

**Maintaining Righteousness in Israel
(Deuteronomy 17:8-13)
Veritas Class
October 20, 2013**

| | Deuteronomy 17:2-7 (Idolaters) | Deuteronomy 17:8-13 (Insoluble Cases) |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Condition | "If <i>any</i> is found among you, within any of your towns that YHWH your God is giving you, a man or woman who does what is evil in the sight of YHWH your and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or the moon God, in transgressing his covenant, ³ and has gone or any of the host of heaven, which I have forbidden, ⁴ and it is told you and you hear of it, | ⁸ "If <i>any</i> 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, |
| Prescription | then you shall inquire diligently , and if it is true and certain that such an abomination has been done in, ⁵ 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. ⁶ 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. ⁷ The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. | then you shall arise and go up to the place that YHWH your God will choose. ⁹ And you shall come to the Levitical priests and to the judge who is in office in those days, and you shall inquire [of them], and they shall declare to you the decision. ¹⁰ Then you shall do according to what they declare to you from that place that YHWH will choose. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they direct you. ¹¹ 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. ¹² The man who acts presumptuously by not obeying the priest who stands to minister there before YHWH your God, or the judge, that man shall die. |
| Result | So you shall purge the evil from your midst. | So you shall purge the evil from Israel. |
| Conclusion | And all the people shall hear and fear and not act presumptuously again. | |

Panel A: How to Deal with Idolaters (vv. 2-7)

Panel B: How to Deal with "Stiff" Legal Cases (vv. 8-13)

Background Text: Exodus 18:15-16

A. The Problem: Insoluble cases involving: homicide; legal disputes; assault (v. 8a)

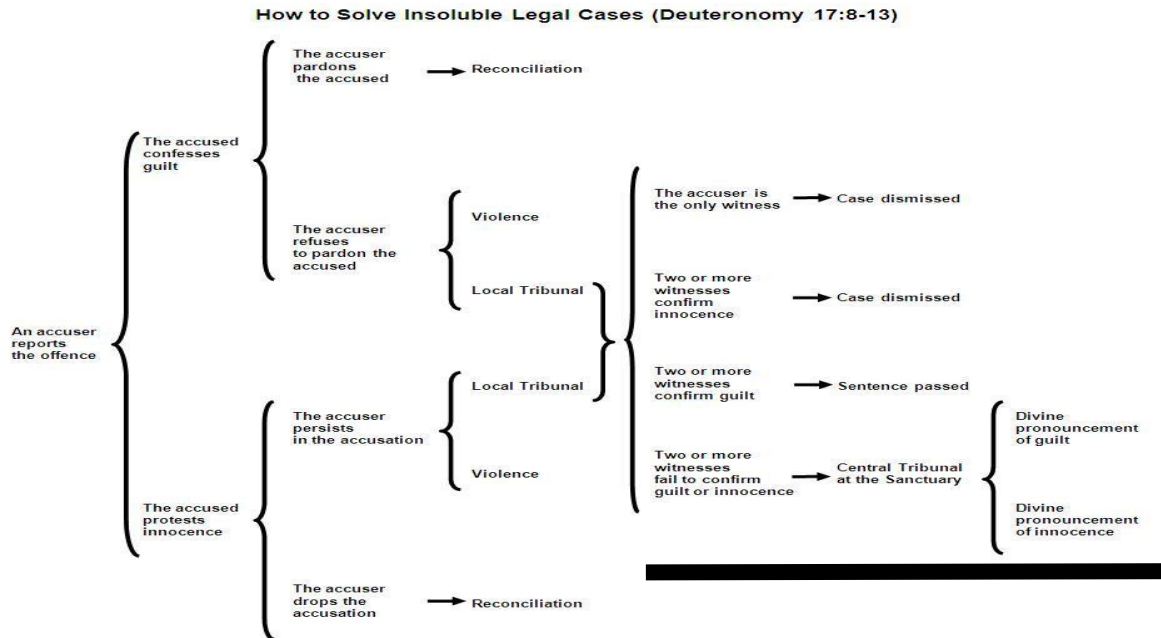
B. The Prescription (vv. 8b-12b)

The locus of responsibility

1. The Appeal to the Central Tribunal (vv. 8b-9)

a. Who were the Levitical priests (*hakkōhānîm halēwiyyim*)?

- (1) Their Origins
- (2) Their Charge
- (3) Their Economic Status in Israel



b. And who is the judge?

(1) A lay man?

(2) A man selected from the Levitical priests?

- ◆ He is at the central sanctuary (vv. 9-10)
- ◆ He officiates before YHWH (19:17)

c. How would the tribunal operate?

Gen 25:22:1 Kings 14:5; 1 Kings 22:4-6

d. What does the tribunal seek? *mišpāt** = “verdict, adjudication, judgment”

e. How would they learn of the divine judgment? By the Urim and Tummim

Exod 28:30; Lev 8:8; Num 27:21; Deut 33:8

2. Responding to the Decision of the Central Tribunal (vv. 10-12b)

a. The importance of pursuing righteousness by precise adherence to the pronouncement of the priest (vv. 10-12a)

b. The Warning (v. 12b)

c. The Goal (v. 12c)

C. Conclusion (v. 13)

Kingship as the Embodiment of Righteousness in Israel
(Deuteronomy 17:14-20)
Veritas Class
November 10, 2013

The Significance of Deuteronomy 17:14-20

1. It presents a revolutionary paradigm for kingship.

- a. Whereas the kings of other nations often gained power by sheer Machiavellian force and at the expense of their rivals and their subjects, the kingship will be established in response to a democratic impulse and the favorable response of Yahweh.
- b. Whereas other states were often governed by foreigners, either usurpers from the outside or imperial overlords, the Israelites were to be governed by one of their own under the imperial reign of Yahweh.
- c. Whereas the kings of other nations regularly used their positions to satisfy their own lust for power, status and wealth, the Israelite kings were forbidden from using their office to amass power and wealth for themselves.
- d. Whereas other kings were perceived primarily as administrators of justice, a function they fulfilled by demanding absolute loyalty, the role of Israelite kings was to embody the divinely revealed standard of covenantal justice.
- e. Whereas other kings codified laws to protect their own interests and to regulate the conduct of their subjects, not themselves, the Israelite laws were codified by Yahweh himself, interpreted by his spokesman who has no vested interest in the kingship, and then imposed upon the king himself.

2. It presents a revolutionary paradigm for kingship.

- a. Godly leaders do not view their positions as personal accomplishments or based on personal abilities; they are chosen by God.
- b. Godly leaders recognize that although they are indeed put “over” the people, they remain one with the people—neither greater nor lesser.
- c. Godly leaders recognize that theirs is not a position of power or privilege, but of responsibility. They know they exist for the sake of the community, rather than vice versa. Therefore, rather than using their positions for personal advantage, they are willing to give up everything, even their lives, for the sake of those they are called to lead.
- d. The primary role of godly leaders is to model and embody the highest virtues and values of the community: their lives are characterized by fear of God, which derives from thorough familiarity with the revealed will of God.
- e. Godly leaders point people upward to God by submitting to him, fearing him, and serving Him without reservation.
- f. Godly leaders recognize that God does not promise success unconditionally. Success is conditional, depending on the leaders' humility before their fellows, their fear of God, and their scrupulous obedience to His will.
- g. As the Son of God and the son of David, Jesus fulfills the Mosaic model of leadership perfectly.

