

**DEUTERONOMY 17-19**

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.

Not only that but 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.

Make no mistake about it, 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.

As Moses starts out, he is going to speak about our giving to the Lord and what it costs us, what we give to 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**

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.”**

In other words, these are the legal precedents or standards that they were to follow.

As Moses starts out, he 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!

He then moves on and speaks of a man or woman in Israel that goes into idolatry, serves other gods. That matter was to be looked into and if it is true, they are to be put to death.

That seems harsh, why did God say that?

Because God is trying to preserve His people. Keep in mind that from the children of Israel the Messiah was to come. And the principle for us is that a little leaven leavens the whole lump or a little sin will affect your entire life!

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.

First of all, 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 and affect the entire church!

#### VERSES 6-7

You could not just accuse someone of a capital crime because you were mad at them.

That safety measure was that there needed to be witnesses to substantiate your charges.

In other words, 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 their destruction!

Maybe you heard the story of John.

John was driving home late one night when he picked up a hitchhiker. As they rode along, he began to be suspicious of his passenger.

John checked to see if his wallet was safe in the pocket of his coat that was on the seat between them, but it wasn't there!

So he slammed on the brakes, ordered the hitchhiker out, and said, ***“Hand over the wallet immediately!”***

The frightened hitchhiker handed over a billfold, and John drove off.

When he arrived home, he started to tell his wife about the experience, but she interrupted him, saying, ***“Before I forget, John, do you know that you left your wallet at home this morning?”***

- Our Daily Bread, October 2, 1992

Make sure you have all the facts before you make an accusation!

### VERSES 8-13

But what happens if a case is too difficult to decide on.

If the case was too tough, then the judges could bring it before the priest, and they could decide.

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.

You could not fight against what the court has established. Thus, 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

Keep in mind it would be some 400 years down the road before there was a King in Israel.

And even before they entered the Promise Land God was preparing them, telling them what the Kings were to do, how they were to behave, and that they were to be an Israelite.

This is what the people wanted; not what God wanted. You see, God preferred to be the King of Israel, but once in the Promised Land Israel looked around at surrounding nations, and wanted a man to sit on the throne.

So as the people cry out for a King like the pagan nations around them had, He gives them what they wanted. And that was not a good thing for the most part.

Their first King was 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. Again, they wanted an earthly King instead of a heavenly King and that was not good for them, as I have said.

We do the same. Look at the upcoming elections for President and how Christians are spending all kinds of money to elect the person they want. But what does God want and isn't the Lord to be our King. We look to man and as we saw with President Trump in office, many 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 16-20

These are the instructions for the Kings of Israel, what they were to do or not do.

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!

The future King of Israel was not to multiply wives unto himself, but why?

Do I even need to answer that?

The reason is simple, and we are told that they will turn his heart away from the Lord!

We see that played out in the life of Solomon!

You see, 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!

Also, 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!

Billy Graham once said, ***“The three greatest dangers to every pastor are power, women, and money.”***

It's true. Most pastors are brought down by one of the three.

What does this all mean to us?

It means that 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?

In Deuteronomy 17:18-20 we see Moses tell us how these Kings and how we are stay on track – ***BE IN THE WORD OF GOD! KNOW THE WORD OF GOD! APPLY THE WORD OF GOD TO YOUR LIFE!***

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. He wrote, ***“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!

As I have said, Solomon was a sad example of someone who was wise but did not apply that godly wisdom to his life.

In I Kings 10:14-18 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! His walk with the Lord was hampered by his sin!

What did he do?

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**

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**

We see here that a portion of the offering was given to the priests and the rest belonged to the Lord.

VERSES 6-8

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

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.

Let me show you what I mean. Amazon has this book for sale – ***HOW TO BE A CHRISTIAN WITCH***. And this is what they said about this book,

**As a beginner or experienced Christian Witch, you may have had critical questions along the way, as I did . . .**

Questions regarding:

- Celebrations and Holy Days for Christian Witches
- Rituals & Magickal Practices that WORK
- Christian Witch Covens & Coven Creation
- Initiation as a Christian Witch
- Blood Oath & More

If you desire soul-fulfilling answers from a practicing Christian Witch, this book may be the inspiration you’re seeking.

Because *Christian Witches* is a spiritual path and not a religion, there are no set protocols. ***The good news is: you get to create your own!*** That's where this book comes in. This cutting edge tome [work] is packed with ideas, inspirations and experiences from my magickal journey.

For me, being a Christian Witch is a spiritual path. On this path, our rituals, magickal practices and celebrations of sacred lunar and solar events sustain and grow us as practicing magicians. I pray this book feeds your soul, and inspires you to walk your path as a Christian Witch with your head held high, sharing your gifts with the world, completely fulfilled in every imaginable way.

- <https://bit.ly/47Sh3K8>

And this is a growing trend in Christianity!

- **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 27% of Americans believe in it!

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 readers and so on. Don't even open the door to these practices, for even a Ouija board is a door to the occult and it is dangerous! And, believe it or not, Amazon sells a Christian Ouija board!

- ***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 to 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. Please understand that it is demonic spirits speaking 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 used 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!

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.

Remember, **“You shall be blameless before the Lord your God.”** Deuteronomy 18:13.

In other words, 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

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!

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!

In Acts chapter 3 Peter referred to Jesus as the Prophet Moses said would come.

In John 5:46 Jesus told the Jews, "**If you believed Moses, you would believe in Me; for he wrote of Me.**"

I believe Jesus was referring to Deuteronomy 18:15. Jesus was a prophet like Moses.

Like I have said, 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

Here is a warning from Moses for the people of his day and for us. We are to guard against false prophets and expose them.

In fact, 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 what is true and what is false, and they end up supporting 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!

Now let me ask you this. 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.

Again, I believe 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!



We need to be careful. Even with COVID there were wild speculations, wild statements made and when they did not come to pass as they said, even saying that God spoke to them, we continue to listen to them instead of moving away from them. And there were many wild statements made just about COVID! Be careful, let the Word of God be your source of truth and not the words of man!

Today we still see those who claim to be prophets of God, to have this office and yet, what they say does not always come to pass, most of the time it doesn't and if it does it is because they are very general statements!

And they have an answer to why they are not right all the time. They say that they are growing into this position. Folks, in Israel there was no room to grow.

Here's the thing. Back then, 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!

In the days we are living in we need to cling to God's Word so that we will not go astray.

Don't believe these so-called prophets that come up with some of the wildest, unbiblical statements. And yet, 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!

As we move into Deuteronomy chapter 19 Moses continues instructing the children of Israel on what they were to do, how they were to walk as they entered the Promise Land.

We will start out by looking at these cities of refuge and what they were all about.

## **DEUTERONOMY 19**

### **VERSES 1-3**

In Deuteronomy 4:41-43 Moses established three cities of refuge on the east side of the Jordan River.

There was Bezer in the plain of Moab for the Reubenites in the south.

Ramoth-Gilead in the middle part of the land for the Gadites.

Golan in Bashan in the north for the Manasites.

And in Joshua 20:7 we see that once they are in the Promise Land and have defeated the enemy, they will establish another three cities of refuge on the west side of the Jordan River.

Jewish tradition says the roads to these cities were quite wide – 32 cubits or 48 feet - as broad as a four-lane highway.

They were built with no impediments.

Bridges were always open. The roads were well maintained.

According to Clarke, he said this regarding the care of the roads to these cities of refuge,

***“The Jews inform us that the roads to the cities of refuge were made very broad, thirty-two cubits; and even, so that there should be no impediments in the way; and were constantly kept in good repair.”***

Now Moses is going to give us an example of who may flee to one of these cities of refuge.

#### VERSES 4-7

These cities of refuge were for the protection of the person who killed another accidentally or in self-defense.

In ancient Israel, when one was killed, it was the responsibility of the avenger of blood to make certain the murderer was punished.

And Moses now gives us a case study to illustrate the point.

He tells us that if two men are working together, chopping down trees and one man takes a swing with his ax and the head flies off striking the other man in the head and killing him, the surviving man would understand that the avenger of blood from the dead man's family would track him down and kill him. Thus, he would flee to the city of refuge where the case could be heard and he could be spared.

When they take possession of the Promise Land these cities on the west side of the Jordan River will be - Kadesh, Shechem, and Hebron.

VERSES 8-10

Once again, we see that when they are in the land, three more cities of refuge will be established, for a total of six cities of refuge.

And again, there was three on the east side of the Jordan River and three on the west side of the Jordan River so that no matter where you were in Israel, you were close to one of these cities, you could flee there if you needed to.

Sandy Adams gives us this insight into these cities of refuge. He wrote,

According to Jewish tradition these roads were marked by signs with large letters which read, "**Miklac**" or "**Refuge.**"

Everything was done to make it as easy as possible for the guilty party to find their way to the place of refuge. And this is our job. God wants us to make it as easy as possible for people to come to Christ. Our job is to keep the road cleared of misconceptions - the bridges of understanding open.

Our lives should be road signs pointing to Jesus.

The cities of refuge are wonderful pictures of Jesus in at least 10 ways.

***The gates were never locked*** - and the way to Jesus is never barred.

***As long as you were inside the city you were safe. If you left you were on your own.*** -

The same is true with Jesus. We need to continue to abide in Christ.

***You had to pick up and leave all your possessions to come.*** - Likewise, to follow Jesus you have to leave behind anything that rivals your devotion to Him.

***The city was within easy reach.*** – Likewise Jesus is only a cry of faith away.

***Refuge was available, but you had to come.*** - The same is true with Jesus.

***Once inside the city there were plenty of provisions.*** - Likewise, all that a human heart might need is found in fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

***The cities of refuge were established in advance.*** – Likewise Jesus was slain before the foundation of the world. He too was chosen beforehand.

***According to Numbers 35:15, strangers and Gentiles, as well as Jews, were welcomed to come to the cities of refuge*** – as they are in Christ.

***The death of the High Priest granted total freedom.*** - And it's because of the death of our High Priest, Jesus, that we've been granted a permanent pardon.

***And finally, the names of the cities all speak of the blessings of Christ*** – ***Kadesh*** means holiness – ***Shechem*** means shoulder and Jesus shoulders our burdens – ***Hebron*** means fellowship – ***Bezer*** means fortified place – ***Ramoth*** means exaltation – ***Golan*** means joy. ***All the above is found in Christ Jesus!***

And notice the one crucial distinction between Jesus and the cities of refuge. The cities were for the innocent. ***Even the guilty can find refuge in Jesus.***

- Sandy Adams, Deuteronomy 19

And we are all guilty before God, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God!

### VERSES 11-13

Again, there was no place of refuge if you premeditated a murder, if you murdered someone in anger and-so-on.

Life is sacred to God and if you don't respect it, you will be held accountable!

Thus, in the case of premeditated murder, the death penalty applied.

As I have said, ultimately Jesus is our city of refuge and we dealt with this once again back in Numbers chapter 35.

The only difference is that all can come to Jesus, no matter what they have done and find refuge in Him, sparing the person from the avenger of blood!

#### VERSE 14

God does not want people to take advantage of others. You were not to move the stones that set the boundary for your land so that you can increase your land and take away land from someone else.

Several years ago we had to have a surveyor come out to establish our property lines because someone was trying to take advantage in the situation, enlarging their property lines!

#### VERSES 15-20

As we have seen tonight, to convict someone of a sin there had to be at least two witnesses. It could not just be your word against theirs.

And, if you made a false accusation against another person, then what you tried to falsely accuse them of, you would be punished for!

In both cases, punishment is an effective deterrent to crime and false accusations. Today we are weak and inconsistent with our punishment and thus, there is no deterrent to crime!

#### VERSE 21

Some take this to the wrong conclusion. What Moses is saying is that the punishment of the person must be equal to the crime they committed, not more or less!

In Matthew 5:38-39 Jesus said, **“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.”**

Jesus is speaking of individuals, not a court case. How we are to respond to others. He is not negating what the Old Testament is saying because the courts were not a place for mercy, but for Justice.

In regard to this Thompson made these remarks, *“Jesus’ criticism of this law (Mt. 5:38f.) arose from its use to regulate conduct between individuals. He did not reject it as a principle of justice which should operate in the courts of the land. For private relationships He proposed the ideal of brotherhood, a strong principle throughout the book of Deuteronomy. To extend the lex talionis [the law of retribution or retaliation] to this interpersonal domain was to destroy the law of God.”*

Thompson also wrote, *“Far from encouraging vengeance it limits vengeance and stands as a guide for a judge as he fixes a penalty suited to the crime. The principle was thus not license or vengeance, but a guarantee of justice.”*

As Christians, we need to remember that vengeance belongs to the Lord, and we truly are to love people. Yes, there are times we need to respond, but be careful in what you do because you are representing the Lord in a world filled with darkness!

As I bring our study to a close this evening, listen to these words from Jesus in Matthew 5:11-16 as He reminds us, **“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

May we shine for Him!