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Deuteronomy 17:1-13
Shall Be Put to Death the Dead
May 9, 2021

¹“You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God a bull or sheep which has *any blemish or defect, for that is an abomination to the LORD your God.*

²“*If there is found among you, within any of your gates which 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, ³ who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, ⁴ and it is told you, and you hear of it, then you shall inquire diligently. And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination has been committed in Israel, ⁵ then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing, and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones. ⁶ Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. ⁷ The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you.*

⁸“*If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses. ⁹ And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge there in those days, and inquire of them; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment. ¹⁰ You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which the LORD chooses. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you. ¹¹ According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you, according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you. ¹² Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. ¹³ And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously.*

Years ago, I watched a movie where two guys were outside in the heat of the day. One of them was visiting the other while traveling. The one who owned the house was drinking something out of a can – maybe a beer or a soda.

He said to the guy who was visiting something like, “Hoowee, it sure is hot out here.” The other guy said, “Yeah, it sure is.” The first guy says, “I sure bet you’d like a cold drink too, wouldn’t you?” The other guy said, “Yeah, that would be really great.” The first guy, without missing a beat, handed his drink to the visitor then bent over, pulled a fresh drink out of his cooler, opened it up, and started drinking it.

Although I do remember not liking the movie very much, and not remembering almost anything else about it, that has always stuck with me. Sometimes I think I’d like to do that to someone, just for fun, to see their reaction. But it is actually so perverse to me that I couldn’t get myself to do it, even as a joke.

A guest is a person who is to be treated with respect and treated kindly. There are plenty of other things you can do to kid around with friends or family who are visiting, but to me, that is just too brazen to even consider. It really was funny to watch though.

The idea of Deuteronomy 17 follows that of what has already been presented, holiness before the Lord, right conduct, proper judgment, and so on. When this is lacking, the people will

quickly turn away from what is right, and chaos – as is seen throughout the rest of the Old Testament – will ensue.

It all comes back to the people's attitude towards the Lord. How they perceive Him and their relationship with Him will dictate how they conduct their lives before Him. This is no different today. Churches are filled with leaders and people who do not treat the Lord and His word with holiness. Old Testament or New, the Lord sees and is aware of the conduct of the people...

Text Verse: *“You offer defiled food on My altar,
But say,
‘In what way have we defiled You?’
By saying,
‘The table of the LORD is contemptible.’
⁸And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice,
Is it not evil?
And when you offer the lame and sick,
Is it not evil?
Offer it then to your governor!
Would he be pleased with you?
Would he accept you favorably?
Says the LORD of hosts.” Malachi 1:7, 8*

This seemed to be an obvious passage for today's sermon because it ties exactly in with the first verse we will look at. Imagine having a half-finished and now lukewarm drink, and passing it off to a guest, and then reaching into the cooler for a new, cold, fresh, and bubbly drink. It made for a great comedic scene because the very idea of it is so offensive.

But this is just the thing Israel was doing toward the Lord. The whole book of Malachi follows this tone. What could the people expect of the Lord when they treated Him with contempt? They looked for blessing, but their actions toward Him were as cursing.

And as He notes, they would never dare to take such an offering to their own governor. The level of disrespect is only heightened because of this. Holiness before the Lord. That is what was expected, and it is the expectation today. Let us bring our best before Him at all times.

Whether it is an offering from what we have been blessed with, the quantity and quality of time spent in His word, or the type of sermons and studies we will participate in – or even our attitude towards our personal failings in His presence – such things as these are what He is evaluating.

He is a great God, and He has given us His best in the giving of His Son. Let us remember this and respond in kind. Such truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. You Shall Inquire Diligently (verses 1-7)

¹“You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God a bull or sheep which has any blemish or defect,

Moses begins Chapter 17 with the same train of thought that he has already put forth – holiness before the Lord. This was the case with the pilgrim feasts, with the standards of justice expected of the people, and of maintaining pure religious expression by removing anything pagan and unauthorized.

Now, he reminds them of the necessity to present sacrificial offerings that are perfect in their being. He specifically mentions the *shor* and the *seh*. The *shor* is a bull or ox, an animal of the herd. The *seh* can be either a sheep or a goat, an animal of the flock. Thus, it is an all-encompassing expression to cover that which is offered to the Lord.

Of them, they are to be without any *mum*, or blemish, or any *davar ra*, or “thing evil.” Anything that was not absolutely perfect was not to be brought before the Lord. This thought was already carefully presented in Leviticus on several occasions, but a good all-encompassing explanation is found in Leviticus 22 –

“Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. ²¹ And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. ²² Those that are blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the LORD. ²³ Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer as a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted.”
Leviticus 22:20-23

As was seen in our text verse today, this was something Israel did. What they would never present to their human rulers, they gladly brought before the Lord. And the offense is twofold. This wasn't just an offense because of their negative attitude toward Him, which was certainly bad enough. It was further an offense against the typology of the coming Christ.

In offering marred sacrifices, it diminished their perception of what God would do in Him because these anticipated Him. The question one might ask is, “What kind of a Messiah were

the people anticipating.” Would He be perfect and without spot, or were they expecting God to provide something flawed, just as they did towards Him? Their attitude towards Him reflected their thoughts about Christ. But the word says otherwise –

“And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; ¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:17-19

As a side note concerning these first words of Chapter 17, the KJV says, “...*any* bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, *or* any evilfavouredness.” It should not be necessary for the average reader of the Bible to have to carry around a lexicon in order to understand the intent being conveyed.

The Hebrew reads, *kol davar ra*, “all thing evil.” Coming upon words like “evilfavouredness” in archaic translations shows how good it is that we have up to date translations for people to appreciate what is being said. Concerning such blemished or evilfavouredly animals being presented, Moses says...

¹ (con’t) **for that is an abomination to the LORD your God.**

The Hebrew is emphatic: *ki toavat Yehovah elohekha hu* – “for abomination Yehovah your God it.” Nothing further needs to be said. No further words of explanation are required. The law has been given, Moses repeats it now, and it is the expectation henceforth. God is great, and what is offered to Him is to reflect that greatness. Anything else is abominable to Him.

² **“If there is found among you, within any of your gates which 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,**

The idea here is similar to that of Chapter 13. There, it was an active attempt by others who were working to turn people away from the Lord, whether it was a person in general, someone close in friendship or relationship, or even a town of Israel. The idea was actively trying to turn others away from serving the Lord. Here, it is rather a person who has turned away on his or her own, as is seen in the next words...

³ **who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them,**

Such a person is a member of the covenant community. He has been considered a servant of the Lord because of that covenant relationship, and yet he (or she) has departed from that in order to serve *elohim akherim*, or “gods other” and bow down to them.

The idea here of serving could be burning incense to them, sacrificing to them, and so on. It is a form of physical service. The word translated as “worship” means to bow down to. Thus, worshipping, as if a master or overlord, is implied. What rightly belonged to the Lord has been transferred to another...

³ (con't) **either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven,**

The Hebrew says *l'kal tseva ha'shemayim* – “to all host the heavens.” The thought has already been seen in Deuteronomy 4 –

“And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.” Deuteronomy 4:19

Not only did Genesis clearly indicate that these things were created by the Lord, but He has given them to all peoples under the heavens. The same sun, moon, and stars that shine over Jerusalem also shine over Moscow. They are in view at one time and out of view at another.

These things were never intended to be objects of worship. The heavens, being plural, means any and every view of the sky by man at any point in time. If these were gods, they would – like the Lord – always be present. But the Lord has divided them among the peoples because He is the Creator of them, and the One who appoints their seasons.

Therefore, these have been given by the Lord to serve man, not to be served by men. As He created them, the departure to them as “another god” was reprehensible enough, but to worship something clearly stated as having been created by Him – and thus not a god at all – would be perfectly demeaning of His authority. With that noted, Moses next says...

³ (con't) **which I have not commanded,**

Two points of interest concerning these words come forth. First, instead of saying, “which I have forbidden,” He says it in the negative, *lo tsiviti*, or “no have I commanded.” In this, it produces a highly emphatic pronouncement.

But more, it is stated in the first person. The Lord takes up the speech, right in the middle of Moses' words. This has already happened several times in Deuteronomy, such as in Chapter 7

“For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.” Deuteronomy 7:4

One can almost sense the burning anger of the Lord at just the thought of what lies ahead. The Spirit is inspiring Moses to speak, and then right in the middle of his discourse, the Lord interjects His own words. It is a rather remarkable thing to consider. With the Lord’s words spoken out, Moses again takes up the conversation...

⁴ and it is told you, and you hear *of it*, then you shall inquire diligently.

As with the whole passage, the words are in the singular. Moses is either speaking to each person individually, or to the nation collectively. Probably the latter as appears the case from later verses. Either way, it is personal and very direct. The thing is brought forth and a process of inquiry is thus to be taken...

^{4 (con’t)} And if *it is* indeed true *and* certain that such an abomination has been committed in Israel,

The Hebrew is again very precise: *v’hineh, emet, nakon ha’davar* – “And behold! True! Certain the word.” What was brought forth has been confirmed. The matter is established, and the offense is made manifest.

The importance of the matter is brought forth with the final word, *b’yisrael*, or “in Israel.” The offense has occurred among the covenant people, by a member of that people, and it is brought to light among that people. To not take action would be to deny the responsibility of every aspect of the matter.

There is the responsibility of the people because of who they are. There is the responsibility to the covenant that they agreed to. And there is the responsibility to the Lord with whom the covenant was made. Therefore...

⁵ then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing,

The Hebrew is again very emphatic – “and you shall bring out to your gates the man that or the woman that.” The idea by the emphasis is that there was to be no leniency regardless of who it was that did it. It could be someone famous, wealthy, in the priesthood, or a noble.

Whoever it was, he (or she) was to be taken out to the gates. As a point of clarification, this is not the same as was seen in Leviticus and Numbers where offenders were taken outside the camp and stoned. The reason for that was to not defile the camp of the Lord.

Once in the land of Canaan, the idea was not that the city would be defiled. Rather, it is because the gates of the city are the place where judgment is rendered among the city people. If someone was expelled from a city, he would be taken to the gates as a sign of his judgment and shoved out, “Beat it, buddy. And don’t come back!”

This is the same idea. They are taken out to the gates for judgment and then stoned outside them as a sign of judgment, “You are thus expelled from Israel.” It is to that place the person was to be taken...

⁵ (con’t) **and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones.**

eth ha’ish o eth ha’issah u-seqaltam ba’abamin v’metu – “the man or the woman and shall stone them in the stones and they die.” The same who are taken to the gates are the ones who are to be stoned. And they are to be stoned until they have expired. The entire thought is one of no mercy and no leniency towards such a person. With that in mind, a protection is given in this regard...

⁶Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.

The Hebrew is direct concerning the guilty – *yumat ha’met* – “shall be put to death the dead.” In other words, because of his guilt, he is already dead. Thus, it is an emphatic command to ensure that the one who is dead is put to death. He is beyond rescue and the punishment must be meted out.

However, that person can only be considered as “the dead” when his or her actions are confirmed. One witness cannot be sufficient for such a judgment. The precept here was rarely carried out, and violations of the command permeate the time of the later kings. However, there are also instances where the law was again picked up and followed to varying degrees –

“So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. ¹¹ And they offered to the LORD at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought. ¹² Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; ¹³ and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. ¹⁴ Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams’ horns. ¹⁵ And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.” 2 Chronicles 15:10-15

Whether this was actually carried out or not, it was right for them to affirm the matter. But in due time, and at the leading of a new king, the nation would again fall away from the precept and the people would again serve other gods, bowing down to them. When the precept was obeyed, and a person was judged and found guilty, there was an important part of the process to be adhered to...

⁷The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death,

The reason for this precept is because there are those who will eviscerate another with their mouths, but who would not dream of lifting a finger to otherwise do what needed to be done. This is to weed out such people, and to let them know that the guilt of blood would first and foremost be upon them.

In other words, what is determined to be a legal and judicial act is – in the case of a false witness – an act of murder. Further, the Hebrew says “hand” in the singular – “the hand of the witnesses.” It is a unified act by them. If they are false witnesses, their single hand is one of blood and the Lord will know of it.

⁷(con’t) and afterward the hands of all the people.

The word “hand” is again in the singular. It is a unified act by the people, acknowledging that what they have done is for the collective good. They are one people united in one act of the hand.

⁷(con’t) So you shall put away the evil from among you.

It is word for word and letter for letter the same as the final clause of verse 13:5. The word translated as “put away,” is *ba’ar*. It signifies to burn, or to consume and this is certainly what is on Moses’ mind. It is as if the evil has been purged through fire, and thus it is a point of purification.

Do not worship anything, but Me alone, says your God
In doing this, you will do well
I will keep you safe on this earthly path you trod
And will open to you heaven, instead of opening hell

I am the Lord your God, so you are to worship only Me
And I will lead you in paths of righteousness for My name’s sake
I will guide you each step, watching over you tenderly
If you will follow Me – may this be the path you take

Forget the false gods, all of which are only vanity
Don't bow to the heavenly host, and you will do well
Don't allow yourself to be pulled into idolatrous insanity
And I will open to you heaven, instead of opening hell

II. You Shall Put Away the Evil (verses 8-13)

⁸“If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge,

The word translated here as “hard” is *pele*. It is widely translated, but the sense here is “extraordinary.” It is something beyond the ability of the people to resolve. It is a matter of judgment that is...

⁸between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another,

The Hebrew reads in a comparative manner: *ben dam l'dam, ben din l'din, u-ben nega, la'neg* – “between blood to blood, between judgment to judgment, and between stroke to stroke.”

This final word, *nega*, or “stroke,” was used many times in Leviticus when referring to a plague or an infection of leprosy. It may be speaking of a wound or stroke incurred between people in a fight, but it very well may refer to the inability to decide a matter of ritual cleanliness not clearly defined by the law, but appearing to be something that defiles – “Shall this person be deemed unclean or not?” Either way, what is clearly implied here is that a decision cannot be made concerning a matter.

The importance of this notion is that if a decision can be rendered, the matter ends at that time. There is no higher court of appeal within the land. If a judgment for stoning occurs, the person is simply taken out of the gates and stoned. If a person is fined, he is to pay the fine. Elevation of a matter is only made when there are...

^{8 (con't)} matters of controversy within your gates,

divre rivot – “Words of strife.” The idea is that there is no consensus on the judgment of a matter of judicial importance. When such a case occurs...

^{8 (con't)} then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses.

Wherever the sanctuary of the Lord is, the matter is to be taken there for a decision. This, however, may include some other location when dealing with a judge because the judges of Israel did not necessarily judge from the location of the sanctuary.

However, the accounts of the judges show that they led Israel according to the word of the Lord. The reason for noting this distinction is seen in the next verse. Either way, in such a case, the decision is taken out of the hands of the city and presented before the Lord's representatives...

⁹ And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge *there* in those days, and inquire of them;

There are at least two categories here, and maybe three. It may say, "the priests the Levites," or "the priests, the Levites." The former is certainly correct, thus making only two categories – "the priests the Levites" and "the judge."

As this is the case, the priests would decide matters of Levitical law, and the judge would decide the other laws. This seems obvious because it is apparent that Joshua was to lead Israel upon the death of Moses, not the priests.

At some point, Joshua would then be succeeded by another, and so on. And this line of judges (later to be kings) was not responsible for matters of Levitical law. And the Levitical priesthood was not responsible for matters outside of their priestly duties.

In other words, the structure of authority in Israel is being implied here in these words, and it is a structure that clearly defines the parameters of the two branches. Understanding this, in such a case, and whichever one applied...

^{9 (con't)} they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment.

The Hebrew reads, "word the judgment." Whatever they spoke forth was to be considered final and binding. In such a matter, though, it would keep things harmonious within the city. If there was strife about a judgment, that strife was to be left behind once the matter was elevated and the decision was rendered.

¹⁰ You shall do according to the sentence

v'asita al pi ha'davar – "And you shall do upon mouth the word." Whatever the spoken word of the priest or judge was, it was to be considered binding and it was to be performed accordingly...

^{10 (con't)} which they pronounce upon you in that place which the LORD chooses.

Again, as noted in verse 8, judges of Israel did not necessarily judge from the place of the sanctuary. For example –

“Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. ⁵ And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.”
Judges 4:4, 5

Despite the location, this is certainly what is being referred to by Moses. The place of the priest, or the place of the judge, is the place that the Lord chooses for such a decision. In going there, the decision would be rendered and final, as is next noted...

¹⁰ (con't) **And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you.**

The word translated as “order” is *yarah*. It signifies to throw or shoot, such as an arrow. Figuratively, then, it means to point out, teach, or instruct. One shoots an arrow to hit a mark. In speaking out what is decided, that is the mark that has been set, and it is to be followed...

¹¹ **According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you,**

al pi ha'torah asher yorukha – “Upon mouth the law which they instruct you.” Again, Moses uses the word *yarah*. It is as if a mark was made, it was determined as such, and it is binding.

This is more poignant because the word *torah*, or law, comes from *yarah*. If one wanted to loosely, but notably, paraphrase this, they could say, “Upon the mouth of instruction by which you were instructed.” Everything is coming back to the instruction, the law, which is to take preeminence in all such matters. When the law is given it is to be heeded...

¹¹ (con't) **according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do;**

v'al ha'mishpat asher yomeru lekha taaseh – “and upon the judgment which they say to you, you shall do.” The previous clause spoke of the law. This clause speaks of the interpretation of the law. The judgment was based on the law, and the judgment is now the law which is to be performed. In this, Moses uses the word *amar* – to say. It is a word that implies participation in what is spoken.

In this case, those who receive the judgment are to communicate that judgment as they have received it to the one the judgment is directed to.

¹¹ (con't) **you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you.**

These words are probably as much for the judges who disputed in the first place as they are for the one to whom judgment is ultimately pronounced. In other words, there was a hearing

at the gate of the city where the elders gathered. No judgment was rendered because there was no agreement in judgment. Because of this, they took the case to the ultimate place of judgment.

With the decision rendered, one of the city judges will be unhappy about the decision, but that is irrelevant. Whatever is decided upon by the authority is to be heeded without addition or subtraction, signified by the term *yamin u-semol*, or “right and left.” The course the arrow flew is where the decision lies. It is this standard that is reflected in the way King Jehoshaphat organized his kingdom –

So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the LORD God of their fathers. ⁵ Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, ⁶ and said to the judges, “Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. ⁷ Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes.” 2 Chronicles 19:4-7

Interestingly, his name, Yehoshaphat, signifies exactly what the account records. It is a compound name – *Yeho*, is derived from Yehovah and *shaphat* signifies “judge.” Thus, it means Yah has Judged, or Yah Judges. As far as the judgment once it is rendered, the matter is settled and fixed, or else...

¹² **Now the man who acts presumptuously**

It is a preposition and a noun, not an adverb: *v’ha’ish asher yaaseh b’zadon* – “And the man who acts in presumption.” It is a new word, *zadon*. It signifies insolence or presumption, coming from the word *zud*, meaning “to boil.” In other words, the person is like a boiling pot that refuses to act properly...

¹² (con’t) **and will not heed the priest**

This shows that what was surmised earlier is correct. When it said, “the priests the Levites,” it was referring to only one category. A priest is the one who would decide the matter of Levitical law. One would generally assume it would be the high priest, but any priest could certainly act in his stead.

¹² (con’t) **who stands to minister there before the LORD your God,**

Only the priests could stand and minister before the Lord. Levites could only minister between the priests and the people. Thus, this would be the high priest or his representative who would

stand in this capacity. When they interpreted the law, it was considered on behalf of the Lord. For matters of non-Levitical law...

12 (con't) or the judge,

Whoever was the appointed judge for non-priestly matters, that person was to be heeded, just as if the Lord had rendered the decision. Should that not be heeded by a city judge, or by the person on whom the judgment was rendered...

12 (con't) that man shall die.

The words are emphatic: *u-met ha'ish ha'hu* – “and dead the man the him.” The judgment was made by the Lord’s representative. There could be no excuse and no appeal because he had not acted presumptuously against a person, but against the Lord who chose that person. In such a case...

12 (con't) So you shall put away the evil from Israel.

Moses again uses the word *ba'ar*, to burn or consume, but instead of saying “from among you,” he says, “from Israel.” Such a person wasn’t just a local cancer, but one who infected the entire nation. He was to be eliminated. And that, for a very good reason...

***13 (fin) And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously.**

Moses now uses the verb *zud*, or to boil, that was the source of the noun just spoken forth. The matter would become known throughout the land, and it would be a source of fear to those who judged. When the decision of the Lord was given, they were to comply with the decision.

Likewise, those who stood for judgment would know that if they refused to comply with the decision of the chosen authority, they were refusing to comply with the word of the Lord. As the Law of Moses was to be the standard for the people, to fail to act in accord with the judgment was to fail to uphold the law.

The difference between the person in verses 1-7 and the person in verses 8-13 is which god they had turned to. In the first section, it was to a false god external from them – the stars, the sun, the moon, and so on. In the second section, it was to the false god of self. The person had placed his decision above that of the Lord.

In either case, the person was dead before he was executed. Nothing could change the course of the decision because judgment was already rendered. The execution was just a point of

completion for it. Unfortunately, this has become the norm in our society – and societies around the world today.

The Lord has spoken, but there is presumption in the leaders of the world to speak against Him. It happened openly and publicly in the House of Representatives at the end of February this year.

While one congressman from Florida was standing up and speaking of God’s design for humanity as defined in Scripture, another congressman, a Jew from New York – Jerry Nadler – stood up and said, “What any religious tradition describes as God’s will is no concern of this Congress.”

Unlike Israel under the law, Nadler has a chance to redirect his thoughts and humble his heart. If he does, and if he turns to Jesus Christ for mercy, he will receive it. But as he stands right now, he is a dead man, simply awaiting the execution of his punishment.

God will not be mocked, and He will not tolerate such overflowing presumption, especially not from someone who bears the name of this holy, righteous, and just God. Jerry Nadler stands as a sinner in the hands of an angry God. The choice is his. The anger can be quelled, and a right and propitious relationship can be restored.

Will it come about? I’m not holding my breath, but the same God who saved Charlie Garrett through an infinite act of mercy can do so for a guy like Nadler. Only time will tell. The point is that we all must face the Lord for decisions concerning our life and actions. How will we meet Him?

For me, I appeal to the blood of Jesus Christ. It is in His cross, and in that alone, that I make my stand. The law is not a place to find mercy. But Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the law is. I pray you will act wisely and do the same. Come to the cross and be saved by His blood. May it be so, and may it be today – to the glory of God who redeems sinners such as us.

Closing Verse: *“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Ephesians 2:4-9*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 17:14-20 *Who shall it be? Only time will tell...* (A King Over Israel)
(53rd Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Shall Be Put to Death the Dead

“You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God
A bull or sheep which has any blemish or defect
For that is an abomination to the LORD your God
Such inconsistencies He can detect

“If there is found among you
Within any of your gates which 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, so he does do...

Who has gone and served other gods and
worshiped them
Either the sun or moon or any of the host of
heaven
-----if such shall be
Which I have not commanded
And it is told you, and you hear of it, then you shall
-----inquire diligently

And if it is indeed true and certain that such an
abomination
-----has been committed in Israel
Then you shall bring out to your gates that man or
woman
-----even if it is your neighbor Mr. or Mrs. Jones
Who has committed that wicked thing
And shall stone to death that man or woman with
stones

Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to
death
On the testimony of two or three witnesses, so
shall it be
He shall not be put to death
On only one witness's testimony

The hands of the witnesses shall be the first
Against him to put him to death, so they shall do

And afterward the hands of all the people
So you shall put away the evil from among you

“If a matter arises which is too hard for you to
judge
Between degrees of guilt for bloodshed
Between one judgment or another
Or between one punishment or another, as I have
said...

Matters of controversy within your gates
Then you shall arise and go
Up to the place which the LORD your God chooses
Thus, it shall be so

And you shall come to the priests
The Levites, and to the judge there in those days,
as you are sent
And inquire of them
They shall pronounce upon you the sentence of
judgment

You shall do according to
The sentence which they pronounce upon you, so
you shall do
In that place which the LORD chooses
And you shall be careful to do according to all that
they order you

According to the sentence of the law in which they
instruct you
According to the judgment which they tell you, you
shall do
You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the
left
From the sentence which they pronounce upon
you

Now the man who acts presumptuously
And will not heed the priest who stands
To minister there before the LORD your God, or the
judge
That man shall die just as the law demands

So you shall put away the evil from Israel
And all the people shall hear and fear
And no longer act presumptuously
The word will go out far and near

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your
word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...