

Deuteronomy 15:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt eat it before the LORD thy God year by year in the place which the LORD shall choose, thou and thy household.

Analysis

Thou shalt eat it before the LORD thy God year by year in the place which the LORD shall choose, thou and thy household—The firstborn animal becomes a covenant meal, eaten at the central sanctuary. Worship combines sacrifice (the animal dies) and celebration (the family feasts). This dual nature foreshadows the Lord's Supper: **This is my body, which is given for you** (Luke 22:19)—Christ's death enables our fellowship feast.

Year by year emphasizes regularity—covenant worship is rhythmic, not sporadic. The annual pilgrimage to **the place which the LORD shall choose** (Jerusalem, Deuteronomy 12:5) unified Israel, preventing tribal fragmentation. Modern application: corporate worship isn't optional but essential. **Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together** (Hebrews 10:25)—gathered worship sustains covenant identity.

Historical Context

Three annual pilgrimage festivals (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles) brought families to Jerusalem with their firstborn offerings. These gatherings strengthened national identity, renewed covenant commitment, and created shared memories across generations, cementing Israel's unity despite tribal divisions.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does regular, corporate worship ('year by year') shape your covenant identity more than sporadic private devotion?
2. What does the firstborn meal (combining sacrifice and celebration) teach about the Lord's Supper?
3. In what ways do you prioritize gathered worship rather than treating it as optional or inconvenient?

Interlinear Text

לִפְנֵי	יְהוָה ה	אֱלֹהֶי יְכ	תֹאכֵל נו	בְּשָׁנָה ה	בְּשָׁנָה ה	בְּמָקוֹם וּמ
it before	the LORD	thy God	Thou shalt eat	by year	by year	in the place
H6440	H3068	H430	H398	H8141	H8141	H4725
אֲשֶׁר	יִבְחַר ר	יְהוָה ה	אֶתְּ ה	וּבֵיתְךָ:		
H834	shall choose	the LORD	H859	thou and thy household		
	H977	H3068		H1004		

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 12:17 (Parallel theme): Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand:

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.

