



# Deuteronomy 17

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Deuteronomy 17.

(A brief overview of the main topics).

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**INTRODUCTION:** this is a continuation of the previous chapter; Israel is soon to cross over the River Jordan and enter into the Promised Land. The primary focus of all the following chapters is upon Moses re-telling to the new generation about to cross the River Jordan all the covenant laws the LORD originally gave to Israel at Mount Sinai so that the new generation would renew the covenant with the LORD before they enter the Promised Land. The final chapter finishes with the LORD burying Moses and Joshua being ready to lead Israel over the River Jordan and into the Promised Land (see also the introduction to chapter one).

**NOTE:** for information of people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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### DEUTERONOMY 17 (ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)

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- **Deuteronomy 17:** “You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep in which is a blemish, any defect whatever, for that is an abomination to the LORD your God.”<sup>2</sup> “If there is found among you, within any of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, a man or woman who does what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing his covenant,<sup>3</sup> and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have forbidden,<sup>4</sup> and it is told you and you hear of it, then you shall inquire diligently, and if it is true and certain that such an abomination has been done in Israel,<sup>5</sup> then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has done this evil thing, and you shall stone that man or woman to death with stones.<sup>6</sup> On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.<sup>7</sup> The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.<sup>8</sup> “If any case arises requiring decision between one kind of homicide and another, one kind of legal right and another, or one kind of assault and another, any case within your towns that is too difficult for you, then you shall arise and go up to the place that the LORD your God will choose.<sup>9</sup> And you shall come to the Levitical priests and to the judge who is in office in those days, and you shall consult them, and they shall declare to you the decision.<sup>10</sup> Then you shall do according to what they declare to you from that place that the LORD will choose. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they direct you.<sup>11</sup> According to the instructions that they give you, and according to the decision which they pronounce to you, you shall do. You shall not turn aside from the verdict that they declare to you, either to the right hand or to the left.<sup>12</sup> The man who acts presumptuously by not obeying the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall purge the evil from Israel.<sup>13</sup> And all the people shall hear and fear and not act presumptuously again.<sup>14</sup> “When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, ‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,’<sup>15</sup> you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.<sup>16</sup> Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall never return that way again.’<sup>17</sup> And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.<sup>18</sup> “And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests.<sup>19</sup> And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them,<sup>20</sup> that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.

If anyone in Israel's towns served and worshipped other gods or the sun, the moon or any of the host of heaven or they have done what is evil in the sight of the LORD and transgressed His covenant, Israel was to inquire diligently and on the evidence of two or of three witnesses if a person was found to be worshipping and serving other gods or doing what is evil in the sight of God they were to be put to death. A person was not to be put to death on the evidence of one witness. If it was true and certain that such an abomination had been done in Israel, they were to stone that man or woman to death with stones, the hand of the witnesses was to be first to throw the stones and then all the people. Putting the man or woman who had been committing evil before God to death was to purge the evil from among Israel.

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## **Sacrifices**

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Israel was not to sacrifice to the LORD an ox or a sheep in which is a blemish or any defect because it is an abomination to the LORD, this is because these sacrifices became food for the priests.

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## **Laws for making difficult decisions on legal matters**

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If a decision for a case of homicide, a legal matter, an assault or any case within Israel towns was too difficult, they were to go up to the place that the LORD would choose and stand before the Levitical priests and the judge and consult them and they were to declare the decision, then Israel was to do according to what the priest and the judge declared from that place the LORD chose. Israel was to be careful to do according to all that the priest and the judge direct them they were not to turn aside from the verdict that had been determined. Any person who acted presumptuously by not obeying the priest who stands to minister before the LORD was to be put to death. Putting these people to death was to purge the evil from Israel and all the people would hear and fear and not act presumptuously again.

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## **Laws for choosing a king over Israel**

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When Israel went into the Promised Land and desired to have a king over them like all the nations that were around them, they were told they could set a king over them, but only one who the LORD would choose and the king had to be from among their brothers, they could not put a foreigner over them who was not their brother.

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## **Laws concerning kings of Israel**

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Kings of Israel were not to:

- Acquire many horses for himself or cause Israel to return to Egypt to acquire horses because the LORD said Israel was never to return that way again (horses in this context were used for warfare (today we would say the king was not to acquire weapons of mass destruction). This is because if Israel had remained faithful the LORD would have prospered and protected them.
- Have many wives because his heart might be turned away from the LORD.
- Acquire for himself excessive silver and gold and abundant riches.

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## **Laws for when a king of Israel sits on the throne**

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- The king was to write for himself in a book a copy of the law that was approved of by the Levitical priests and read in it all the days of his life so that he would learn to fear the LORD.
- Keep all the words of the law and the LORD'S statutes and do-them so that his heart would not be lifted up above his brothers or be turned aside from the commandment of the LORD. This means the king was not to exalt himself above those in his Kingdom or consider himself superior to them).

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## CONCLUSION

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If Israel followed the LORD'S laws and kept His statutes then they would continue long in his Kingdom.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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