



Deut 17:14-20
The Good King

14 " When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,'

15 "you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.

16 "But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.'

17 "Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

18 " Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.

19 "And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes,

20 "that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

When God brought his people out of Egypt, he gave them a leader, Moses, but He did not give them the kind of leader that Egypt and the nations of Canaan had, that is a king. Indeed for hundreds of years after they entered into the promised land, the Israelites did not have a king, they had Judges. Prophet leaders raised up specifically by God to command, instruct, judge and often liberate his people. Their having Judges and not kings was another way they were separated from the nations. They were during this phase intended to be a direct theocracy, ruled by God directly through leaders he would appoint.

But the Lord knew that the day would come when the people would say, no more Judges, give us a king so that we can be like the other people. Indeed this time was prophetically foreseen in the book of Genesis, for instance in Genesis 35:11 when God promised Jacob that kings would come from his body, and most importantly in Jacob's prophetic blessing of Judah in Genesis 49:10 when he prophesied that his would be the tribe of Great David from which the kings of Israel came, and most importantly that his would be the tribe from which Great David's Greater Son, the Messiah, Jesus, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, would spring "***The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.***"

But there is a problem with Kings, they tended to be intensely worldly, and the more powerful they were the more worldly they tended to be, and so there is double meaning to the phrase "***a king over me like all the nations that are around me***"

God's people must realize that they will either love the Lord their God, or love the world, because they could not love both. They were also warned that to choose love of the world is a foolish choice because not only is it personally destructive, it is a choice to love that which is fleeting and temporal, treasure

that we cannot hold on to, over that heavenly treasure which lasts forever. The Apostle John warned in his first epistle (and kids an *epistle* is a letter):

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

The more exalted in wealth and status a person is, the more likely they are to be ensnared by the world, and the three things that John warned of, **the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life**. And perhaps to no one is this more applicable than kings and world leaders. It has ever been the case that very few kings and rulers were men of strong Christian faith. A fact that Paul acknowledged when he wrote:

1 Cor. 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

That of course is still true in our day. In my time in Washington I found that by and large our proud mighty leaders and those waiting in the wings who desired to be our leaders, regardless of party, were more often than were themselves ruled by *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life* and were at best spiritual pygmies. One can't help but lament the fact that more often than not, the men and women who steer the course of our nation wouldn't even qualify for membership in this church, let alone the leadership.

But here in these verses that we might call God's *LEX REX* his "law of the King" we see set out his law for those who would be the kings of his people. This was important that they not be like all the other nations, and because it was God's intention that their earthly kings would by types pointing towards the King of Kings, Jesus. In particular he gave them 7 Sound laws that were to be the **LAW** that governed their **KINGS**

1) The first of these is an overarching law that is often overlooked, was simply that **GOD** and the **LAW** of **GOD** was over **THE KING**. He was not autonomous, he was to remember to fear the **LORD** his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes. Sadly, this law was often forsaken by the Kings of Judah and Israel and they became tyrants acting and governing according their own desires.

2) The King **WOULD BE THE KING THE LORD CHOSE** – HE was therefore chosen by God and anointed by His Prophets – Messiah means "The Lord's Anointed King" and this was why for instance, David, and not Jonathan succeeded Saul.

3) That the King would be an Israelite a member of the Covenant Community and not a foreigner: He commands that he should be taken from the people, and excludes foreigners, because, if they had been admitted, a door was opened to apostasy; for each would have tried to force upon them his native gods, and true religion would have been persecuted by the force and threatenings of the royal power.

(This actually happened when Jezebel, a Sidonian, became Queen in Israel and was able to get her weak-willed husband Ahab to adopt and enforce Baal worship)

1 Kings 16:30 Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him.

31 And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.

32 Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

33 And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

Brother because: “one from among thy brethren, that he may be a type of Christ, who is bone of our bone”,

4) Not to multiply horses – Return to Egypt to get them. They were not to do this or trade with them.

NOR must he multiply horses for war, **lest he should trust too much to them,**

Psalm 20:6 Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand.

7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

8 They have bowed down and fallen; But we have risen and stand upright.

9 Save, LORD! May the King answer us when we call.

Sadly this was something that Solomon did: 1 Kings 10:26 And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.

5) Not to multiply wives – “that kings were not to multiply wives to themselves, lest their heart should turn away from what was right,” as was the case with Solomon; for, from being too devoted to his wives, and being deceived by the snares of women, he fell into idolatry

Calvin identifies another reason that a king should not have too many wives: “***And assuredly it can scarcely fail to happen, that when many wives beset a man, they must render his mind effeminate, and stifle in him all his manly good sense.***”

6) Not to multiply wealth – Moreover, He forbids kings to heap up treasures, because it cannot be done without rapine and violent exactions; whilst, at the same time, *wealth encourages them audaciously to undertake unjust wars, incites them to gross dissipation, and at length hurries them forward to tyrannical excesses.*

TAXES and OPPRESSION– Again SOLOMON, one of the complaints of the delegation sent to Rehoboam

Wealth inevitably becomes an IDOL in and of itself: Luke ***18:24 And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!***

25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

7) HE MUST *COPY for Himself and Follow the Law of God* –first of all, in general, that they may learn to fear

God and keep His statutes; and,

secondly, lest, being lifted up with pride and vanity, they should despise and oppress their brethren. And the word brethren is used designedly, lest they should imagine that the law of brotherhood was abolished, because they were set over the whole people; but rather that they should study to cherish all as members (of themselves.)

When a man turns aside he becomes a tyrant - Again, it is afterwards repeated, lest they should “turn aside to the right hand or the left;”

finally God reminds them that these rules would serve the kings, for that they thus would prolong their reigns

Our LEADERS in the church should be the men God selects:

and the people are reprov'd for not observing this law, Hos. 8:4: They have set up kings but not by me.

In all cases God's choice, if we can but know it, should direct, determine, and overrule ours.

4 "They set up kings, but not by Me; They made princes, but I did not acknowledge them. From their silver and gold They made idols for themselves -- That they might be cut off.

WE Too SHOULD Avoid Bad Influences/Marriages - We should take heed of that commerce or conversation by which we are in danger of being drawn into sin.

We Should make GOD'S LAW our main interest David confessed Psalm 119:72 The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of coins of gold and silver.

Is God's law better to *us* than gold or silver?

“The affairs of his kingdom both at home and abroad call for a large share of his time and thoughts, and yet he must write himself a copy of the law. Let not those who call themselves men of business think that this will excuse them from making religion their business”

but he must read therein all the days of his life, v. 19. It is not enough to have Bibles, but we must use them, use them daily, as the duty and necessity of everyday require:

The word of God is not designed merely to be an entertaining subject of speculation, but to be a commanding rule of conversation.

Let Us remember that service and not being served is enjoined upon us:

Phil. 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.