

# Deuteronomy 12:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart.

## Analysis

A critical distinction: 'Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart.' This distinguishes sacrificial slaughter (only at central sanctuary) from ordinary slaughter for food (anywhere). Before centralization, all meat consumption involved sacrifice (Leviticus 17:3-7). Now, with distant sanctuary, regular meat-eating is permitted locally. The phrase 'unclean and the clean' means ritually clean/unclean persons, not animals—both may eat non-sacrificial meat. This prevents worship centralization from eliminating meat consumption for distant tribes.

## Historical Context

This represents significant legal development from Levitical law. Leviticus 17:3-7 required all slaughter at Tabernacle to prevent offerings to 'demons' (שְׁעִירִים, se'irim, literally 'goat-demons'). Deuteronomy's centralization made this impractical—distant Israelites couldn't travel to Jerusalem for every meal. Thus, non-sacrificial slaughter becomes permissible. This demonstrates law's contextual

application: principles remain, but application adapts to circumstances. The distinction between common and sacred remains critical.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How does this verse demonstrate that biblical law adapts application to changing circumstances while maintaining principles?
2. What is the difference between sacred (worship) and common (daily) activities, and how do we maintain both?
3. How do we avoid collapsing all life into 'sacred' (rigorous legalism) or reducing worship to 'common' (casual irreverence)?

## Interlinear Text

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תִּזְבֶּחֶת חַיִל נַפְשָׁךְ אֲוֹתָךְ בְּכָל־בָּאָתָּה  
H7535 H3605 lusteth after whatsoever thy soul Notwithstanding thou mayest kill  
H185 H5315 H2076

אֲשֶׁר־אֱלֹהָ יְהֹוָה בְּשֶׁר וְאָכְלֶנּוּ  
and eat flesh according to the blessing of the LORD thy God H834  
H398 H1320 H1293 H3068 H430

וּבְתָהוֹרָה בְּתַמִּים אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָה בְּכָל־לְבָנָה  
which he hath given H5414 H0 H3605 in all thy gates thee the unclean and the clean H2889  
H2931

וְאָכְלֶנּוּ וְאָכְלֶנּוּ וְאָכְלֶנּוּ  
and eat thereof as of the roebuck and as of the hart H354  
H398 H6643

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 14:5** (Parallel theme): The hart, and the roebuck, and the fallow deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois.

**Deuteronomy 14:26** (References God): And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,

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