



Deuteronomy 17-18

Tape #7057
Deuteronomy 17-18
By Chuck Smith

Now into chapter seventeen. It would sound like it's just a repeat of the twelfth chapter, in a way, as he deals again with the offering of sacrifices.

You're not to sacrifice to the Lord your God any bull, or sheep which has any blemish or any defect: for that is an abomination to the Lord. [You're not to say, "Ahh it's no good, let's give it to God. Look at it. It's got a ripped out eye, or something. Sacrifice it to the Lord". Not so.] If there is found among you, within any of your gates with 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, worshiped them, either the sun, or the moon, or the hosts of heaven, which I have not commanded; And it's told you, and you hear of it, you will inquire diligently, and, if it indeed is 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 them to death. And whoever is worthy of death, shall be put to death; on the testimony of two or three witnesses, but he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness (17:1-7).

So, if, you have to have ample evidence that you're not falsely accusing, or putting a person to death by mistake. But in the mouth of two or three witnesses, a person who despised Moses' law, was put to death. Now in Hebrews, chapter two, we read concerning this. "He that despised Moses' law was put to death in the mouth of two or three witnesses, of how much worse punishment do you suppose God counts him worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, who has counted the blood of his covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing and has done despite to the spirit of grace? For we know Him, who hath said, 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay', saith the Lord". It's a fearful thing to fall in the hands of the living God. So God has given very severe penalties for those that would turn aside from Him, to worship other gods. In the mouth of two or three witnesses, they were to be put to death. "How much worse?", God is still very severe. "How much worse punishment do you suppose God counts a man worthy, who has rejected His plan of salvation, through Jesus Christ?"

Now the hands of the witnesses were to be the first against this person, they were to throw the first stones, and afterward, all of the people. So that they're to put away that evil person from among them (17:7).

And if in their judgement, a case comes that's too difficult for them to judge in their villages, Then they were to bring them to the priest, and the priest and the leaders of the nation, were to pronounce the sentence of judgement. That was not really like our appeal court at all. It was just a case where I'm a judge, I don't know what to do in this matter, I would take it then to the higher court, to the priest, in the place where God had chosen to place His place of worship for the people. Now in verse twelve...

The man who acts presumptuously, and won't listen to the priest, who stands to minister there before the Lord your God, or the judge, then that man shall die: [Contempt of court. Put to death.] you shall put away the evil person from Israel. And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously again (17:12-13).

It's declared that this will be a deterrent. If you're very severe in the penalty, it will deter others from presumptuousness.

When you come into 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 us; You shall surely set a king over you, whom the Lord your God chooses: one from among you of your brethern, you shall set as king over you: you're not to set up 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: neither shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself (17:14-17).

say, "We want a king like the other nations". That came to pass in the time of Samuel. The people came to Samuel, and they said, "Look Samuel, we want a king like the other nations". So, this is pretty much a prophecy of Moses. He foresaw the day that would, uh, the people would demand a king, and it came about four hundred years after this prophecy. They said, "We want a king like the other nations". So Samuel inquired of the Lord, and the Lord said, "Appoint the one that I show you", and God showed him Saul, and Samuel anointed Saul. Saul however, because of his disobedience to God, gave way to David, and David was promised then that from his family, one would sit upon the throne forever, if they would continue in the ways of the Lord. Of course, the promise to David, really is to be fulfilled through Jesus Christ, the seed of David, to sit upon the throne forever.

But Solomon, the son of David, when he began to reign, turn to I Kings, chapter ten. Again, remember what the kings were prohibited from doing, "They're not to multiply horses, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to multiply horses. They're not to multiply wives, nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself", the commandments. Did I say II Kings? It's I Kings, chapter ten. Beginning with verse fourteen, "The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly, was six hundred and sixty six talents of gold." 666, interestingly. Then it tells about making these shields of hammered gold, and so forth, and verse twenty seven, "The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone, and he made cedars as abundant as sycamores, which are in the low lands." Solomon had horses imported from Egypt, and Keveh And the king's merchants brought them from Keveh at a current price. Then in chapter eleven, verse one, "But king Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh. Women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and the Hittites, and from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, 'You're not to inter marry with them, nor they with you, for surely they will turn your hearts after their gods'. And Solomon clung to these, in love, and he had seven hundred wives, princesses, three hundred concubines, and the wives turned away his heart.

God knows what he's talking about. Now Solomon did exactly what the Lord said not to do. He began to multiply horses, twelve thousand chariots, he had these stables in these various cities. You go to the ruins of the city of Megiddo today, and you see the area where Solomon had built his stables. Multiplied horses, multiplied wives, multiplied his riches. Just as God declared, and just as God warned, they turned his heart away from the Lord. Sad that we don't listen to God.

Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he is to write a copy of this book (17:18).

That was, God said, "Each king should write a copy of this book, in order that he would know the law of God, and keep the law of God, and see that it was kept by the people."

Chapter 18

Chapter eighteen...

The priests and the Levites, indeed all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part or inheritance. They were not to be given any cities, they were not to be given any part of the land, the Lord was their inheritance. And they are to eat the offerings that the Lord made by fire and his portion. Therefore they shall have no inheritance among their brethern, the Lord is their inheritance, as he said to them. And this shall be the priest's due from the people, when the people bring their offerings to sacrifice to the Lord, the priest, whether it be a bull or a sheep; they shall give the priest the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach (18:1-3).

So that was the portion that the priest got for his due. In the time of Samuel, the sons of Eli, who were wicked boys, when the people would come and bring their offerings, they would take their flesh hooks in, and they would go for the T-bones, and the fillets. If the people would object, they'd slap them around and treat them roughly. So we'll get to that when we get to the book of Samuel, and we read about Eli. Eli didn't correct his sons, and the problems that developed. But what the outcome was, was that they caused the people to hate the sacrifices of God. People resented bringing it, because these guys were so mean and so mercenary. So, God dealt with them very severely.

They are to receive the first fruits of your grain, your new wine, and your oil and the first of the fleece of your sheep. [So the priest gets the first dues.] For the Lord your God has chosen him to stand and

minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons forever. If a Levite comes to your gates from his gates from wherever he has sojourned, and he desires to move and become a part of the priesthood, then he is to be included in the area where they offer the sacrifices to the Lord. Now when you come in the land [verse nine] you are not to learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that makes his son or daughter to pass through the fire, [This is one of the rites in the worship of the god Molech, causing the children to pass through the fire.] You're not to do it, and whoever practices witchcraft, or is a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or is a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritess, or one who calls up the dead, for all who do these things are an abomination to Jehovah: and because of these abominations, Jehovah your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God (18:4-13).

So again the injunction's not to follow the practices of these people who existed in the land before them.

For these nations, which you will dispossess, listened to the soothsayers, and the diviners: but as for you, God has not appointed such for you, God has appointed to speak to you through his prophets, and through his priests. [Then the promise,] The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren; and him you shall hear (18:14-15);

God's promise to send them a prophet, the Jews understand this to refer to the Messiah. They are looking even today for that prophet to arise. When John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness, they came out and said, "Who are you? Are you the Messiah?", he said, "No." "Are you Elijah?", he said, "No.", they said, "Are you the prophet?". They were looking for this prophet to come to speak to them God's word. He would be like Moses in that he would be a mediator between God and man, God would speak directly to him, and he would give them the direct word of God.

The word of God through the prophets, was always through a vision or a dream. The prophets would declare their visions, they would declare their dreams. You remember in reading the book of Ezekiel, he speaks of his dreams. Daniel speaks of his dreams and of his visions that he had. With the dreams and the visions quite often, it demanded sort of an interpretation, and God would interpret then, the vision or the dream, to the prophet, and he in turn to the people. But with Moses, and God said, "When I have a word to speak, I speak to the prophets through dreams and through visions, but Moses I have spoken with directly". Now the promise of a prophet like Moses, where God will speak directly through that prophet, unto man.

Now this is what the people desired and required of Moses. When they were at mount Horeb, and they came to the holy mount of God, and God revealed Himself to them, as God, God said, "Gather the people of Israel together, put the fence around the mountain, don't let them come close. But gather them close to the mountain and I will appear to them there". And God appeared in this heavy cloud, and there was fire running along the ground. There was the sound like claps of thunder, and there was all of this awesome display, and God spoke to the people. They came to Moses and said, "Hey, we can't handle this man! You go up to the mountain. You talk to God. Let Him tell you what we're to do, and you come back and tell us what God said. But we're afraid of this thing man! We, we're apt to die if this happens again, you know it's too awesome, and so you find out what God has to say, and we will obey the command of the Lord. Whatever you tell us to do, but you go up and you listen to God for us". And so even as the people asked, there at mount Horeb, the Lord promises that, He said to Moses...

What they have said is good, [and then He said,] I will raise up for them a prophet like you, from among their brethren, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak them all that I have commanded him. And [he shall] it shall be that whoever will not hear my words which he speaks in my name, I will require it of him (18:17-19).

This was fulfilled of course, in Jesus Christ. He was the Word of God, and He spoke the word of God. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that sent me". He came, and He brought us God's word, and He speaks of, "He that sent me. I have spoken the things of Him, of the one who sent me". So Jesus, the fulfillment of this promise, giving to us the revelation of God, in truth. God in sundry times, or in different times, and in various ways, spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days, He's spoken unto us by His own dear Son.

So God's final revelation of Himself to man, came in the person of Jesus Christ. The whole purpose of the bible is to reveal God to man. The bible is God's revelation of Himself. Now, man in seeking to interpret God's revelation, got things all twisted. Unfortunately, today, so often as men seek to interpret the revelation of God, get things all botched up.

If you really want to know what God is, what God is like, then you have to look at Jesus Christ, for He came to be God's final revelation, and God's true revelation of Himself to man. What did He reveal? He revealed that God was very loving. That God loved even rebellious man, and that God was forgiving, and ready to forgive. That God was wanting to grant to man, eternal life. That God wanted to give man the forgiveness of sins, that he might experience fellowship with God and a life with God. That God wanted to bring man peace. This is the truth of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ. "No man", He said, "hath seen the Father at any time, but the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He is manifested Him". He's revealed Him. "For the word became flesh, and He dwells among us, and we beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

For the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ". Man began to misunderstand and misinterpret the law. They thought that God was trying to restrict and restrain them from a good time, when in reality God gave them the guidelines for a good time. For happy, prosperous, abundant life, these are the rules. Man misinterpreted the rules, and Jesus talks about their misinterpretation. "You've heard, and it has been said, but I say unto you", He dealt with the way the law had been interpreted to them. He said, "That's wrong". He showed them that they were using the law in the wrong way. They were using the law to justify themselves. The law was intended to make them guilty before God, so that they would seek through faith, the help and the forgiveness of God.

But instead, in their misinterpreting of the law, they interpreted it so, as they were keeping it, and they were very proud, self righteous. Thinking that they had been obeying and keeping the commandments of God, when in reality, they had failed. That's why Jesus made such harsh statements. He said, "You know the prostitutes and the whores are gonna go into the kingdom of heaven before you scribes and Pharisees". These guys who spent their whole life in this religious mode. Why? Because they know they need help, and they will seek God's forgiveness and God's help. Whereas a man who feels he doesn't need anything, "I've got it made, I do what I can to be good to others", and that whole moral philosophy. He won't come to Jesus Christ in order to find salvation, that's why they enter into the kingdom of heaven. The whores and the publicans before the scribes and the Pharisees. So, uh this prophet, that God promised, would reveal the truth of God, which of course, Jesus Christ did to us. "And whoever will not hear my words through him that he speaks in my name". Jesus said, "I didn't come in my name, I came in my Father's name." He said, "and I will require it of him".

In other words if you don't listen to Christ, you're on your own. You're responsible and will be held accountable before God, for what you are and what you've done. God has provided the way of salvation. God has provided the way of forgiveness of sins, God has provided the way of eternal life through Jesus Christ. To reject that, hey you're on your own! You have not a ghost of a chance. God requires it of you, that is, your sin and your iniquity, God requires. There's no forgiveness, apart from the plan of God in Jesus Christ. If you don't receive that plan of God, then you will be required to answer for everything you've done.

Now if a prophet presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or if he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. [I mean there's a pretty severe penalty for the false prophets too.] But you say in your heart, How will we know if God spoke, whether or not it's the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, the prophet has spoken it presumptuously: you're not to be afraid of him (18:20-22).

Easy to test a true prophet from a false prophet. If the thing he says, hasn't come to pass, he's marked as a false prophet. There was a guy, remember, predicting earthquakes, during the Olympics. Remember all of the excitement that was around, because this guy predicted there was going to be a great earthquake during the Olympics here in Southern California? All of this damage and so forth, and he got

every body stirred up, and all shook you know. Everybody, but those at Calvary Chapel, because I predicted there would not be one. And I told them, "At the end of the Olympics, you'll know which is the true prophet, and the false prophet." You know if Los Angeles is devastated by an earthquake, I'm a false prophet. If it's still standing, and of course then afterwards, he said, "Well, good that everybody prayed, because of all your prayers, God didn't send the earthquake". That's crawling out the back door if I ever heard it! I don't like, I hate that kind of stuff, where they you know, even on television, remember they were all excited and getting everyone to pray, and then afterwards, "Oh praise God! God answered our prayer, the earthquake didn't come. We're all spared. Bless God, bless you people for praying, all you sweet little darlings, saved Southern California from this tremendous devastation". Can't handle it.

When God speaks, it has to be a hundred percent accurate. That's why the bible is such an interesting book, because so much of the bible is prophecy. But, you see if there was one prophecy of scripture, that didn't take place, then the whole thing would have to be discounted. But the amazing thing is that of the thousands of prophecies that have been made in the scriptures, all of them have come to pass at this point. There are some that are still yet future, that will come to pass, and you can be sure that they will come to pass. Because God doesn't miss. He's a hundred percent. He's batting a thousand percent. And you can be sure that He's going to continue batting a thousand percent! And that is why we are to take the more earnest heed to the word of God. You can be sure it's gonna happen! When Daniel, wrote these prophecies, he said, "The Lord said, Seal this up, for this is certain. It will surely come to pass".

Boy when God puts that kind of a stamp, you know that you better pay attention. That God has spoken and you can be sure it's gonna take place. Now that's why I find prophecy such a fascinating and exciting subject in the scripture. Because God does lay out what is ahead for us in the future, and it is glorious. The plan that God has for your future because He loves you! Glorious plan. So, we can be sure, we can be certain that it was God that spoke, because not one word of prophecy has failed. God has kept His word. Shall we pray?

Father, thank You tonight for Your word, and may we give the more earnest heed, lest we should drift away from it. Lest we should be enticed and drawn unto other concepts, philosophies, ideas, forms of worship. Oh God help us, we pray! If there be something of our lives, if there be something of our worship Lord, that is not acceptable or pleasing to you, please Father, reveal to us. Because Lord, we want to worship You as You would have us to worship you, in spirit and in truth. We want there to be a purity Lord, in our lives, and in our worship, and in our forms of worship. So Father, help us, that we might be pleasing to You, in all that we do. You've been so good to us Lord, and we thank You for that goodness. You've blessed us Lord, we thank You for those blessings. We have been so blessed of You Lord, but we want to honor You and we want to Lord, be pleasing unto you. So, show us Your ways. Lead us in Your paths. May this church be all You want Your church to be. May we do all You want Your church to do. Let our lives be witnesses, our church be a witness, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.