

Civil Laws
Deuteronomy 16:18-20:20
Study Guide

God knew that if his people were going to be a nation of stability and order, they had to have a godly and strong civil government. God already has told Israel how they can specifically honor Him in their worship, now He specifically spells out how they are to conduct themselves in a God honoring way in the civil setting.

This section focuses on three main aspects of civil life. First, God enacts laws which make sure that His people are lead by godly exemplary leadership. Second, laws are given to ensure that justice and equity reign among people. Third, laws are given which regulate warfare. As you examine these civil laws this week, consider how vital of a role that government plays in the outworking of God's plan. Notice how concerned that God is with providing leadership which will accurately represent Him and His will to His people.

Day 1

Read Deuteronomy 16:18-17:13

1. What was Israel to appoint in every city? What kind of men were these to be? What activity were they to abstain from? Why?

2. The judges of the city had the responsibility to make sure that idolaters were executed. What was needed as proof that such idolatry was taking place? Why do you think that God made this a necessary rule before execution took place?

Day 2

Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20

1. This passage deals specifically with the conduct of what governmental leader?
2. At this time, Israel did not have a king. However, God knew that the time would come when Israel would desire to have one. What passage of Scripture records Israel's request for her first king? Who was this king?
3. Did Israel's king have to be an Israelite? Why do you think this was important?
4. What 3 things was Israel's king not to do? Can you name some kings who broke some or all of these laws?

5. What was a new king to write out for himself? What was he to do with this? How often was he to do it? What three benefits would he receive for doing this?

6. Daily exposure to God's law was to keep the king obedient, humble, and blessed. Thank God that His word is powerful to change the heart and alter behavior. Know that if you too commit to reading His Word daily, it will greatly impact your life. Meditate on Psalm 119:9-11 while you contemplate how gracious God is to give us such a cleansing agent.

"How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:9-11).

Day 3

Read Deuteronomy 18:1-22

1. Having already given instruction regulating judges and kings, here God gives laws on how the priests are to conduct themselves. Since the Levites were not given any land to grow food and raise animals on, how were they to be supported?

5. What was the basic test to see if a prophet was the true prophet or a counterfeit?

6. Thank God for providing spiritual leadership for His people and for giving them strict qualifications to insure their competency. Think of ways that you can tangibly minister to those who spiritually minister to you.

If you mess around with occultist paraphernalia, repent of such practices and destroy them before God destroys you. This law is not limited to Israel, but is universal as seen from the fact that God destroyed entire nations who had no covenant with Him for such practices.

Praise God that He has provided the ultimate Prophet whom we can be certain not only speaks the true Word of God, but is God Himself.

Day 4

Read Deuteronomy 19:1-21

1. In our study of Deuteronomy, we have already briefly covered the "Cities of Refuge." This passage deals with the purpose of these cities in much more detail. What was the difference between a manslayer and a murderer?

6. Do these laws seem too lenient or too strict? Explain your answer.

7. Ask God to help you live a life that loves your neighbor as yourself. Ask for His forgiveness for the times that you have treated people unfairly and judged situations before you heard all the facts. Thank Him that he never judges unfairly or is ignorant of any facts. Thank Him that he does not deal with us as we deal with others. Today, start treating others the way that you would have them, and God, to treat you.

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

Day 5

Read Deuteronomy 20:1-20

1. Israel's enemies were superior to them both in military experience and in number. In what were they to place their confidence in a battle against such a formidable foe? How could they know that this would help?

2. What was the role of the priests in battle?

3. Do you ever go through times when it seems as if your circumstances are far too difficult for you to handle? In such times, where should your confidence come from? Give an example of such a situation and write down how God was faithful to sustain you through it. Think of this example often to remind you that the same God who was faithful in the past will be faithful in the future.

