

# Deuteronomy 12:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.

## Analysis

Repetition for emphasis: 'If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock...and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.' The concession to distance ('too far') permits local slaughter while maintaining sanctuary exclusivity for sacrifice. The phrase 'to put his name there' reminds that sacredness derives from divine choice, not geography. Non-sacrificial meat consumption is permitted ('whatsoever thy soul lusteth after'), but sacred slaughter remains restricted. This practical accommodation prevents hardship while maintaining worship purity.

## Historical Context

Israel's territory at maximum extent (Dan to Beersheba, ~150 miles) made Jerusalem travel burdensome for northern and southern extremes. Three annual pilgrimage feasts required presence (Deuteronomy 16:16), but daily meat consumption couldn't require travel. This law permitted daily life to continue while reserving worship for central sanctuary. After division, northern kingdom used distance as excuse for rival sanctuaries (1 Kings 12:27-28), though that violated worship centralization itself.

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How do we distinguish legitimate practical accommodation from unauthorized innovation in worship?
2. What principles guide application of God's commands when circumstances make literal compliance difficult?
3. How do modern churches balance gathering requirements (corporate worship) with practical limitations (distance, health, work)?

## Interlinear Text

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כִּי יְרַמֵּם קָרְבָּן מִמֶּנּוּ אֲשֶׁר יְבִרְכֶּנּוּ אֲשֶׁר יְהִי  
H3588 **there be too far** H4480 **If the place** H834 **hath chosen** which the LORD  
H7368 H4725 H977 H3068

אֱלֹהִים לְשׁוֹם וְשֵׁם אֶלְמָנָה מִבְּקָרְבָּן  
thy God to put his name H8033 from thee then thou shalt kill of thy herd  
H430 H7760 H8034 H2076 H1241

וְמִצְאָנָה אֲשֶׁר נָתָן יְהִי כִּי אֲשֶׁר לְבָבְךָ  
and of thy flock H834 hath given which the LORD H0 H834  
H6629 H5414 H3068

צִוְּתִיךְ אַכְלָתְךָ בְּכֶל בְּשֻׁעָרֶיךָ אַוְתָּה  
thee as I have commanded thee and thou shalt eat in thy gates lusteth after  
H6680 H398 H8179 H3605 H185

נַפְשֶׁךָ:  
whatsoever thy soul  
H5315

## Additional Cross-References

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**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:

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