

DEUTERONOMY 18-20

March 18, 2012

Today we will study **chapters 18 through 20** of the book of **Deuteronomy**.

18:1-2 In **chapter 18 verses 1 to 2** we learn that the Levites, the priestly tribe, would not be granted large sections of the land like the other tribes when they entered Canaan. Would the Levites own any property in Israel?

- They would have designated cities and they would own homes. **Verses 6 to 8** talk about selling their father's estates. See **Leviticus 25:32-34**. The land given to the other tribes would be the equivalent to states of large counties in the U.S.

18:3-5 **Verses 3 to 5** tell about the Levites who were the ministers or staff in that day. Were they volunteers or did they receive pay for what they did?

- These verses tell us how they were compensated.

Is it Biblical to pay pastors today? What does the New Testament say about the subject?

- See **1 Corinthians 9:7-11** [7 What soldier has to pay his own expenses? What farmer plants a vineyard and doesn't have the right to eat some of its fruit? What shepherd cares for a flock of sheep and isn't allowed to drink some of the milk? 8 Am I expressing merely a human opinion, or does the law say the same thing? 9 For the law of Moses says, "You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain." Was God thinking only about oxen when he said this? 10 Wasn't he actually speaking to us? Yes, it was written for us, so that the one who plows and the one who threshes the grain might both expect a share of the harvest. 11 Since we have planted spiritual seed among you, aren't we entitled to a harvest of physical food and drink? And **1 Timothy 5:17-18** [17 Elders who do their work well should be respected and paid well, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain." And in another place, "Those who work deserve their pay!" The word *honor* is literally the word "honorarium". It is proper to compensate pastors and it is proper to base that compensation on performance.

18:9-14 **What do we learn about the people in the land in verses 9 to 14?**

- The people in the land were wicked people. They sacrificed their children to their gods. They also practiced all sorts of witchcraft. These things are *detestable* to God and because of them God is driving these people out of the land.

Did Israel ever do these detestable things?

- See **2 Kings 21:1-9**. [1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother was Hephzibah. 2 He did what was evil in the Lord's sight, following the detestable practices of the pagan nations that the Lord had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites. 3 He rebuilt the pagan shrines his father, Hezekiah, had destroyed. He constructed altars for Baal and set up an Asherah pole, just as King Ahab of Israel had done. He also bowed before all the powers of the heavens and worshiped them. 4 He built pagan altars in the Temple of the Lord, the place where the Lord had said, "My name will remain in Jerusalem forever." 5 He built these altars for all the powers of the heavens in both courtyards of the Lord's Temple. 6 Manasseh also sacrificed his own son in the fire. He practiced sorcery and divination, and he consulted with mediums and psychics. He did much that was evil in the Lord's sight, arousing his anger.

- 7 Manasseh even made a carved image of Asherah and set it up in the Temple, the very place where the Lord had told David and his son Solomon: “My name will be honored forever in this Temple and in Jerusalem—the city I have chosen from among all the tribes of Israel. 8 If the Israelites will be careful to obey my commands—all the laws my servant Moses gave them—I will not send them into exile from this land that I gave their ancestors.” 9 But the people refused to listen, and Manasseh led them to do even more evil than the pagan nations that the Lord had destroyed when the people of Israel entered the land. **NLT**

What eventually happened to Israel?

- They, too, were driven out of the land for their sin. **See Leviticus 20:22-23** [22 “You must keep all my decrees and regulations by putting them into practice; otherwise the land to which I am bringing you as your new home will vomit you out. 23 Do not live according to the customs of the people I am driving out before you. It is because they do these shameful things that I detest them.] And **Ezra 9:7** [7 From the days of our ancestors until now, we have been steeped in sin. That is why we and our kings and our priests have been at the mercy of the pagan kings of the land. We have been killed, captured, robbed, and disgraced, just as we are today.]

18:15-19 What are the applications of verses 15 to 19 for the Bible and for our times today?

- God would raise up prophets (18:15) and they would speak all that He commanded (18:18). **See 2 Timothy 3:16** [16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.] And **2 Peter 1:20-21**. [20 Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding, 21 or from human initiative. No, the **Holy Spirit** moved those prophets, and they spoke from God. In our day God still speaks to His people through His spokesmen. Their words are not infallible, as were the words of the Biblical writers under God’s inspiration, but they still speak His truth to His people.

18:20-22 Explain the “0” tolerance rule for prophets revealed in verses 20 to 22.

- If a prophecy did not come true, then that proved the prophet to be a false prophet who was then to be executed.

19:1-10 In chapter 19 verses 1 to 10 we are told about the cities of refuge. What all are we told about those cities?

- There would initially be three (19:2) but eventually six of these cities of refuge (19:9). (2) The cities were to be strategically located so that all of Israel would have access to one. (3) There were to be roads constructed for people to travel to those cities. (4) Anyone who accidentally killed another person could flee to one of those cities where he would be protected from the “blood avenger”.

Who was the “blood avenger” and what were his rights?

- **See Numbers 35:9-28**. [9 The Lord said to Moses, 10 “Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. “When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11 designate cities of refuge to which people can flee if they have killed someone accidentally. 12 These cities will be places of protection from a dead person’s relatives who want to avenge the death. The slayer must not be put to death before being tried by the community. 13 Designate six cities of refuge for yourselves, 14 three on the east side of the Jordan River and three on the west in the land of Canaan. 15 These cities are for the protection of Israelites, foreigners living among you, and traveling merchants. Anyone who accidentally kills someone may flee there for safety. 16 “But if someone strikes and kills another person with a piece of iron, it is murder, and the murderer must be executed.

17 Or if someone with a stone in his hand strikes and kills another person, it is murder, and the murderer must be put to death. 18 Or if someone strikes and kills another person with a wooden object, it is murder, and the murderer must be put to death. 19 The victim's nearest relative is responsible for putting the murderer to death. When they meet, the avenger must put the murderer to death. 20 So if someone hates another person and pushes him or throws a dangerous object at him and he dies, it is murder. 21 Or if someone hates another person and hits him with a fist and he dies, it is murder. In such cases, the avenger must put the murderer to death when they meet. 22 "But suppose someone pushes another person without having shown previous hostility, or throws something that unintentionally hits another person, 23 or accidentally drops a huge stone on someone, though they were not enemies, and the person dies. 24 If this should happen, the community must follow these regulations in making a judgment between the slayer and the avenger, the victim's nearest relative: 25 The community must protect the slayer from the avenger and must escort the slayer back to live in the city of refuge to which he fled. There he must remain until the death of the high priest, who was anointed with the sacred oil. 26 "But if the slayer ever leaves the limits of the city of refuge, 27 and the avenger finds him outside the city and kills him, it will not be considered murder. 28 The slayer should have stayed inside the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest, the slayer may return to his own property.

19:11-13 Look at verses 11 to 13; what were they to do in the case of intentional murder?

- In the case of intentional murder, the elders of the city of refuge would give the killer over to the blood avenger who would put the murderer to death. They were not to pity him. A person's difficult childhood had no bearing on how these cases were handled. They were to purge Israel of such behavior. God makes it clear in **verse 13** that executing the guilty was a condition of things going *well* for Israel.

19:14-21 What do we learn about justice in Israel in verses 14 to 21?

- They were never to defraud anyone out of their land (19:14). There had to be at least two witnesses to convict a person (19:15). A person can make up and accuse another person of anything if there are no other witnesses to witness. If someone ever bore "false witness" (lied in his testimony), then that false witness was to receive the exact penalty he was trying to get for the accused person (19:16-19).

What was their motive to be in executing justice?

- They were to purge Israel of dishonesty and lying. If they would do so, then everyone would hear, fear, and no one would ever dare give a false witness again.

How did Israel determine the judgment for personal injury?

- Whatever you wrongly did to the innocent person, that same thing would be done to you. **See 19:21.**
[21 You must show no pity for the guilty! Your rule should be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, and foot for foot.]

How might this kind of justice change the rate of crime in America?

- See what you get.

20:1-4 What do we learn about Israel's army in chapter 20 verses 1 to 4?

- They were not to fear the armies that they would fight. They were to trust in the Lord. He would fight for them. If they would properly fear the Lord, then they would not fear anyone else. **See Psalm 27:1-3**
[1 The Lord is my light and my salvation—so why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble? 2 When evil people come to devour me, when my enemies and foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. 3 Though a mighty army surrounds me, my heart will not be afraid. Even if I am attacked, I will remain confident.]

And **Isaiah 43:1-3b**. [1 But now, O Jacob, listen to the Lord who created you. O Israel, the one who formed you says, “Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. 2 When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. 3 For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, you’re **Savior**. I gave Egypt as a ransom for your freedom; I gave Ethiopia and Seba in your place.]

20:5-9 What unusual provisions are mentioned in verses 5 to 9?

- Anyone building a home that had not completed and dedicated it would be exempt from battle. Anyone who had planted his first vineyard but had not yet harvested it would be exempt from battle. Anyone who was engaged but not married was exempt from battle. Once the house was dedicated, the vineyard harvested, and the marriage consummated, the men would then have to report to the army for battle. **Verse 8** even allowed the cowardly to go home so that their fear did not spread to other soldiers.

20:10-15 What do we learn from verses 10 to 15?

- If they fought against cities that were **FAR** them, they were to offer the people a chance to surrender. If they did, all of the people of that city would become slaves of the people of Israel. If they refused to surrender, and then Israel would destroy all of the men of the city and take the women, children, and animals as their *spoil* (reward/battle-pay).

20:16-18 How was it different for the cities in the land of Canaan?

- In the Promised Land they were to utterly destroy everyone who lived there. Any survivor might have tried to teach the Jews their *detestable* practices. They were to purge the land of any possibility of the former people polluting Israel as the new inhabitants. God was going to use Israel to exact His judgment on those wicked people for their sin. See severely judged Egypt for its mistreatment of His people. He severely judged the people who inhabited the Promised Land before the Jews because of their detestable wickedness.

20:19-20 It’s interesting to note that Israel was never to cut down fruit trees to use in their battle pursuits. These trees would provide fruit for them in the future.