Isa 6:13 Isa 62:12 Eze 21:2 Da 8:24 12:7 Titus 2:14 1Pe 2:9
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 19:5-6 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then **you shall be My own possession** among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a **holy nation**.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

Leviticus 11:45 'For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus **you shall be holy, for I am holy.**'"

Leviticus 19:2 "Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, **You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.**

Leviticus 20:26 **Thus you are to be holy to Me**, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.

Titus 2:14 (CHRIST) Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, **A HOLY NATION**, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

1 Peter 1:13-16 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the **Holy One** who called you, **be** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **holy yourselves also in all your behavior**; 16 because it is written, "**YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.**"

### HOLY POSSESSION OF THE HOLY ONE

**For** - Term of explanation. Explaining why to avoid the pagan practices that profane and defile their bodies.



**You are a holy people to the LORD your God- Holy** means they were set apart from the pagan peoples and were to remain separate from the profane practices of their pagan neighbors. Special position calls for special practice! They were to live like they were separate. **Holy** was their position and Moses is calling for their practice to correspond to their position. The way the Israelites lived was to serve as a bright light revealing the unseen God and ultimately the Messiah to the godless, lost pagan peoples.

**THOUGHT** - It (CALL TO HOLINESS) was true for Israel and it is true for all who are in Christ by grace through faith. We are commanded to be holy (1 Pe 1:15 - see above). It is not God's plan "B." There is one divine plan, one divine command and that is to **BE HOLY** in the midst of an unholy, crooked and perverse, tempting, attractive, dying, godless, God hating world! (Php 2:15+) Why? Why are we left on this dying planet which is passing away, including even its sinful lusts and desires? (1 Jn 2:17+) Why? The short, simple answer is to **BE HOLY**. And remember to be holy is not so much external (albeit internal will begat external), but is first and foremost an internal change of our heart. If you are having trouble being holy in this unholy world (and what saint isn't?), then ask the Holy One of Israel to give you the desire and the power (Php 2:13NLT+) to shine forth His holy light empowered by His Holy Spirit. That's a prayer He is sure to answer affirmatively, because it is for His glory and honor. As Jesus said "**Let** your light **shine** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) before men in such a way that they may see your good ("God") works (works HE initiates and HE empowers - cf Php 2:13NLT+, Jn 15:5), and glorify (give a proper opinion to the unholy world of) your (HOLY) Father Who is in heaven (YOUR VISIBLE GOOD WORKS HE DOES THROUGH YOU WILL POINT TO HIMSELF, THE INVISIBLE GOD AND WILL CONVICT AND CALL LOST SINNERS TO A POINT OF DECISION, TO SEEK THE SAVIOR AND ETERNAL LIFE OR SEEK THE SELF-LIFE AND DIE ETERNALLY)." (Mt 5:16+, cf 1 Pe 3:14-15+).

2 Cor 6:14-7:1 - Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 "Therefore, **COME OUT** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) FROM THEIR MIDST AND **BE SEPARATE** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#))," says the Lord. "**AND DO NOT TOUCH** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty. 1 (COMMENT) Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

**Utley** - Deuteronomy typifies covenant language, which describes deity as "the LORD your God" and His "holy," "chosen," "special treasure" people (cf. 4:20; 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; 28:9; 29:12-13). Also notice Jeremiah (cf. 7:23; 11:4; 13:11; 24:7; 30:22; 31:1, 33; 32:38). And of course, who can forget Hosea 1-3!

**And the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth** - This is one of those mercy-filled, amazing grace verses. Israel deserved nothing but death and hell. God reached down and plucked Abram out of a pagan land and set him apart to begin the lineage of Israel through Isaac and then Jacob. None of them deserve to be chosen. It was all by God's wise, sovereign good pleasure.

**NET Note -His own possession** -Or "treasured." The Hebrew term [סְגֻלָּה](#) ([segullah](#)) describes Israel as God's choice people, those whom he elected and who are most precious to him (cf. Exod 19:4-6; Deut 14:2; 26:18; 1 Chr 29:3; Ps 135:4; Eccl 2:8 Mal 3:17). See E. Carpenter, NIDOTTE 3:224. The Hebrew term translated "select" (CHOSEN) (and the whole verse) is reminiscent of the classic covenant text (Exod 19:4-6) which describes Israel's entry into covenant relationship with the LORD. Israel must resist paganism and its trappings precisely because she is a holy people elected by the LORD from among the nations to be his instrument of world redemption (cf. Deut 7:6; 26:18; Ps 135:4; Mal 3:17; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9).

**Chosen** reflects God's omniscient sovereignty to do as He pleases and knows best for their (our) good and His glory. **Choose** is a **keyword** in chapter 14 (Deut. 14:2; Deut. 14:23; Deut. 14:24; Deut. 14:25;). In addition the **place** (here it is **the people**) the LORD **chooses** is a **key thought** in Deuteronomy occurring 22 times! (Dt 12:5, Dt 12:11, Dt 12:14, Dt 12:18, Dt 12:21, Dt 12:26, Dt 14:23, Dt 14:24, Dt 14:25, Dt 15:20, Dt 16:2, Dt 16:6, Dt 16:7, Dt 16:11, Dt 16:15, Dt 16:16, Dt 17:8, Dt 17:10, Dt 18:6, Dt 23:16, Dt 26:2, Dt 31:11)

**Chosen** (0977) [bahar/bachar](#) in most contexts means to choose or to select, to take a keen look at, to prove, to . It denotes a choice, which is based on a thorough examination of the situation and not an arbitrary whim. Lot choose Sodom (Ge 13:11). Moses chose able men (Ex 18:25). "Theologically, *bāchar* asserts the



sovereignty of God in all of life. It affirms divine omnipotence and capacity for choice and in so doing declares that purpose and personality, expressing itself in agape love, lie at the heart of reality." (Gilbrant) TWOT adds that bahar/bachar is often "used to express that choosing which has ultimate and eternal significance." "Bāḥar is used 30 times in Deuteronomy, all but twice referring to God's "choice" of Israel or something in Israel's life." (Vine) Bahar in Deuteronomy - Deut. 4:37; Deut. 7:6; Deut. 7:7; Deut. 10:15; Deut. 12:5; Deut. 12:11; Deut. 12:14; Deut. 12:18; Deut. 12:21; Deut. 12:26; Deut. 14:2; Deut. 14:23; Deut. 14:24; Deut. 14:25; Deut. 15:20; Deut. 16:2; Deut. 16:6; Deut. 16:7; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 16:15; Deut. 16:16; Deut. 17:8; Deut. 17:10; Deut. 17:15; Deut. 18:5; Deut. 18:6; Deut. 21:5; Deut. 23:16; Deut. 26:2; Deut. 30:19; Deut. 31:11;

**Possession** (05459)(**segullah**) is related to an Akkadian cognate, sikiltu, means "private possessions." **Segullah** refers to a treasured possession, that which is valued personal property, that which is owned by someone and in which the owner has special affection or holds special value (Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4; Mal 3:17). **Segullah** most frequently occurs in reference to something God chooses, here referring to Israel, who God choose from all the nations of the world (Ex 19:5, Dt 7:6, 14:2). Segullah speaks of personal wealth in 1Chr 29:3, Eccl 2:8.

**Bob Utley - the LORD has chosen you** The VERB (BDB 103, KB 119, Qal PERFECT) is used of God's sovereign choice of:

1. Abraham, Gen. 12:1; Neh. 9:7
2. the Patriarchs, Deut. 7:8
3. the descendants of the Patriarchs, Deut. 4:37; 10:15
4. Israel, Deut. 7:6; Ps. 135:4; Isa. 44:1, 8; 43:10; Ezek. 20:5
5. Jeshurun (Israel or Jerusalem), Deut. 32:15; 33:5, 26; Isa. 44:2
6. an Israeli king (a symbol of YHWH's rule, which would foreshadow David [cf. 1 Sam. 10:24; 16:8, 9, 10; 2 Sam. 6:21], who became a Messianic figure), Deut. 17:14–17
7. place for His name to dwell (i.e., central sanctuary), Deut. 12:5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; 14:24; 15:20; 16:2, 6, 7, 11, 15; 17:8, 10; 31:11

God's sovereignty and purpose is expressed in His choice of Israel. God's "choice" in the OT is always related to service, not necessarily salvation, as it is in the NT. Israel was to reveal YHWH to the whole world, so that all the world might be saved (cf. Gen. 12:3; quoted in Titus 2:14 and 1 Pet. 2:9). See Special Topic at 4:6.

**"a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth"** The term "possession" (BDB 688) means a special treasure (cf. Exod. 19:5; Ps. 135:4; Mal. 3:17). This phrase is recurrent in Deuteronomy (cf. Dt 7:6; 14:2; 26:18).

#### Deuteronomy 14:3 "You shall not eat any detestable thing."

- Lev 11:43 Lev 20:25 Isa 65:4 Eze 4:14 Ac 10:12-14 Ro 14:14 1Co 10:28 Tit 1:15
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 11:43 **Do not render yourselves detestable** through any of the swarming things that swarm; and you shall not make yourselves unclean with them so that you become unclean.

Leviticus 20:25 You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and **you shall not make yourselves detestable** by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean.

### ISRAEL'S DIVINE DIET

Deuteronomy 14:2-21 deals with the laws of kosher diet (this term becoming known in post-biblical Judaism).

**Utley** - Verses 3–21 reflect Leviticus 11:2–19, but with differences. It is differences like this which are so hard to explain that have caused the speculation of numerous sources. Notice the VERB "eat" (BDB 37, KB 46) is used 17 times in this chapter.

**You shall not eat any detestable thing** - Holy people need to stay away from unholy food. Holy people eating detestable, unclean things will make them unclean. The word **detestable** in the Septuagint is [bdeugma](#) (from [bdeusso](#) = emit foul odor, turn away from something or someone on account of the "stench". A loathing or disgust, abhor in turn derived from bdeo = to stink;cf [bdekluktos](#))

which describes something foul, that which is extremely hated, disgusted, detested or abhorred.

**THOUGHT** - This is fascinating! He has just said they are a holy people. But now he describes food not worship at the tabernacle, etc. The point is that a holy people, every area of our life is to be considered "holy," what we eat, wear, where we go, what we watch, etc. This sounds "confining" but to the contrary Scripture is clear that God will withhold no good thing from those who walk uprightly (aka "holy"). So what might seem to be a constraint on our liberty is really just the opposite, for it is intended for our good and His glory. We are to be different than the pagan peoples around us, and that difference is to permeate every area of our life, so we give off (so to speak) a sweet aroma of Jesus ("[eau de cologne](#) of Yeshua") in every place we go, whether home, work or play. As Paul says "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?" (2 Cor 2:14-16)

**Keil** - With reference to food, the Israelites were to eat nothing whatever that was abominable. In explanation of this prohibition, the laws of Lev. 11 relating to clean and unclean animals are repeated in all essential points in vv. 4–20 (for the exposition, see at Lev. 11); also in v. 21 the prohibition against eating any animal that had fallen down dead (as in Ex. 32:30 and Lev. 17:15), and against boiling a kid in its mother's milk (as in Ex. 23:19).

**Detestable** (abomination, loathsome) ([08441](#)) **toebah** refers to an abominable custom or thing. Abomination. Loathsome. Detestable thing. Something or someone who is loathsome and abhorrent. Something or someone who is loathsome and abhorrent. When used with reference to God, this nuance of the word describes people, things, acts, relationships, and characteristics that are "detestable" to Him because they are contrary to His nature and totally devoid of holiness. Anything detestable to the LORD because of its innate evil or inconsistency with his own nature and character. Sometimes **toebah** is used as a synonym for idol, a repulsive thing, a worship object, with a focus that it is an item to be rejected (Dt 32:16; 2Ch 34:33; Isa 44:19; Jer 16:18; Eze 5:9; 7:20; 11:18, 21; 16:36). **Toebah** is even used for a specific pagan deity, as in 2Ki 23:13 where Milcom is called "the **abomination** of the Ammonites." And even prayer is an **abomination** when offered by one who refuses to obey God's Word (Pr 28:9). **Toebah** in Deuteronomy - Deut. 7:25; Deut. 7:26; Deut. 12:31; Deut. 13:14; Deut. 14:3; Deut. 17:1; Deut. 17:4; Deut. 18:9; Deut. 18:12; Deut. 20:18; Deut. 22:5; Deut. 23:18; Deut. 24:4; Deut. 25:16; Deut. 27:15; Deut. 32:16

**Utley - SPECIAL TOPIC: ABOMINATIONS** "Abominations" can refer to several things:

1. things related to Egyptians:
  - a. they loathe eating with Hebrews, Gen. 43:32
  - b. they loathe shepherds, Gen. 46:34
  - c. they loathe Hebrew sacrifices, Exod. 8:26
2. things related to YHWH's feelings toward Israel's actions:
  - a. unclean food, Deut. 14:2
  - b. idols, Deut. 7:25; 18:9, 12; 27:15
  - c. pagan spiritists, Deut. 18:9, 12
  - d. burning children to Molech, Lev. 18:21–22; 20:2–5; Deut. 12:31; 18:9, 12; 2 Kgs. 16:3; 17:17–18; 21:6; Jer. 32:35
  - e. Canaanite idolatry, Deut. 13:14; 17:4; 20:17–18; 32:16; Isa. 44:19; Jer. 16:18; Ezek. 5:11; 6:9; 11:18, 21; 14:6; 16:50; 18:12
  - f. sacrificing blemished animals, Deut. 17:1 (cf. 15:19–23; Mal. 1:12–13)
  - g. sacrificing to idols, Jer. 44:4–5
  - h. remarrying a woman whom you had previously divorced, Deut. 24:2
  - i. women wearing man's clothes (possibly Canaan worship), Deut. 22:5
  - j. money from cultic prostitution (Canaanite worship), Deut. 23:18
  - k. Israel's idolatry, Jer. 2:7
  - l. homosexuality (possibly Canaanite worship), Lev. 18:22; 20:13
  - m. use of false weights, Det. 25:16; Pro. 11:1; 20:23
  - n. food laws violated (possibly Canaanite worship), Deut. 14:3
3. Examples in Wisdom Literature:
  - a. Proverbs 3:32; 6:16–19; 11:1, 20; 12:22; 15:8, 9, 26; 16:5; 17:15; 20:10, 23; 21:27; 28:9
  - b. Psalms 88:8
  - c. Job 30:10

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## Utley - SPECIAL TOPIC: THE OT FOOD LAWS

In my opinion, these food laws (Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14) are not given primarily for health or hygienic reasons (i.e., Maimonides, Guide 3:48; Kiddushin 49b [Talmudic tractate]), but for theological reasons. Israelis are to have no contact with Canaanites (cf. Isa. 65:4; 66:3, 17). Many of the regulations given to Israel through Moses relate to Canaanite eating, socializing, and worshiping practices (e.g., Exod. 8:23).

On the question of “are these food laws binding or even helpful for NT believers,” I would say No! No! No! Here are my reasons:

1. Jesus rejected the food laws as a way to approach and please God, Mark 7:14–23 (surely the editorial comment by either Peter or John Mark in v. 19 is equally inspired)
2. This very question was the issue of the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15, where it was decided that Gentiles did not have to follow OT cultic laws (cf. esp. v. 19). Verse 20 is not a food law, but a fellowship concession to believing Jews who may be in their Gentile churches.
3. Peter’s experience in Acts 10 in Joppa is not about food, but about the acceptability of all people, yet the Spirit used the food law’s irrelevance as the symbol to teach Peter!
4. Paul’s discussion of “weak” and “strong” believers cautions us not to force our personal interpretation, particularly of OT laws, on all other believers (cf. Rom. 14:1–15:13; 1 Corinthians 8–10).
5. Paul’s warnings about legalism and judgmentalism in relation to the Gnostic false teachers recorded in Col. 2:16–23 ought to be a warning to all believers in every age!

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### Deuteronomy 14:4 "These are the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat,

- Lev 11:2-8 1Ki 4:23
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

## THE DIVINE MENU BEGINS

**These are the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat-** The menu includes steaks, lamb chops, BBQ capretto or cabrito. All good source of protein and each capable of being made quite tasty. Quite a change from manna (manna - cotti, etc)! Clean for eating and for sacrificing.

**Coakley** has an interesting comment - The types of foods the Israelites ate were an important matter to the Lord because they are related not just to **diet** but also to **theology**. While it is not always clear what specific animal is being mentioned in these verses, the animals were grouped according to the domain in which they lived. (Bold mine. Moody Bible Commentary)

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### Deuteronomy 14:5 the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope and the mountain sheep.

- the wild goat: The word {akko,} according to the LXX. and Vulgate, signifies the {tragelephus,} or goat-deer; so called from its resemblance to both species. Dr. Shaw states that an animal of this kind is found in the East, where it is called {fishtull,} and {lerwee,} pygarg. or, bison. Heb. dishon. The {pygarg,} [pygargos,] or white-buttocks, according to the LXX.; and Dr. Shaw states that the {liamee,} as the Africans call it, is exactly such an animal; being of the same shape and colour as the antelope, and of the size of a roebuck.
- the wild ox: {Theo,} probably the {oryx} of the Greeks, a species of large stag; and the {Bekkar el wash} of Dr. Shaw. De 14:5
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

## THE MEAT MENU CONTINUES

**the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope and the mountain sheep-** The high protein meat menu continues. Clean for eating but unclean for sacrificing.

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### Deuteronomy 14:6 "Any animal that divides the hoof and has the hoof split in two and chews the cud, among the animals,

## that you may eat.

- Ps 1:1,2 Pr 18:1 2Co 6:17 On this verse remark, that the clean beast must both chew the cud and part the hoof: two distinct characteristics, or general signs, by which the possibility of error arising from the misinterpretation of names is obviated. When God directs, his commands are not of doubtful interpretation.
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

### **Any animal that divides the hoof and has the hoof split in two and chews the cud, among the animals, that you may eat-**

These are the specific requirements for any meat on their plates. No lion paws, tiger tails, bear brisket, etc. The point is that animals that failed to meet these standards were to be considered unclean and as such served as a symbol of holiness.

**Deuteronomy 14:7 "Nevertheless, you are not to eat of these among those which chew the cud, or among those that divide the hoof in two: the camel and the rabbit and the shaphan, for though they chew the cud, they do not divide the hoof; they are unclean for you.**

- Mt 7:22,23,26 2Ti 3:5 Tit 1:16 2Pe 2:18-22
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

**Nevertheless** - A change of direction in the "divine menu."

**You are not to eat of these among those which chew the cud, or among those that divide the hoof in two: the camel and the rabbit and the shaphan, for though they chew the cud, they do not divide the hoof; they are unclean for you** - It is surprising that rabbit is on the forbidden list, but God says they were unclean. Recall that this does not apply in the New Testament. In Mark 7:19+ Jesus "declared all foods clean."

**Utley on rabbit** - This animal is apparently mentioned in Lev. 11:6 as "hare" or "rabbit." It is interesting that Leviticus says (as assumed here) that the rabbit chews the cud. This is a good place to remind readers that the Israelites based their knowledge of nature on observable characteristic (phenomenological language). Rabbits do not, in actuality, chew the cud, but the rapid movement of their noses look as if they do. This is not an error in the Bible, but the recognition the ancients based their knowledge on observation, not modern, scientific methods.

**Deuteronomy 14:8 "The pig, because it divides the hoof but does not chew the cud, it is unclean for you. You shall not eat any of their flesh nor touch their carcasses.**

- the pig: Isa 65:4 66:3,17 Lu 15:15,16 2Pe 2:22
- touch: Lev 11:26,27
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

## **NO BACON ON GOD'S MENU**

**The pig, because it divides the hoof but does not chew the cud, it is unclean for you. You shall not eat any of their flesh nor touch their carcasses** - No reason is given why these characteristics were determiners. Not only are they not to eat pork, but they are not to even touch it. I was an infectious disease doctor in my "former life" (before Christ) and pigs carry tapeworms, et al ("swine flu"), so were off-limits for medical reasons. If you eat pork today, please make sure you do not eat like you like you filet mignon, medium rare! It must be thoroughly cooked to destroy any [potential tapeworm cysts](#) (especially [cysticercosis](#)) which can germinate in our intestinal tract and invade the bloodstream and land in vital organs like the brain.

**Utley** - The pig was eaten and used in sacrificial ritual by the Canaanites (cf. Isa. 65:4; 66:3, 17). It was classified as unclean because of its eating habits (the same is true for dogs) and preferred resting places (mud holes). Pigs were sacrificed regularly in Hittites, Greek, and Roman cultures. They were also eaten (by some groups) in all of the Mediterranean cultures.

**Deuteronomy 14:9 "These you may eat of all that are in water: anything that has fins and scales you may eat,**

- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 11:9-12+ 'These you may eat, whatever is in the water: all that have fins and scales, those in the water, in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. 10 'But whatever is in the seas and in the rivers that does not have fins and scales among all the teeming life of the water, and among all the living creatures that are in the water, they are detestable things to you, 11 and they shall be abhorrent to you; you may not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall detest. 12 'Whatever in the water does not have fins and scales is abhorrent to you.

### MARINE MENU

**These you may eat of all that are in water: anything that has fins and scales you may eat**- "Fish that were permitted were to picture the purity and holiness that the Israelites were to reflect even in their diet." (Coakley)

**Deuteronomy 14:10 but anything that does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you.**

- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

### NOTHING "SLIMY"

**But anything that does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean (tame; Lxx = [akathartos](#)) for you** - Did you realize that this prohibition would have excluded catfish for the Israelites? It would because [catfish have no scales!](#) I recall once opening up a catfish we had caught on the lake and it had a chicken drumstick intact in its stomach! Catfish has never tasted quite the same to me since! In addition shellfish would be unclean, because clams, crabs, oysters, and lobster all do not have fins and scales. As an infectious disease expert I know that shellfish can harbor diseases and make you sick (See [this article](#) or another [article](#)). Shellfish ingestion can also be [associated with Hepatitis A](#).

**Unclean** ([02931](#)) **tame** describes that which is (ceremonially) defiled or impure, ritually impure and unfit for use or consumption. It describes that which is not cleansed in a ceremonial sense and that which must be abstained from according to the Levitical law, lest impurity be contracted. **Tame** (used 78x in OT) and its derivatives occur 279 times, about 64% in Lev and Num, and 15% in Ezekiel.

**Lawrence Richards** explains that **tame** "designates ceremonial (ritual) uncleanness in the early books. Later the prophets use the term primarily of moral impurity. In the early books of the OT, cleanness and uncleanness are ritual issues. That is, calling a person or thing "unclean" was not a moral judgment. "Unclean" meant simply that a person or thing was unable to participate in Israel's worship of Yahweh. During the time of ceremonial uncleanness, one could not attend any worship ceremony or eat meat that had been offered in sacrifice (Nu 5:1-4; 9:6-12). Under certain circumstances an unclean person must be isolated from others in the community (Lev 13:45-46)... The rules concerning the clean and the unclean seem to draw attention to central issues in human experience—to birth, death, sex, health, and food. In so doing, **these ritual issues graphically demonstrated God's concern for everything in His people's earthly life...** What we conclude is that Israel's God sets apart what he chooses for his people, and he sets them apart from whatever he rejects. Israel is God's people. **Everything in their daily life is to testify to their exclusive commitment to the Lord...** Ceremonial and ritual uncleanness cut off an individual from participation in worship of the Lord. The lesson is clear: **one must be clean to approach a holy God** (New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words) (Bolding added for emphasis)

**Tame** in **Deuteronomy** - Deut. 12:15; Deut. 12:22; Deut. 14:7; Deut. 14:8; Deut. 14:10; Deut. 14:19; Deut. 15:22; Deut. 26:14

**Deuteronomy 14:11 "You may eat any clean bird.**

- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

#### Related Passage:

Ex 16:12-13+ "I have heard the grumbings of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat **meat**, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'" 13 So it came about at evening that the **quails** came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp.

Numbers 11:31-34 Now there went forth a wind from the LORD and it brought **quail** from the sea, and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp and about two cubits deep on the surface of the ground. (THIS IS A "TON" OF QUAIL!) 32 The people spent all day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the **quail** (he who gathered least gathered ten homers) and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. 33 While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very severe plague. 34 So the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had been greedy (THIS IS THE KEY - GREED! THEY TRIED THE LORD = Ps 78:18,26-32)

Ps 105:40 They asked, and He brought **quail**, And satisfied them with the bread of heaven.

**Comment** - [What were the quail mentioned in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

## AVIAN MENU

**You may eat any clean bird** - No examples of clean birds are given. We know some for Israel had fed on quail in their wilderness wanderings.

**Guzik** - Among these animals, they fall into one of three categories: predators (unclean because they ate both the flesh and the blood of animals), scavengers (unclean because they were carriers of disease, and they regularly contacted dead bodies), or potentially poisonous or dangerous foods such as shellfish and the like. Eliminating these from the diet of Israel no doubt had a healthy effect, and one of the reasons for the dietary laws of Israel was to keep Israel healthy!

**Deere** - the unclean birds are birds of prey that eat flesh without draining the blood and/or are carrion eaters, whereas clean birds are presumably those that eat grain

**Deuteronomy 14:12** "But these are the ones which you shall not eat: the eagle and the vulture and the buzzard,

- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 11:13-19+ 'These, moreover, you shall detest among the birds; they are abhorrent, not to be eaten: the eagle and the vulture and the buzzard, 14 and the kite and the falcon in its kind, 15 every raven in its kind, 16 and the ostrich and the owl and the sea gull and the hawk in its kind, 17 and the little owl and the cormorant and the great owl, 18 and the white owl and the pelican and the carrion vulture, 19 and the stork, the heron in its kinds, and the hoopoe, and the bat.

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER TO FLY FROM

**But these are the ones which you shall not eat: the eagle and the vulture and the buzzard,**

**NET NOTE** - **vulture** - The Hebrew term פֶּרֶס (peres) describes a large vulture otherwise known as the ossifrage (cf. KJV). This largest of the vultures takes its name from its habit of dropping skeletal remains from a great height so as to break the bones apart.

Deuteronomy 14:13 and the red kite, the falcon, and the kite in their kinds,

- the glede: {Raah,} probably the same as {daah,} rendered vulture in Lev 11:14, where six of Dr. Kennicott's codices read some animal of the hawk or vulture kind: LXX. [gupa,] vulture. De 14:13
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

### BIRDS OF PREY OFF LIMITS

and the red kite, the falcon, and the kite in their kinds,

Deuteronomy 14:14 and every raven in its kind,

- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

### NO RAVEN STEW

and every raven in its kind

Deuteronomy 14:15 and the ostrich, the owl, the sea gull, and the hawk in their kinds,

- Job 30:29
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

### MORE FORBIDDEN FEATHERED FRIENDS

and the ostrich, the owl, the sea gull, and the hawk in their kinds,

Deuteronomy 14:16 the little owl, the great owl, the white owl,

- the swan: {Tinshemeth,} probably, as Michaelis supposes, the goose. De 14:16
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

### WISE NOT TO EAT WISE OWLS

the little owl, the great owl, the white owl,

Deuteronomy 14:17 the pelican, the carrion vulture, the cormorant,

- gier: {Rachamah,} probably a species of vulture, still called in Arabic by the same name.
- the cormorant: {Shalach,} probably the cataract, or plungeon, a sea fowl. De 14:17
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

### MORE FORBIDDEN BIRDS

the pelican, the carrion vulture, the cormorant,



## Deuteronomy 14:18 the stork, and the heron in their kinds, and the hoopoe and the bat.

- the lapwing: {Doocheephath,} the {upupa,} or hoop, a beautiful but very unclean bird. De 14:18
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

### STAY AWAY FROM THIS MENAGERIE

**the stork, and the heron in their kinds, and the hoopoe and the bat.**

**Utley on hoopoe** - This type of bird eats all kinds of insects, including dung beetles. It became known for its eating in unclean places and having a dung-filled nest, therefore, it became an “unclean” migratory bird.

## Deuteronomy 14:19 "And all the teeming life with wings are unclean to you; they shall not be eaten.

NET Deuteronomy 14:19 and any winged thing on the ground are impure to you— they may not be eaten.

NLT Deuteronomy 14:19 "All winged insects that walk along the ground are ceremonially unclean for you and may not be eaten.

ESV Deuteronomy 14:19 And all winged insects are unclean for you; they shall not be eaten.

NIV Deuteronomy 14:19 All flying insects that swarm are unclean to you; do not eat them.

### Related Passages:

Leviticus 11:20-23 'All the winged insects that walk on all fours are detestable to you. 21'Yet these you may eat among all the winged insects which walk on all fours: those which have above their feet jointed legs with which to jump on the earth. 22' These of them you may eat: the locust in its kinds, and the devastating locust in its kinds, and the cricket in its kinds, and the grasshopper in its kinds. 23'But all other winged insects which are four-footed are detestable to you.

**And all the teeming life with wings are unclean to you; they shall not be eaten-** No flying insects! Note exceptions in the Leviticus passages above - locusts and grasshoppers. Have you ever eaten a fried grasshopper? Are you into shrimp? Grasshoppers taste similar to the beloved seafood. (I will still pass even though I love fried shrimp!) It is interesting that these insects are the food for many of the unclean birds listed below.

## Deuteronomy 14:20 "You may eat any clean bird.

- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

### CLEAN BIRDS ARE EDIBLE

**You may eat any clean bird** - See note on Deut 14:11.

**Deuteronomy 14:21 "You shall not eat anything which dies of itself. You may give it to the alien who is in your town, so that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner, for you are a holy people to the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.**

- any thing: Lev 17:15 22:8 Eze 4:14 Ac 15:20
- the stranger: Ex 12:43-45 Lev 19:33,34
- an holy: De 14:2 Da 8:24 12:7 1Pe 1:16
- Thou shalt: Ex 23:19 34:26 Ro 12:2
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

## Related Passage:

Leviticus 17:15 "When any person eats an animal which dies or is torn by beasts, whether he is **anative** or an **alien**, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening; then he will become clean.

## NOTHING DEAD AND DECAYING

**You shall not eat anything which dies of itself. You may give it to the alien who is in your town, so that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner, for you are a holy people to the LORD your God** - One problem with an animal that died was that it may not have been properly bled and all the blood removed. As Guzik says "It was important to bleed animals before eating them, because the blood represented the life principle of the animal (Leviticus 17:11), and the life principle belonged to God and God alone. Another reason for the dietary laws was to project an important symbolism to Israel regarding blood and the sanctity of the life principle."

Animals that died could be eaten by aliens (non-Israelites, not holy people) or sold. Again the explanation for the prohibitions is that they were set apart from not only the pagans but the non-Israelites among them. This distinction theoretically could have caused the alien or the pagan to ask "Why let us use this meat and you cannot?" This would give them an opportunity to explain that they were holy and served the holy and living God!

**Utley** - These food laws were meant to separate Israel from Canaanite society and worship practices.

**You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk** - This strange prohibition in some way alludes to pagan practices (see Coakley below).

**Guzik** has an interesting note that "This law, because of strange rabbinical interpretations, became the reason why one cannot have a kosher cheeseburger. Observant Jews today will not eat milk and meat at the same meal (or even on the same plates with the same utensils cooked in the same pots), because the rabbis insist that the meat in the hamburger may have come from the calf of the cow that gave the milk for the cheese, and the cheese and the meat would "boil" together in one's stomach, and be a violation of this command."

**Coakley on mother's milk** - The next command, You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk (v. 21, cf. Ex 23:19+; Ex 34:26+) is puzzling. The typical explanation is that such an injunction reflects a Canaanite fertility practice. The scant evidence supporting this interpretation is based on a likely incorrect reconstruction of a thirteenth-century Ugaritic inscription that never mentions boiling the kid in the milk (Jacob Milgrom, "You Shall Not Boil a Kid in its Mother's Milk," Bible Review 1 [October 1985]: 48–55). This view, however, would fit the context here with its emphasis on purity and abstaining from practices associated with pagans. Another possible interpretation is to render the sentence, "You shall not boil a young goat on its mother's milk." In other words a baby kid was not to be eaten while still nursing. Respect for young animals is reflected elsewhere in the Pentateuch (Lv 22:27–28; Dt 22:6), so that is a possibility here. Possibly also the command expresses concern for the mother of the animal whose distress at the slaughter of her baby would be intolerable. But this does not seem to fit the subject of purity. Another interpretation, which goes back as far as Philo (De Virtute 143), is that this is a prohibition against mingling life with death: "You shall not take a goat and season it after its death with what brought it life." Just as other "separations" have been noted in this section (clean and unclean) here is another distinction that ought not to be crossed (life and death). In 14:1 Israelites were forbidden to show any symbol of death on their bodies while they were alive, so this view seems to fit the context and is the preferred view. The injunction is probably not related to the avoidance of eating milk with meat, a common Jewish understanding of the verse. (Moody Bible Commentary)

**NET NOTE - Do not boil a young goat in its mother's milk** This strange prohibition—one whose rationale is unclear but probably related to pagan ritual—may seem out of place here but actually is not for the following reasons: (1) the passage as a whole opens with a prohibition against heathen mourning rites (i.e., death, vv. 1–2) and closes with what appear to be birth and infancy rites. (2) In the other two places where the stipulation occurs (Exod 23:19 and Exod 34:26) it similarly concludes major sections. (3) Whatever the practice signified it clearly was abhorrent to the LORD and fittingly concludes the topic of various breaches of purity and holiness as represented by the ingestion of unclean animals (vv. 3–21). See C. M. Carmichael, "On Separating Life and Death: An Explanation of Some Biblical Laws," HTR 69 (1976): 1–7; J. Milgrom, "You Shall Not Boil a Kid In Its Mother's Milk," BRev 1 (1985): 48–55; R. J. Ratner and B. Zuckerman, "In Rereading the 'Kid in Milk' Inscriptions," BRev 1 (1985): 56–58; and M. Haran, "Seething a Kid in its Mother's Milk," JJS 30 (1979): 23–35.

**Jack Deere** - In conclusion, all these food laws would have reminded Israel of her unique status before God. No Israelite could eat

without realizing that in every area of his life he was to be consecrated to God. Likewise an Israelite's diet served as a testimony of his relationship to the Lord in the presence of Gentiles. As stated earlier, in the New Testament God abolished the food laws of the Old Testament (Mark 7:14–23; Acts 10:9–23). However, Christians should demonstrate their unique relationship to God by the purity of their lives. Christians may demonstrate their faith and unique relationship with the Lord by offering sincere thanks at mealtimes to God, the Creator and Provider of all food (1 Tim. 4:3–5).

**Deuteronomy 14:22 "You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year.**

- De 12:6,17 26:12-15 Lev 27:30-33 Nu 18:21 Ne 10:37
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

## **GIVE BOUNTY TO THE LORD OF THE HARVEST**

**You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year** - From kosher food Moses moves to "[kosher](#)" tithing, which also deals with food in a sense ("shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God" - Dt 14:23, 26) The word "surely" is actually the verb for "tithe" repeated, which clearly lends emphasis to this practice. In other words the "tithe" must really be a "tithe" and not some permutation of a tithe, which would discourage the Israelites from looking for "loopholes" to try to give less than a true tithe thinking that they were still meeting the Lord's commandment. It would be like a Christian today looking for loopholes in his tax return, not a godly practice!

**Guzik** comments on the KJV rendering "**All the increase of thy seed**" (Dt 14:22KJV): Seemingly, this meant the grain left over after the seed-grain was taken out. This meant that the tithe was assessed on the income, not on the total assets.

**Keil** - As the Israelites were to sanctify their food, on the one hand, positively by abstinence from everything unclean, so were they, on the other hand, to do so negatively by delivering the tithes and firstlings at the place where the Lord would cause His name to dwell, and by holding festal meals on the occasion, and rejoicing there before Jehovah their God.

**Ryrie on tithe** - The tithe had to be taken to the central sanctuary. This referred to what was known as the second tithe. Two tithes were required: an annual tithe for the maintenance of the Levites (Lev. 27:30; Nu. 18:21) and a second tithe brought to Jerusalem for the Lord's feast (Dt. 14:22). Every third year, however, the second tithe was kept at home and used for the poor (Dt. 14:28). One's use of money is often a barometer of his spirituality (cf. 1 John 3:17). This command was considered by Jewish interpreters to be for a second tithe (see Lev. 27:30+ and Num. 18:21 for the first; also Mal. 3:8+), which was brought to the central sanctuary either in kind or in money. Apparently the offerer could use a part of this tithe for a feast at the sanctuary (Dt 14:26-27).

**Believer's Study Bible** - The tithe was a reminder to the people that their prosperity was a gift of God, who Himself is the divine Creator and Owner of all (cf. Lev. 27:30-33+; Mal. 3:8-10+; Luke 11:42+).

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### **Deuteronomy 14:22-29**

Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice. - Deuteronomy 14:26

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

For some of the best food in America, just head for ... a Navy submarine? That's right. Because submarine duty is one of the most demanding assignments in the military, professionally trained Navy chefs serve such delicacies as steak, prime rib, stuffed lobster tails, and fresh-baked bread in generous portions to the sailors. On one submarine known for its chicken dishes, a week's menu once included Sichuan chicken, Jamaican chicken, chicken cordeon bleu, savory baked chicken, chicken cacciatore, Southern fried chicken, and chicken noodle soup.

Sounds like a five-star underwater feast! Feasting before the Lord was a key element in the leisure-and-worship life of Israel. In today's reading, we see in action the principles mentioned yesterday--rest, worship, and celebration. The physical pleasures of good food and drink, the combination of happiness and order, and the freedom and spiritual blessing of being in God's presence fuse together into a beautiful picture of community pleasure.

This special covenant meal took place in the context of tithing, and so was an acknowledgment that our well-being and all that we have ultimately belongs to the Lord (v. 23). As God's ministers, the Levites received the bulk of the tithe for their daily needs, but first the whole nation was to have a feast with it. The poor were also to be provided for, showing that a spirit of compassion is exactly in

line with godly holidays. What a contrast this was to comparable Canaanite events where feasting would be accompanied by sexual immorality and drunkenness.

Celebration was such an essential part of this regulation that it included a "Plan B." If the distance was too far, the worshipers could buy the feast fixings, "anything you wish," and organize the worship meal somewhere else. The point was to eat together and rejoice in the Lord's presence (v. 26).

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Why not organize your own "festival" to the Lord? Plan a special meal for your family or small group which includes rest, food, fellowship, and worship--a "celebration dinner" along lines similar to those in today's passage. Scripture readings, spontaneous testimonies, or candlelight prayers might help add the worship dimension. If a meal sounds like too much work, make it a potluck or go to a restaurant.

**Deuteronomy 14:23 "You shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always."**

- **eat** : De 12:5-7,17,18
- **firstborn** De 15:19,20
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

### DIVINE DINING DECREE

**You shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God-** " This refers to the [peace offering](#) whereby God and the offerer and his family symbolically ate together. In the ancient East, eating together was the sign of covenant." (Utley)

**Deere** - Eating the tithes in the Lord's presence was another way in which the Israelites were to express their unique relationship to and dependence on the Lord in reference to their food.

#### Related Resource:

- [What is a peace offering / fellowship offering? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**At the place where He chooses** (see [bahar/bachar](#)) **to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock -**

**So that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always-** Living Bible - "The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives." Note that **fear** of Yahweh is learned. Imagine eating in His presence! Would this not generate a holy and reverential awe in one's heart? I think so!

**THOUGHT** - This regulation reminds me of the NT believer who in a sense also eats "in the presence of the LORD," every time he or she partakes of communion! (1 Cor 11:23-26+) Do we all not do so with a sense of reverential awe? I think we do. So it follows that to regularly partake of communion is one of the ways we energize (so to speak) our fear of the Lord, thinking back to His awesome sacrifice as our Substitute and forward to His glorious return to triumph over all evil. (1 Cor 11:26 "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death [PAST] until He comes [FUTURE].")

The problem with the godless world is they have not learned this holy, reverential fear which Paul sums up with the declaration that "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES." (Ro 3:18)

**Deuteronomy 14:24 "If the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring the tithe, since the place where the LORD your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you,**

- **if the:** De 11:24 12:21 Ex 23:31
- **which:** De 12:5

- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

## FLEXIBILITY BECAUSE OF DISTANCE FROM TABERNACLE

If the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring the tithe, since the place where the LORD your God chooses (see [bahar/bachar](#)) to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you- Guzik calls this "long distance" tithing. The point is that while one might easily transport money to the location of God's residence, that would not be as easy with products from the harvest or animals.

**Keil** - In the land of Canaan, however, where the people would be scattered over a great extent of country, there would be many for whom the fulfilment of this command would be very difficult—would, in fact, appear almost impossible. To meet this difficulty, permission was given for those who lived at a great distance from the sanctuary to sell the tithes at home, provided they could not convey them in kind, and then to spend the money so obtained in the purchase of the things required for the sacrificial meals at the place of the sanctuary.

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### Deuteronomy 14:24 F. B. Meyer Our Daily Homily

GOD'S pitifulness is very manifest here. If the pious Jew found it impossible to transport all his tithes in kind, he might change them into money, and bind it in his hand. It was for from God's thought that His service should become irksome, or the soul faint in performing it. An alleviation was suggested, of which the worshipper might take advantage, if he would. This principle may be applied in several directions. We are not to make God's service a toil, but esteem it a delight. "Thou shalt rejoice, and thine household."

The Lord's Day should be the gladdest of the week; full of love and joy and holy song. We should carefully guard against anything approaching to slavish observance: and be very careful that our children and servants should look forward to it with delight.

Christian work should not be carried to the point of exhaustion. There is a mistake somewhere if it so breaks down the health and spirits that the worker is not able to carry it. At such a time, we need to avail ourselves of any assistance or alleviation that may be possible.

Acts of devotion, also, should be for our enjoyment and refreshment. It seems sometimes as though God's children relied more on length than strength, in their prayers. They are not at ease or natural in the Father's presence. The forms of their devotion are so numerous and prolonged. that they are not able to carry them. By all means maintain the salutary form, but not for form's sake. Let the joy of the Lord, taking pleasure in His presence and in communion with Him, be always the first thought.

**Deuteronomy 14:25 then you shall exchange it for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses.**

- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

## EXCHANGE GOODS FOR LIGHTER LOAD (\$)

**then you shall exchange it for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses ([bahar/bachar](#))** - "Laws like this show us that God is a common-sense God. He does not place unreasonable demands on His people. He made a way for them to more conveniently tithe." (Guzik)

**Deuteronomy 14:26 "You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household.**

- **bestow:** Ezr 7:15-17,22 Mt 21:12 Mk 11:15 Joh 2:14-16
- **thy soul:** De 12:15,20,21 Ps 106:14 1Co 6:12,13 10:6
- **eat:** De 12:7,12,18 Dt 26:11

- rejoice: Ec 9:7
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 12:7 “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.

Deuteronomy 12:12 “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.

Deuteronomy 12:18 “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.

### TYPE OF OFFERING TO YAHWEH IS PERSONAL CHOICE

**You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household - In the presence of the LORD** was first to the Tabernacle (before the Temple was built).

**Utley** - “You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires” This refers to items to be tithed at the central sanctuary. This is parallel to 12:20. This phrase must drive “legalists” crazy! YHWH desires our happiness! He just wants to share it with us (cf. 12:7, 18; 16:14; 27:7; 1 Chr. 29:22; Ps. 104:15; Eccl. 2:24; 3:12, 13, 22; 5:18; 8:15; 9:7–9; Isa. 22:13). The NT even widens this concept by clearly stating that nothing in the physical creation is unclean in and of itself (e.g., Acts 10:15; Rom. 14:2, 14, 20; 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23–26; 1 Tim. 4:4). This is not meant to give humans a license to sin, but to encourage Christian freedom from legalism and judgmentalism (cf. Col. 2:16–23). However, the mature believer will be careful while in this fallen world to do nothing that might offend a weaker brother for whom Christ died (cf. Rom. 14:1–15:13)!

**Ryrie on strong drink** -Some think this was fermented, but low in alcohol content, beer. Others note that Nu 28:7 uses this same word ([shekar](#)) for the content of a strong drink offering, indicating perhaps that the **strong drink** was not drunk by the offerer but used in a drink offering to the Lord. Proverbs 20:1 warns against its use, and Israel did not consume wine or strong drink during the 40 years in the wilderness (Dt. 29:6).

#### Related Resource:

- Utley's special topic - [Alcohol and Alcoholism](#)

**Deuteronomy 14:27 "Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you.**

- **Levite:** Dt 14:29 Dt 12:12,18,19 Gal 6:6 1Ti 5:17
- **he has no:** De 14:29 Dt 18:1,2 Nu 18:19-24
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

#### Related Passages:

Numbers 18:20-24+ Then the LORD said to Aaron, **“You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel.** 21 “To the sons of Levi, behold, **I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance**, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting. 22 “The sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, or they will bear sin and die. 23 “Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and **among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance.** 24 “For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, **‘They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.’”**

## REMEMBER THE LEVITES!

**Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you-** The fact that this instruction is given indicates there would always be the temptation among the Israelite lay persons to not give the portion they were required to give for the sustenance of the Levites. It would be like withholding some of the information on

**Deuteronomy 14:28 "At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit it in your town.**

- **the end:** De 14:22 26:12-15 Am 4:4
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

## THE THIRD YEAR TITHE RULE

**At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit it in your town-** This was like a way to show charity to those in need (described in Dt 14:29).

**Guzik** - Some have said this speaks of another tithe (sometimes called the "poor tithe") to be brought every three years. Yet since it speaks of the tithe, and since it also went to the Levite and not only to the poor, it is best to understand that this was not an additional tithe, but a command that once every three years the tithe also be available to the poor, not only to the Levite. As Kalland points out: "The Jewish rabbis have usually held that there were three tithes: (1) for the priests and Levites, (2) for the communal meals, (3) every third year for the nonlanded (i.e., the Levites, aliens, fatherless, and widows)." Kalland goes on to object to this rabbinic approach, and accurately observes, "So all the designations of tithes speak of one basic tithe to be put to various uses."

**Coakley on tithe** - The word "tithe" comes from the Old English word tenth and was an early custom in the OT (cf. Ge 14:20; 28:22). Tithing had two main features. It first represented a mandatory token repayment gift to God (Dt 14:22), recognizing that all produce and livestock came from Him. It also was the means to fund the court (1Sa 8:17), as well as priests and the needy. At the end of every third year a second tithe of the people's produce was to be deposited, not at the sanctuary, but in their hometown (Dt 14:28). It was then to be distributed among the Levites (Nu18:26-32), aliens, orphans, and widows so that they might eat and be satisfied

**Ryrie on tithe** - The tithe had to be taken to the central sanctuary. This referred to what was known as the second tithe. Two tithes were required: an annual tithe for the maintenance of the Levites (Lev. 27:30; Nu. 18:21) and a second tithe brought to Jerusalem for the Lord's feast (Dt. 14:22). Every third year, however, the second tithe was kept at home and used for the poor (Dt. 14:28). One's use of money is often a barometer of his spirituality (cf. 1 John 3:17).

**Believer's Study Bible** on v28-29 - These verses provide a system of tithes whereby those who were prosperous received the reminder from God that He was the source of their blessing and abundance, and that some were not so fortunate. The widows, orphans, and strangers were at the mercy of God, who provided for them through the tithe of the abundance of their neighbors, thus uniquely binding the community together and pointing the people to God (cf. James 1:17).

**TSK** - As the Levites had no inheritance, the Israelites were not to forget them, but truly tithe their increase. For their support, the Levites had, 1. The **tenth of all the productions of the land**. 2. **Forty-eight cities**, each forming a square of 4,000 cubits. 3. **Two thousand cubits of ground round each city**, total of land, 53,000 acres. 4. **The first-fruits, and certain parts of all the animals killed in the land**. But though this was a very small proportion for a whole tribe that had consented to annihilate its political existence, that it might wait upon the service of God, yet, let it be considered, that what they possessed was the best of the land: and while it was slender remuneration for their services, yet their portion was such as rendered them **independent**, and kept them comfortable; so that they could wait on God, and labour in his work, **without distraction**.

**Related Resource:**

- [What does the Bible say about tithing?](#)

**Deuteronomy 14:29 "The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the**



- **he has no portion** De 14:27 12:12
- **the alien:** De 16:11,14 24:19-21 26:12,13 Ex 22:21-24 Lev 19:34 Job 31:16-22 Lu 14:12-14 Heb 13:2 Jas 1:27
- **that the Lord:** De 15:10 Ps 41:1 Pr 3:9,10 11:24 19:17 Isa 58:7-12 Mal 3:10-11 Lu 6:35 11:41 2Co 9:6-11
- [Deuteronomy 14 Resources](#)

## PROGRAM FOR NEEDY IN THE LAND

**The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied** - This is the Old Testament way of giving aid to those in need, what I would call "divine [socialism](#)" (righteous and just!)

**Guzik** - The New Testament nowhere specifically commands tithing, but it certainly does speak of it in a positive light, if it is done with a right heart (Luke 11:42).. It is also important to understand that tithing is not a principle dependent on the Mosaic Law; as Hebrews 7:5–9 explains, tithing was practiced and honored by God before the law of Moses.. What the New Testament does speak with great clarity on is the principle of giving; that giving should be regular, planned, proportional, and private (1 Corinthians 16:1–4); that it must be generous, freely given, and cheerful (2 Corinthians 9).. Since the New Testament doesn't emphasize tithing, one might not be strict on it for Christians (though some Christians do argue against tithing on the basis of self-interest). Yet since giving is to be proportional, we should be giving some percentage—and ten percent is a good benchmark—and starting place. For some to give ten percent is nowhere near enough; for others, at their present time, five percent may be a massive step of faith.. If our question is, "How little can I give and still be pleasing to God?" our heart isn't in the right place at all. We should have the attitude of some early Christians, who essentially said: "We're not under the tithe—we can give more!" Giving and financial management is a spiritual issue, not just a financial one (Luke 16:11).

**Deere** - The aliens were foreigners who lived with the Israelites. Though those foreigners were to be treated fairly, they did not share all the privileges of Israelite citizenship. Widows and their children (the fatherless) were also given special consideration (cf. Dt 24:19–21; 26:12–13).

**Utley** - Deuteronomy is emphatic in its care of all who lived in the Promised Land (cf. Dt 10:18; Dt 26:12–15)! This third-year tithe was for the Levite and the local poor.

**in order that** - Purpose clause.

**the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do**- Note the paradoxical pattern. The receive more, give. God always blesses the giving heart! It was not that they merited blessing, but the blessing was reflective of the grace of God to those who were obedient to share with those in need.

**Deere** - If the Israelites obeyed this command to share, then they could always expect to live in a prosperous society and could be generous, for God would bless them in all the work of their hands.

This reminds me of the passages in **Malachi**...

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. 11 "Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts. (Mal 3:10-11+)