

Text: Dt 17.1-20

THEOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY¹

1. **Consider:** a review of God’s faithfulness (1.6–4.40)
2. **Covenant:** an exposition of the law (5–26)

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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3. **Commence:** preparations for renewing the covenant (27.1–28.68)
4. **Commit:** an exhortation to obedience (29.2–30.20)

The heading in the NASB for Dt 17 is “Administration of Justice.” From this suggestion I derived the title for this lesson, “Governing in the Land.”

Let’s identify the themes of each paragraph once again:

- (16.21-17.1) **Purity of worship**
- (2-7) **Punishment of false worship**
- (8-13) **Courts of appeal and final judgement**
- (14-17) **Limitations of Royal authority**
- (18-20) **Requirement of Royal piety**

We discussed verse 1 a bit last week, the whole paragraph is related to worship. Idolatry is forbidden, but so is insincerity.

The following paragraph establishes the death penalty for idolatry. However, the whole section establishes what has come to be known as “due process” in our justice system. Which references describe aspects of “due process”?

1. (4) **You shall inquire thoroughly**
2. (6) **You must have two or more witnesses**
3. (7) **Witnesses must be accountable: if their testimony is false, they become murderers**

¹ Adapted from an outline in Lawrence O Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion*, electronic ed. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), 117.

The next paragraph (8-13) speaks of appealing cases beyond the local courts to a kind of supreme court.

What would precipitate transferring a case to a higher court? **Inability of local judges to come to a decision**

Where would the higher court be located? **In the place of God's choosing (i.e., where the Tabernacle was)**

Two officials are designated as the higher court. Who are they? (9) **The Levitical priest [presumably the high priest] or the Judge in those days [anticipating the judges who arose during the period of judges]**

How should the nation take the decisions of the higher court? (10-11) **They shall take them by faith as from God and act upon them immediately**

What penalty attached to those who would not accept the decision of the highest judges? (12) **They were subject to the death penalty themselves.**

What is the purpose of all these judicial procedures? (13) **To bring about the submission and faithfulness of the people at large.**

God's legislation concerning kings (14-20)

God intended to give Israel a king in his own good time (Gen 17.6, 16, 35.11, 49.10; Num 23.21, 24.7). Later, the nation ran ahead of God's will, demanding a king near the end of Samuel's judgeship. Ultimately, they would get God's intended king in David, but only after a troubled period under the people's choice, Saul.

What qualities must a monarch of Israel possess?

1. (15) **He must be an Israelite**
2. (16) **He must not build up a large army, especially in any alliance with Egypt**
3. (17) **He must not multiply wives**
4. (17) **He must not amass a personal fortune (lest he become corrupt)**
5. (18) **He must personally copy out the law of God (probably the covenant text of Deuteronomy at least)**
6. (19) **He must faithfully read out of God's law every day**
7. (20) **He must not exalt himself above his countrymen**

If a king followed this kind of life, what sort of king would he be? **One who feared God and ruled for the benefit of the people**