

LITTLE GEMS

Re'eh

Shalom children! Today we are going to talk about some more instructions that Yahweh has for His people, along with some strong reminders from Mosheh. **(Place older Mosheh on board.)** Remember, they are getting ready to go into the land of Kena'an, and they need to know how Yahweh wants them to do things once they get there. Mosheh tells them that they need to guard these instructions and follow them all of their days.

So let's see, where are we in Mosheh's speech? Ah, yes. He is telling them what they need to do to the places in the land where the people before them had worshipped mighty ones other than Yahweh. Yahweh wants them to completely get rid of all these false worship-places and everything that they had used to honor other mighty ones. He doesn't want even one little tiny piece left of any of their idols. **(Place idol on board, then pretend to knock it over.)** And He doesn't want them to try to serve Him the way that those other people served their mighty ones, because that would mean doing things that Yahweh hates. He wants the Yisra'elites to be focused on guarding His commands and worshipping Him in exactly the way that He wants to be worshipped. If they will do this, they are promised that things will go well for them.

Yahweh also has instructions for them about a special place that He has picked out for Himself. **(Place scene of Jerusalem on board.)** He will place His Name there and make it a special place where He dwells. This is where the people will bring their offerings, tithes, and contributions—all the things that they are commanded to bring to Yahweh, as well any additional gifts that they wish to bring Him. **(Place man with offerings on board next to Jerusalem.)**

He doesn't want them to offer animals and other offerings in just any old place, but only in the place that He picks. However, Yahweh does give them permission to eat clean animals at home, within their own gates. **(Place 7 lambs on board.)** He does not want them eating the blood, though. The blood has to be poured out onto the earth. **(Place man pouring blood on board.)** I don't know about you, but I wouldn't want to eat blood anyway. Yuck!

Yahweh also tells them to be sure to take care of any Lewites who will live there with them, since Lewites are separated out to spend their time serving Yahweh, and their tribe doesn't get a large piece of the new land to raise crops and herds like the rest of the Yisra'elites. **(Place 3 sons of Lewi on board.)**

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The people are also instructed on tithes that Yahweh wants them to give. A tithe is a tenth, so when their harvest is completed, they are to separate out a tenth of the grain that they grew in their fields that year, as well as a tenth of their wine, oil, and livestock, and dedicate it all to Yahweh. **(Place tithe items on board.)** They are supposed to take this particular tithe to Yahweh's chosen place at His fall festival and eat it there. **(Point to scene of Jersusalem.)** But if that place is too far away for them to travel, then they can exchange it for silver, and use the silver to buy whatever they wish in order to celebrate near home. **(Place bag of silver on board.)** Then, at the end of every third year, an extra tithe goes to the Lewite and to sojourners, to children who have no fathers to take care of them, and to women whose husbands have died. **(Point to sons of Lewi and place sojourner, children and older woman next to them.)**

Now, Yahweh wants them all to have a good time getting together and rejoicing at the feasts that He has told them to celebrate. **(Place happy people on board.)** These 3 gatherings are called the Pilgrimage Feasts, because at those special times the Yisra'elites are to travel from all over the land to the place that Yahweh chooses. There, every spring, they will hold the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Passover/Pesach). Then later, when the early crop is ready, they will honor the Festival of Weeks (Shavuot); and finally, when harvest is done, they are to celebrate the fall Festival of Booths (Sukkot). **(Point to happy people.)** Yahweh has specific rules for how He wants them to celebrate these festivals. And the people are not supposed to come empty-handed; Yahweh wants them to bring Him a gift, because they have received blessings from Him. **(Place man with money bags in his hands on board.)**

We still celebrate these festivals these days, but we can't do everything exactly the same way that the Yisra'elites did it back then, because we don't have those same places set up in the land of Yisra'el right now. Have you been to any celebrations for these festivals? At Passover, you may have eaten matzah, or unleavened bread. **(Place matzah on board.)** At Shavuot, you probably heard about Yahweh giving us the Torah. **(Place tablets on board.)** And at Sukkot, you might have had fun helping to build and decorate a sukkah, which is a temporary booth. **(Place sukkah on board.)**

Well children, we have come to the end of our story for today. We will see you next week for another exciting Little Gems story!