

## **Day 199 - TUESDAY: July 4th**

### Deuteronomy 17

Deuteronomy 17:1-20 NKJV

"You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God a bull or sheep which has any blemish or defect, for that is an abomination to the LORD your God. "If there is found among you, within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you, a man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing His covenant, who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, and it is told you, and you hear of it, then you shall inquire diligently. And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination has been committed in Israel, then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing, and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones. Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you. "If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses. And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge there in those days, and inquire of them; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment. You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which the LORD chooses. And

you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you. According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you, according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you. Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously. "When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

The UCG reading plan states: “Moses continues by stating the criminality of idolatry and describing right and just proceedings regarding the execution of its perpetrators—through stoning (verse 21–17:7). To ensure that an allegation of idolatry could be substantiated, the matter had to be diligently looked into, and two or three witnesses had to be found confirming the sin. If only one person saw and reported the transgression, the perpetrator could not be killed. Furthermore, the witnesses who reported the transgression had to be the first to cast the stones (verses 1–7). This procedure for a carnal nation was to ensure that the stoned person was in fact guilty of the alleged crime, and that such evil conduct would not be repeated. Indeed, the same principles had to be applied for *any* capital offense (compare Numbers 35:30). Moreover, no conviction of *any* crime, whether worthy of death or not, could be established without the testimony of at least two witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15).

After explaining the role of the appointed judges and the people's responsibility to heed them, God moves on to the matter of human kingship. At this time, God was Israel's King (Exodus 15:18; Numbers 23:21). But knowing human nature, He already foresaw and knew that Israel would

eventually ask for a human king as in other nations, although this request would constitute a rejection of God's direct rule and therefore be sinful (1 Samuel 8:7; 1 Samuel 12:19). Nevertheless, God would give them a human king, as He had earlier prophesied that He would (compare Genesis 17:16; Genesis 49:10). But Israel's future king was not to be just like other rulers of the day. For, in placing certain restrictions and requirements on Israel's king, God essentially decreed that the nation would be a limited constitutional monarchy under His own supreme theocracy. "These regulations limited the power and splendor of the future king. He would not be dependent on military power and riches. He was exhorted not to entangle the nation in political alliances that would expose Israel to pagan worship. Instead, he was exhorted to guide the nation into obedience to God's laws" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 17:15–17). In requiring the king to read and govern according to God's law, "the true king of Israel would be bound to God's instructions. He would not be a tyrant, but a king who ruled in accordance with God's revealed will" (note on Deuteronomy 17:18). Sadly, few Israelite kings would fulfill their responsibilities in these regards.

But the instructions here can serve as a lesson for us. True Christians, the saints of God serving in His spiritual administration of life, do not administer civil judgment over the governments of this world (see 2 Corinthians 3:6–7). But they *are* to eventually serve as kings in the coming Kingdom of God, which will soon reign over the entire earth (Revelation 5:10; Revelation 20:4, Revelation 29:6; Revelation 2:26–28). Daniel 7:18 says that "the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." And verse 22 reveals, "Judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (KJV). Psalm 149 elaborates: "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment—this honor have all His saints" (verses 5–9). So even though Christians are not to judge in the governments of the world today, they will, when glorified as immortal kings, both judge and carry out judgment on the nations according to the "written

judgment." Therefore, if the kings of Israel had a responsibility to read and meditate upon the Book of the Law, Christians, as future kings in God's Kingdom, have an even greater responsibility to do so—yet by studying not only the civil law of Israel, but the full exposition of God's judgments as found throughout the entire Bible. Glorified Christians will, of course, rule with great mercy—just as God's great mercy has been shown to *them* throughout *their* human lives." [END]

Verse 12 – Notice how seriously God takes us following those that He places in authority. In Romans 13:1-2 it states: "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves."

God doesn't tolerate people rejecting the authority that He either directly puts in place or allows. This kind of mindset was to be eliminated and eradicated from the nation. We see this rejection of authority all around us. People always have justification for why it's okay for them to rebel (they weren't treated right, the leader did something wrong, etc...), but God only gives us the out when authority tries to force us to not obey God (compare Acts 5:29). This is a sin we should strive to avoid in our lives.

Verse 17 – The JFB commentary states: “There were the strongest reasons for recording an express prohibition on this point, founded on the practice of neighboring countries in which polygamy prevailed, and whose kings had numerous harems; besides, the monarch of Israel was to be absolutely independent of the people and had nothing but the divine law to restrain his passions. The mischievous effects resulting from the breach of this condition were exemplified in the history of Solomon and other princes, who, by trampling on the restrictive law, corrupted themselves as well as the nation.” [END]

Verse 18 – Not only was a king to read, know and understand the law, but God also required that this king was to write “this law” down himself. This would have taken time and effort and greatly increased the retention of these laws. I wonder how many of the kings of Israel ever did this as we see many of God’s laws were either never practiced or rarely practiced.

Verse 20 – In zeal and sincerity, sometimes someone can go further than God requires in His law. God wants us to obey exactly as He instructs. Not more, not less, not to the

right, or to the left, not to add to or take away, but exactly as He commands.

How nice it would be to live in a society where those in leadership positions and authority didn't elevate themselves above others. Human nature has done this since the beginning and certainly since Nimrod. It will not be so in God's Kingdom!