



# MONDAY 21 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 16:18 – 17:7

### Plug In...

Israel appoints officials to a governmental role for the purpose of justice. Verse 18 calls them to judge with a “righteous judgement”. Judgement and justice are the same word in Hebrew. So, the judgement is an action that decides what is right or wrong. The judgement enacts a law. *Righteous* means straight in Hebrew. Therefore, the activity of justice within Israel is: *judgement in accordance with what is right*.

It is not the task of individuals to adjudicate and punish, it is deferred to God through the judges. Still, such officials are open to corruption. The ideal painted is fairness of process for all humans. An example of fair process is in [17:2-7](#).

### Chew It Over...

Listen to any contemporary political debate and everything is framed as a justice issue: taxes, equality, identity, life, liberty, happiness. Everyone is talking about their inalienable *rights* as the basis for justice. By the term *rights* people are identifying the inherent worth of a person. So, laws should be brought into place to protect and preserve these rights. It sounds good and proper, but is that the right starting point? What happens when one person’s rights bump into another? For example, will the right for same-sex couples to marry trump religious freedom rights?

Rights are important because human worth is important. But is that the starting point for making judgements? What does today’s reading suggest as the starting point for judgement decisions?

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Lord God, please help us to seek justice and enact justice when we find ourselves in roles of influence.



# TUESDAY 22 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 17:8-13

### Plug In...

Doing the activity of justice in a fallen world does not roll out with clear-cut cases. Within Israel, cases can be escalated to a 'high court'. This final court is at the temple with the involvement of the priests. At the local level they may understand one does not kill. But some cases get complex: Was it pre-mediated murder, or manslaughter? If manslaughter, was it completely accidental, or due to negligence, and if so, what level? When it is an assault: Was it deliberate injury, accidental, or criminal negligence? The need to escalate complex cases to the priest (which is probably taking it to God directly – see [Exodus 28:29-30.](#)) shows how serious justice is to characterise the Land.

### Chew It Over...

A lot of justice legislation spelling out punishment for sin in Israel is retributive (e.g., [Deuteronomy 19:15-21](#)). What other function does enacting punishment have here?

Today, many look at our justice system and ask what is the goal or purpose of punishment? When you think about our justice systems, what principles do you derive from how God does justice that you would like to see? Why? Where do you see our current judicial system at – does it approximate this more or less?

### Prayer Suggestion

Ask the Lord for a passion for justice in our community. Ask for wisdom on how to seek that and advocate that in Australia where our government is secular.



## WEDNESDAY 23 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

### Read: Deuteronomy 17:14-20

#### **Plug In...**

We will see that in chapters 16-18 different offices within the 'government' for Israel are appointed by God. All the civil rules in Israel get framed around these officials (e.g. judges, Levites, priests, prophets). In the centre of these is the provision for a king. It is surprising the category of king essentially gets sidelined. The king is not essential to the justice system. He only comes into existence when the people start wanting to be *like* other nations.

#### **Chew It Over...**

Power concentrated into one person is high-risk. What things does Moses show that Israel risk by having a king? What is the key to being a good king?

The king's role essentially was to be the primary model of what it is to be a true Israelite. We only see Jesus fulfil this ideal perfectly.

Are you a leader in any capacity in the church (or family, or work)? What tools does this passage suggest you really need to lead others? Leadership is more about absorbing God's Word than any other management talent. Talent will be admired, but character is what pays off.

#### **Prayer Suggestion**

Lord help us resist the temptation to lay down your Word. We learn of our own human nature as we watch the kings – make us different leaders in our spheres. Help us to model Jesus to our peers, colleagues, family, brethren.



THURSDAY 24 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 18:1-8

### Plug In...

The laws throughout Deuteronomy keep reminding Israel that the Levites are landless. For the Levite to survive, indeed prosper, they are directly dependent on the LORD. In this dynamic, the landless Levite models the type of relationship the LORD desires: close dependence on Him alone. Should broader Israel neglect the Levites it shows disobedience and reveals they are not depending on the LORD.

### Chew It Over...

Think where you might be tempted to shirk your God-given responsibilities because you don't believe God will provide for you?

What things in your life can you point to as signposts that your dependence for survival is rooted in something else other than God?

Would you see missionaries as in a similar category to the landless Levites? May we not neglect them. What can we learn from them?

### Prayer Suggestion

Pray for the Turveys, the Wrights, the Gorries and the Pearsons. Ask that they will depend on the Lord Jesus for all they need to do His work. Pray that *The Lakes* and other support churches will not forget, nor be behind in supporting these people so they might not suffer unnecessarily. Pray that the Lord will bring glory to His name through their self-sacrifice and hard work.



FRIDAY 25 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 18:9-14

### Plug In...

Moses seems worried that Israel could revert to pagan practices. This warning is for when they are in the Land. Israel, although in the Land, will still be in a context where other voices can be heard, will tempt. Israel each day are still on a journey. They are to listen to God's Word and respond.

### Chew It Over...

Israel are going to be tempted to search for God's voice outside of how God has chosen to reveal Himself. They will dabble in pagan mechanisms to get God to speak.

We should first remember that God chooses to speak to us, we can't manipulate Him to speak, but He comes down to us so we can hear His voice.

Second, passages like today's get us to evaluate when someone says they "feel led..." or even "God told me..." A filter has already been provided in [Deuteronomy 13:1-5](#). If someone goes off to follow another god, or to follow Jesus in a way that contradicts what God has already said in Scripture it is a 'dodgy' word.

Today's passage shows how God doesn't speak, tomorrow we learn more of how God *does* speak.

### Prayer Suggestion

Thank the Lord for coming and speaking to us in His mercy. When you read the Bible next, speak to God as a response to Him speaking to you.



The Lakes

## WEEKEND 26-27 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

### Read: Deuteronomy 18:15-22 & Acts 3:17-23

#### Plug In...

God will raise up future prophets after Moses. Israel are to evaluate the words of the prophets. The test for words spoken in the name of the LORD is, does it come to pass?

The context has prophets like Moses. He is not making mere predictions, nor speaking of individual details, but announcing God's future covenant and saving plans.

Subsequent revelation is tightly connected to the plans God already has revealed.

[Deuteronomy 34:10](#) recognises prophets have come since Moses, but none have been of the calibre of Moses. [NB: Moses is distinguished, for he brought the opening revelation of this covenant; he also is the only one that spoke with God without the mediation of a dream, vision – instead he spoke “face-to-face” ([Numbers 12:3-8](#)).]

#### Chew It Over...

The comment from Deuteronomy 34:10 views Moses as the first in a succession of prophets that would culminate in an individual.

Peter applies the “like me” criteria to the individual Jesus ([Acts 3:17-23](#)). Jesus is the promised final prophet ([Hebrews 1:1-4](#)).

Does God still speak today? Yes! When we listen to Jesus we are hearing God.

Does God speak directly to us? Yes! Even though written down from a time past, Jesus' words are His direct words to us today ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)). Want to hear God speak 'live'? Then pick up your Bible ([Hebrews 4:12](#)).

Is there new revelation? No! But, the church is an eschatological prophetic people (i.e. end-time people of God promised to be filled with the Spirit – see [Acts 2:1-22](#) and its quote of [Joel 2](#))! God wonderfully causes His people today to be inspired to speak to one another in order to bring glory to Jesus ([1 Corinthians 12:3](#)) and to build people up to love and obey Jesus ([1 Corinthians 14:3, 24-25](#)).

On-going prophecy in the church, post the final great prophet Jesus, is God's Spirit enlivening people to:

(1) love, worship, and give glory to Jesus!

(2) evaluate by God's Word, the present application of God's past words into people's lives today ([1 Corinthians 14:29-33](#)).

If we are after something spectacular and different we are probably heading in the wrong direction ([Deuteronomy 18:9-14](#)). If the words we are hearing are not focussing on God's big saving and kingdom plans, then that doesn't seem to fit the pattern of content of the prophecy we see in Scripture.

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Ask the Lord to help you read and absorb His voice through His Word. Ask that you would listen carefully. Ask for discernment to evaluate the voices in the church. Pray that you too are gifted to participate in the building up of others with the Word of God by His Spirit.