

**Into the Promised Land • Joshua's Story**  
**Lesson #32**  
**“Spiritual Justice in Israel” - Deuteronomy 17**  
**•HANDOUT•**

► This lesson: Again Moses changes his discussion: Once again he warns the people against idolatry. Since the concluding thoughts of Chapter 16 are connected to the admonishments in Chapter 17, we elected to view the end of Chapter 16 as part of Chapter 17. This is where we begin with this study.

**Notice to the Leaders:**  
**God Will Not Tolerate Mixing Worship to Him with Pagan Worship...**

Deuteronomy 16:21-22; 17:1 • Do not set up any wooden Asherah pole beside the altar you build to the LORD your God, and do not erect a sacred stone, for these the LORD your God hates. Do not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep that has any defect or flaw in it, for that would be detestable to him.

Q: Why would the Lord find it detestable for an animal with a defect be used for sacrifice?

► As King David said: [ref: 2 Sam. 24:25]

Q: What were Asherah poles and the sacred stones, which God prohibited?

**An Asherah pole:**

**The sacred stones:**

**There are Consequences for doing what is “evil in the eyes of the LORD” ...**

► The next passage of Deuteronomy 17 is about the consequences of violating God's Covenant – those things which the Lord considers evil. This discussion includes what is to be done in Israel if there is a deviation from authentic worship to the Lord. This will probably sound harsh to our more neutral sensibilities. But, if we examine this from the standpoint that we have freewill to accept or reject God's Law, and all consequences have been carefully laid out to us before we make our choice, then we will see that God's harshness is something which we have actually chosen. This passage is the O.T. equivalent to the N.T. truth: the wages [consequences] of sin is death. Also, we see that God's grace is available in both the O.T. and the N.T.

Verses 2-7: About Worship and the consequences of combining the worship to the LORD with bowing down to other gods, including the worship of the sun, moon or stars. If an allegation arises that this is occurring, it must be investigated. There must be testimony from two or three witnesses – one is insufficient. If found guilty, the guilty one is to be stoned to death and it is the witnesses who must throw the stones. If it is too difficult to reach a conclusion, the case must be taken to the Levite priests, who are responsible for making the final verdict. This fulfills God's command: "You must purge the evil from among Israel."

Q: What is the reference to the sun, moon, or stars all about?

▶ King David wrote about this in several of his Psalms. He even made it clear that instead of man worshiping the celestial realm, the celestial realm was to worship it's Creator.	
Psalms 19:1	The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Psalms 8:3	I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon & the stars, which you have set in place ...
Psalm 148:3-5	Praise Him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. Let them praise the Name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created.
▶ The Apostle Paul declares that God can be known by examining His creation:	
Romans 1:20	For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

**Next, the Lord sets down Laws regarding Israel having a King ...**

Deuteronomy 17:14-20 • When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite.

The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

**Q: What is both prophetic and ironic about the opening paragraph of Deuteronomy 17:14?**

**▶ Prophetic:**

**▶ Ironic:**

**Q: Why did God initially set up a Theocracy when He knew it wouldn't work?**

**Q: What are the contingent requirements God demanded for Israel's future King?**

Q: What are the restraints God put in place for Israel's future King?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Q: What were the rewards for the King who willingly and carefully follows God's instructions?

Q: What spiritual requirements did God expect from Israel's kings?

Q: Historically, once Israel established the reigns of kings, how well did Israel's kings keep these rules which the Lord had set down?

1. God was to choose Israel's kings:
2. Marriage:
3. Horses:
4. Egypt as a resource:
5. Accumulation of wealth:
6. The Kings attitude toward others:
7. The King and the Word of God:

Q: Although these “rules” were laid down by God for the kings of Israel, if we apply them to the church today, how is the church measuring up?

1. Leadership:
2. Marriage:
3. Government:
4. Accumulation of wealth:
5. Attitude toward the world around us:

► Moses continues to give his broad review to Israel's second generation. He is touching on everything God has set up for Israel in preparation for them to enter the Promised Land. In this next study, he will discuss the Levites, followed by a discussion of those who are called Prophets – both the true and the false. Lastly, there will be a discussion on the purpose of the Cities of Refuge. This is where we will pick up next time.



Next Time • Lesson #33  
“Priests, Prophets, & the Cities of Refuge”  
Deuteronomy 18 & 19

