

Deuteronomy 12:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.

Analysis

The consumption location for sacred items: 'But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose...and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.' Consecrated items must be eaten at the sanctuary 'before the LORD'—in His presence. The inclusivity repeats: 'thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite.' Worship and celebration involve whole household and marginalized (Levites). Joy in God's presence while consuming consecrated food creates sacred fellowship, bonding community to God and one another. Worship isn't private but communal.

Historical Context

The fellowship offerings (Leviticus 7:11-36) allowed worshipers to eat portions after dedicating them to God. This created sacred meals celebrating covenant relationship. The Passover, eaten 'before the LORD,' commemorated redemption (Deuteronomy 16:1-8). The Lord's Supper continues this pattern—sacred meal celebrating covenant in Christ's presence. The recurring 'rejoice before the LORD'

emphasizes worship's celebratory character, contrasting with pagan fear-based religion.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does eating 'before the LORD' (in His presence) sanctify ordinary activities like meals?
2. What role does shared celebration (communal joy) play in strengthening covenant community?
3. How can modern believers recover the practice of eating as sacred, worshipful activity?

Interlinear Text

בָּמָקָם	תֵּאכַל	פְּנֵי	אֱלֹהִים	יְהוָה	לִפְנֵי	אָמַר	כִּי
H4725	H398	H518	H6440	H3068	H6440	H430	H3588
in the place	But thou must eat	thy God	the LORD	the LORD	before	thy God	before
וְבָנֶךָ	אַתָּה	בָּן	אֱלֹהִים	יְהוָה	יְבָנֶה	רָאשֵׁךְ	וְשָׁלַח
H1121	H859	H0	H430	H3068	H977	H834	H5650
thou and thy son	thou	the	thy God	the LORD	shall choose	the LORD	choose
אַשְׁר	וּבְלֹוי	וְבָתְךָ	וְעֶבֶד	וְעֶבֶת	וְבָתָה	וְבָנָה	וְבָנָת
H834	H3881	H1323	H5650	H3068	H430	H519	H1323
and the Levite	and thy maid-servant	and thy manservant	and thy daughter	and thy daughter	that is within thy gates	before	thy God
thy God	thy maid-servant	thy manservant	thy daughter	thy daughter	and thou shalt rejoice	the LORD	the LORD
H430	H3881	H3068	H1323	H8055	H8179	H6440	H6440
מִנְשָׁלָה	תְּדַבֵּר	בְּכָל	בְּכָל	וְשִׁמְחַת	בְּשַׁעַר	בְּשַׁעַר	בְּשַׁעַר
H3027	H4916	H3605	H3605	H8055	H8179	H6440	H6440
thine hands	thine hands	in all that thou puttest	in all that thou puttest	and thou shalt rejoice	that is within thy gates	before	thy God
						לִפְנֵי	thy God

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 12:7 (References God): And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

Deuteronomy 14:23 (References God): And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.

Deuteronomy 12:5 (References God): But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

