

DEUTERONOMY

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Deuteronomy chapter 17 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Keep in mind that Moses is preparing the children of Israel for their venture into the Promise Land, the land of Canaan. Moses is passing off the scene and Joshua will lead the people into the land and thus, Moses is instructing them in the things they need to know to walk by faith, to live as God desires. Obviously these were important words to the children of Israel and I believe they are important to us as we walk by faith in the Lord. With that said, let's begin reading in Deuteronomy chapter 17, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

DEUTERONOMY 17

VERSES 1-5

1. Yes, the children of Israel needed to hear these things and obey them but it was also for the judges in Israel, showing them how they were to administer justice for the nation. Remember back in Deuteronomy 16:18-19 where we were told, **“You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the Lord your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment. You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.”** Thus, this is the legal precedents or standards that they were to follow.

2. Moses first deals with the giving of a sacrifice, that you were not to give a lame sacrifice or one that had a defect in it. Don't give to the Lord your three-legged lamb! God only wants the best from us and He is God and thus deserves our best! King David understood this principle, for in II Samuel 24:24 we are told, **“Then the king said to Araunah, ‘No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing.’ So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.”** In other words, if it does not cost you something, then it is not a sacrifice!

3. Also, if any man or woman in Israel goes into idolatry, serves other gods, the matter is to be looked into and if it is true, they are to be put to death. Again, that may seem harsh but God is trying to preserve His people because from the children of Israel the Messiah was to come. For us as Christians, if we see a brother or sister in sin, and they refuse to repent of that sin when we confront them in love, they are to be cut off from fellowship and from church. Paul in I Corinthians 5:11 makes this point as he wrote, **“But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner — not even to eat with such a person.”** As harsh and unloving as that may sound, it is not. You don't want to condone their sin and the idea is to bring them to that place where they will repent and then they can be brought back into the fellowship. But if it is not dealt with then their sin will infect the entire church!

VERSES 6-7

1. You could not just accuse someone of a capital crime because you were mad at them. There needed to be witnesses to substantiate your charges. Thus, the guilty person was protected from a false accusation. In our Christian lives we don't stone people to death, which is good, but we can falsely accuse someone of doing something and murder their reputation without any evidence. Paul tells us in I Timothy 5:19, "**Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.**" Make sure you check out the story and if it is true, then you confront the person and don't go around gossiping! The idea is the restoration of the person not the destruction!

VERSES 8-13

1. If the case was too tough then the judges could bring it before the priest and they could decide. You see, they had a better understanding of God's Word. Now here's the thing. When the priest gave his verdict that was it. There was not a second hearing. The case was closed. Contempt of court you might say was a capital crime. If there is no respect for the court or the judges then there will be anarchy and that is what we are seeing happening in our country today. We see unrighteous judges and those who disrespect the court system and thus, people try to get away with murder!

VERSES 14-15

1. Keep in mind it would be some 400 years down the road before there was a king in Israel. But God is preparing them, what they were to do, how they were to behave, and they were to be an Israelite. And God tells us here that the people are going to cry out for a king like the pagan nations have. He was to be their king but they wanted more and that is not a good thing. They ended up getting Saul, who was tall, dark and handsome and was a horrible king, not a man after God's heart. I believe they were in haste and David was the man that God wanted as king. They wanted an earthly king instead of a heavenly king and that was not good for them. We do the same. Look at our new president; many have made him into the messiah, the savior. Folks, he is just a man and we need to pray for him, but there is only one King, one Messiah and let us not forget that!

VERSES 16-17

1. First of all this king must not multiply horses, but why? Because horses and chariots were like our modern day tanks and God wanted them to trust in Him and not their military might. In Psalm 20:7 we are told, "**Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.**" Thus, who are you trusting in with the battles you face? May it be the Lord!

2. The future king of Israel was not to multiply wives unto himself, but why? Do I even need to answer that? Because they will turn his heart away from the Lord! God set the standard for marriage, one man and one woman united together and man has perverted this and is suffering the consequences for it!

3. The future king of Israel was not to multiply wealth, possessions for himself, but why?

Because they too will turn him from the Lord and he will begin to trust in his wealth instead of the Lord!

4. You see, there needs to be a balance in our lives. But when these things have power over us, we are unbalanced and in trouble. How can we stay balanced? Look at the next few verses and you will see.

VERSES 18-20

1. Someone once said, “This Book will keep you from sin. And sin will keep you from this book.” How true that is. These future kings were to write the Law down and read it every day so that he will do what God desires; it will keep him humble and dependent upon God. David said in Psalm 119:9-11 this very thing, “**How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.**” God’s Word is living and it is powerful and it will change our lives for the better if we allow the Holy Spirit through the Word do that!

Poole makes these remarks regarding the future kings and the Word of God, “The Scriptures, diligently read and studied, are a powerful and probable means to keep him humble, because they show him that, though a king, he is subject to a higher Monarch, to whom he must give an account . . . sufficient to abate the pride of the haughtiest person in the world, if he duly consider it.” That truly is the key, not only know the Word of God but then applying it to our lives!

2. A sad example of a king not listening to God was King Solomon. In I Kings 10:14-11:8 we see Solomon break all three of these commands of God that are spoken of here in Deuteronomy chapter 17. He did not heed the warning and he suffered the consequences of his actions or inactions!

He multiplied horses having 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses. He multiplied wives having 700 wives and 300 concubines – what was he thinking? He was supposed to be the wisest man in the world! He multiplied riches. Interestingly enough Solomon received each year 666 talents of gold and that is an interesting number and it is not there be accident or chance happenings! He sent ships out to bring back exotic things. His throne was made of beautiful ivory and then he covered it with gold!

And in I Kings 11:9-11 we are told, **“So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded. Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, ‘Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.’”** God says what He means and means what He says.

Solomon had God’s Word to read and he either did not believe it or did not think it applied to him and he was wrong! What a valuable lesson for us to learn and apply to our lives! It is as Agur said in Proverbs 30:8-9, **“Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches — Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, And say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.”** In other words, give me what I need, not more or less so I won’t become distracted and deny you by my actions!

DEUTERONOMY 18

VERSES 1-2

1. The tribe of Levi, which included the priests who were the descendants of Aaron, had no portion of the land allotted to them because the Lord was their inheritance and they were allowed to serve Him. They were compensated for their service by receiving some of the sacrifices; some of the gifts and offerings went to them from the children of Israel.

VERSES 3-5

1. Once again a portion of the offering was given to the priests and the rest belonged to the Lord.

VERSES 6-8

1. Keep in mind that the priests and Levites were spread throughout the land of Israel, 48 cities including 6 cities of refuge. And when it was their time for service in the temple, they would go to Jerusalem and serve the Lord and then return home. But if one of them would have a passion to stay in Jerusalem serving the Lord there, they were allowed to do so and have an equal share in the offerings to support them and their families.

VERSES 9-14

1. God wants His people to be separated from these pagan practices. They were not for God's people back then and they certainly are not for us, God's people today! Look at this list and you can see how this nation and many so-called Christians have fallen prey to some of these practices, trying to put a good spin on them but God does not see it that way!

- ***PASS THROUGH THE FIRE*** – They would sacrifice their children to the god Molech as they placed them in the outstretched, burning hot arms of this idol. Today we call it abortion as millions of children have been murdered, sacrificed in their mother's womb to the god of pleasure, the god Molech!

- ***DIVINATION OR WITCHCRAFT*** – The idea here is “to divide” or to seek to determine the will of the gods. We see this played out, the same word being used in Ezekiel 21:21, “**For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver.**” How often Christians seek after signs to determine God’s will instead of going to His Word.

- ***SOOTHSAYER*** – The idea here is to predict the future by looking at the heavens. Today we call it astrology and if you don’t think that this is popular today, you are mistaken. Over 32 million Americans believe in it, there are over 10,000 full time astrologers and over 200,000 part time astrologers in America! Folks, if someone asks you what sign you are, don’t say “Scorpio” or “Virgo” but say, “I was born under the sign of the Lion from the tribe of Judah, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb!” AMEN to that!

- ***INTERPRETS OMENS*** – The idea here is to gain knowledge and tell the future, even cast spells. Today they use Tarot cards; they are palm readers, tealeaf reader’s and-so-on. Don’t even open the door to these practices, for even an Ouija board is a door to the occult and it is dangerous!

- ***SORCERERS*** – The idea here is a person who uses drugs to gain spiritual knowledge. This was big in the 1970's with LSD. When the Yogi's came to America to promote TM or Transcendental Meditation, a way to contact the spirit world, they noticed what took them years to master these young people were experiencing with just one trip on LSD! Mind altering drugs open a door to the spirit world!

- ***ONE WHO CONJURES SPELLS*** – This could be the casting of spells for good or evil upon another. And again, it is not a path to travel down!

- ***A MEDIUM*** – This is one who stands between the physical world and the psychic world so they can channel the information from them to others. I think there has been a several month delay in going from analog to digital mediums, not everyone has a converter box yet! But seriously folks, this is real, it is not a trick all the time. Demonic spirits speak to these people and thus, don't go down that path!

- ***SPIRITISTS*** – These are those who claim some kind of psychic power, like the psychic hotline use to do before they went bankrupt. But they did make a fortune at first! God says that we are not to go down that path, not even for entertainment!

- **ONE WHO CALLS UP THE DEAD** – This is known as necromancy, contacting the dead. Please understand that over 42% of Americans claim that they have had contact with the dead! Don't be deceived by this demonic activity!

2. The bottom line is this. In Isaiah 8:19-20 we are told, **“And when they say to you, ‘Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”** God's Word is what we need to listen to and anything contradicting God's Word is not of God. Thus, flee those things and rest in the Lord. Don't be taken into captivity by these demonic activities! God has not appointed us to these things; they are an abomination to Him.

Thus, **“You shall be blameless before the Lord your God.”** Deuteronomy 18:13. You see, flee these things, turn away from them and turn to the Lord just as the new believers in Ephesus did. We see this in Acts 19:19-20, as we are told, **“Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.”** They did not hold onto those things they practiced before they were saved but burned them, destroyed them. What a great lesson for us. Don't play with fire or you will get burned!

VERSES 15-19

1. Moses is speaking of a prophet who is to come, one who is like him, and he is pointing them to the Messiah, to Jesus! Like Moses, they are to listen to this coming prophet, obey him for he will speak forth God's Word. If you reject him, then there will be a great penalty! And folks, not only the Jews but to all who reject Jesus, the Gospel message, they will die in their sins, that is a great and tragic penalty!

2. Today the Jews are still looking for this prophet that Moses spoke of. They are looking for a man like Moses and not the God-Man Jesus Christ. Thus, they have rejected Jesus because He claimed to be God incarnate. But Stephen, as he was speaking before the Jewish council for his faith in Jesus said this regarding Jesus, **“This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’”** Acts 7:37. Jesus is this prophet that Moses spoke of!

Now, what is interesting to me is that the Jews continue to look for this prophet today and when you hear these words of Jesus in John 5:43 it may send shivers down your spine. Jesus said, **“I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.”** In other words, they rejected the true prophet of God and will receive the false prophet, the Antichrist. They will come to their senses when they see him go into the rebuilt temple and demand to be worshiped as God but then it will be too late and the Jews will have to flee for their lives! Don't be fooled, Jesus is this prophet that Moses was speaking of!

VERSES 20-22

1. We are to guard against false prophets and expose them. The children of Israel were to put them to death. We are not to physically do that but in a sense, we do the same by destroying their doctrine, not buying into their lies and killing their false ministry. I am sad to say that many Christians do not discern and support these false prophets! Folks, it is not that difficult. If what they say is not found in the Word of God or it does not come to pass, then they are false prophets, don't listen to them!

2. Are there prophets today, the office of a prophet? I don't believe that there is, I believe that they have passed off the scene. We still speak forth the Words of God but there is not a new revelation to be added to the Word of God. According to Luke 16:16 John the Baptist was the last prophet and now that office has passed off the scene. According to Ephesians 2:20 the church is built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets and once the foundation is laid, then the evangelists and pastor/teachers and teachers come along to continue building the structure but not to lay another foundation!

3. Today we still see those who claim to be prophets of God, to have this office and yet, what they say dose not always come to pass. Their answer to this dilemma is that they are growing into this position. Folks, in Israel there was no room to grow. If what you said did not come to pass, you were put to death! But again, we continue to move away from what God's Word has to say and follow after the words of men!

Tom Stipe, in the foreword to *Counterfeit Revival*, speaks powerfully about the problem of false prophets in the church:

After only a couple of years, the prophets seemed to be speaking to just about everyone on just about everything. Hundreds of . . . members received the ‘gift’ of prophecy and began plying their trade among both leaders and parishioners. People began carrying around little notebooks filled with predictions that had been delivered to them by the prophets and seers. They flocked to the prophecy conferences that had begun to spring up everywhere. The notebook crowd would rush forward in hopes of being selected to receive more prophecies to add to their prophetic diaries.

Not long after ‘prophecy du jour’ became the primary source of direction, a trail of devastated believers began to line up outside our pastoral counseling offices. Young people promised teen success and stardom through prophecy were left picking up the pieces of their shattered hopes because God had apparently gone back on His promises. Leaders were deluged by angry church members who had received prophecies about the great ministries they would have but had been frustrated by local church leaders who failed to recognize and ‘facilitate’ their ‘new anointing.’

After a steady diet of the prophetic, some people were rapidly becoming biblically illiterate, choosing a ‘dial-a-prophet’ style of Christian living rather than studying God’s Word. Many were left to continually live from one prophetic ‘fix’ to the next, their hope always in danger of failing because God’s voice was so specific in pronouncement, yet so elusive in fulfillment. Possessing a prophet’s phone number was like having a storehouse of treasured guidance. Little clutched notebooks replaced Bibles as the preferred reading material during church services.

- Hank Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival*, pp. XI – XII

Folks, cling to God's Word and you will not go astray. Don't believe these so-called prophets that come up with some of the wildest, unbiblical statements and people do believe them. It is as we are told in Jeremiah 23:25-32, **“I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, “I have dreamed, I have dreamed!” How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal. The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?” says the Lord. ‘Is not My word like a fire?’ says the Lord, ‘And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,’ says the Lord, ‘who steal My words every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets,’ says the Lord, ‘who use their tongues and say, “He says.” Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams,’ Says the Lord, ‘and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all,’ says the Lord.”**

May we listen to the Words of God instead of the foolishness of man!