



## Re'eh, [Deuteronomy 11:26 - 16:17](#)

**This week** is a jam-packed portion. It begins with a choice: "I set before you a blessing and a curse. The blessing: if you obey the commandments of God...; the curse if you do not ... and you follow other gods."

**The portion** continues with rules and laws for the land of Israel, primarily oriented towards staying away from idol worship and the other religions in the land. In verses 13:1-12 you will find the section that caused a missionary's face to blanch and silenced him from continuing to proselytize a renowned rabbi.

**One of** the indications of the existence and necessity of the Oral Torah -- an explanation and clarification (later redacted as the Talmud) of the written Torah (The Five Books of Moses) -- comes from verse 12:21, "You will slaughter animals ... according to the manner I (God) have prescribed." Nowhere in the Torah are we instructed in the manner of *shechita*, ritual slaughter. One might conclude that there was a very sloppy editor. Or -- one might conclude that there are additional teachings (the Oral Law/Talmud) clarifying and amplifying the written Word.

**The source** of the Chosen People concept is brought this week: "You are a nation consecrated to God your Lord. God has chosen you from all nations on the face of the earth to be His own special nation ... ([Deut. 14:1-2](#))." We are chosen for responsibility, not privilege -- to act morally and to be a "light unto the nations."

**The portion** then gives instructions regarding: permitted and forbidden foods, the Second Tithe, remissions of loans every 7 years, treatment of those in need (to be warm-hearted and open-handed), a Jewish bondsman, the three pilgrimage festivals (Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot).