

Deuteronomy 12:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.

Analysis

Future territorial expansion: 'When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.' This anticipates blessing of increased territory making sanctuary even more distant. God accommodates this by permitting meat consumption despite distance. The phrase 'enlarge thy border' recalls promises to Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21). God's blessing (territorial expansion) creates practical challenges (distance from sanctuary), which His law addresses. This shows divine law's flexibility regarding circumstances while maintaining principles.

Historical Context

The promised borders (Deuteronomy 11:24; Genesis 15:18) extended from Euphrates to Mediterranean. David and Solomon achieved near-fulfillment (2 Samuel 8; 1 Kings 4:21), though never permanent. The territorial promise remains partially unfulfilled, awaiting Messianic consummation. This verse's provision for distance assumes blessing of expansion, showing covenant obedience brings prosperity requiring practical accommodation.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does God's law balance unchanging principles with flexible application to varying circumstances?
2. What does promised territorial expansion teach about God's intention to bless obedient covenant people?
3. How do Christians understand Old Testament land promises in light of global gospel commission?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	יַרְחִיב	יְהוָה	אֶלֶּה יְיָ	אֶת	גְּבֻלָּךְ	בָּאֵשׁ ר
H3588	shall enlarge	When the LORD	thy God	H853	thy border	H834
	H7337	H3068	H430		H1366	
	דָּבָר	לְךָ	וְאָמַרְתָּ	תֹאכֶּל	בָּשָׂר:	כִּי
	as he hath promised	H0	thee and thou shalt say	I will eat	flesh	H3588
	H1696		H559	H398	H1320	
תִּאָּוֶה	נַפְשְׁךָ	תֹאכֶּל	בָּשָׂר:	בְּכָל	אֶוֹת	נַפְשְׁךָ
longeth	because thy soul	I will eat	flesh	H3605	lusteth after	because thy soul
H183	H5315	H398	H1320		H185	H5315
תֹאכֶּל	בָּשָׂר:					
I will eat	flesh					
H398	H1320					

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 19:8 (Covenant): And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers;

Deuteronomy 11:24 (Parallel theme): Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be your's: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

Exodus 34:24 (References God): For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year.

Genesis 28:14 (Parallel theme): And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Psalms 107:9 (Parallel theme): For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Exodus 23:31 (Parallel theme): And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee.

1 Chronicles 4:10 (References God): And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

Deuteronomy 12:15 (References God): 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.