

PARSHA POINTS

TREASURING HIS WORD

Let's do a quick overview of the Torah portion:

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| Monday: | Deut. 16:18-17:20 | Right-rulings regarding judges, kings and idolaters |
| Tuesday: | Deut. 18 | Right-rulings regarding Lewites, abominable practices and prophets; Promises of the Prophet who is to come |
| Wednesday: | Deut. 19 | Right-rulings regarding escaped murderers, property boundaries and witnesses |
| Thursday: | Deut. 20 | Right-rulings regarding warfare |
| Friday: | Deut. 21:1-9 | Right-rulings for removing guilt for an unsolved murder |

In this week's Parsha Pearls lesson, Mosheh continues to prepare this next generation for heading into the land of Kena'an without him. Here he instructs the people on laws dealing with their leaders; they are to inquire of them and follow their decisions. Now, let's read selected verses in *Deuteronomy 16-21.

*Please note that some subject matter in these chapters is graphic in content. We recommend that parents choose which parts you want to discuss with your children. The main point of this lesson is to show that Yahweh appointed leaders in Yisra'el, to whom the people could appeal for leadership and guidance.

PEARL SEEKING

Judges and Officers

- Appoint judges and officers *within all your gates*, which Yahweh your Elohim is giving you, according to your tribes. They shall judge the people with righteous right-ruling - 16:18

Priests, Lewites and Judges

- When any matter of strife *within your gates* arises which is too hard for you to judge between (17:8):
 - blood and blood
 - plea and plea
 - stroke and stroke
- Then you shall (17:8-9):
 - rise and go up to the *place which Yahweh your Elohim chooses*
 - approach the priests, the Lewites, and the judge who is in those days, and inquire about matters too hard to judge



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PEARL SEEKING

- They shall declare to you the word of right-ruling - 17:9
- You shall (17:10-11):
 - do according to the word which they declare to you from that *place which Yahweh chooses*
 - guard to do according to all that they instruct you
 - do according to the Torah in which they teach you
 - do according to the right-ruling which they say to you
 - NOT turn to the right or to the left from the word which they declare to you
- And the man who acts arrogantly, so as NOT to listen to the priest who stands to serve there before Yahweh your Elohim, or to the judge, that man shall die. So you shall purge the evil from Yisra'el. And let all the people hear and fear, and no longer do arrogantly - 17:12-13

Sovereigns (Kings)

- When you come to the land which Yahweh your Elohim is giving you, and shall possess it and shall dwell in it, and you shall say, 'Let me set a sovereign (melek) over me like all the gentiles that are around me' - 17:14
- You shall (17:15):
 - certainly set a sovereign over you whom Yahweh your Elohim shall choose
 - set a sovereign over you from among your brothers
 - NOT set a foreigner over you, who is NOT your brother
- The sovereign is NOT to (17:16-17):
 - increase horses for himself
 - cause the people to return to Mitsrayim to increase horses (susim), for Yahweh had said to them, "Do NOT return that way again"
 - increase wives (nashim) for himself, lest his heart turn away
 - greatly increase silver and gold for himself
- When the sovereign sits on the throne of his reign, he shall (17:18-20):
 - write for himself a copy of this Torah (teaching and instruction) in a book, from the one before the priests, the Lewites, and it shall be with him
 - read it all the days of his life, so that he learns to fear Yahweh his Elohim
 - guard all the Words of this Torah and these laws, to do them, so that his heart is NOT lifted up above his brothers, and so as NOT to turn aside from the command, right or left, so that he prolongs his days in his reign, he and his children, in the midst of Yisra'el

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Prophets

- Yahweh your Elohim shall raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brothers (18:15-16):
 - listen to Him, according to all you asked of Yahweh your Elohim in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me NOT hear again the voice of Yahweh my Elohim, nor let me see this great fire any more, lest I die'
- And Yahweh said (18:17-20):
 - what they have spoken is good
 - I shall raise up for them a Prophet like you out of the midst of their brothers
 - I shall put My Words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him
 - the man who does NOT listen to My Words which He speaks in My Name, I require it of him
 - the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My Name, which I have NOT commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other mighty ones, even that prophet shall die
- And when you say in your heart, 'How do we know the word which Yahweh has NOT spoken?' - when the prophet speaks in the Name of Yahweh and the word is not, or comes NOT, that is the word which Yahweh has NOT spoken, the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. Do NOT be afraid of him - 18:21-22
- When anyone hates his neighbor, and shall lie in wait for him and rise against him and smite the life from him so that he dies, then he shall flee to 1 of these cities, and the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and give him into the hand of the revenger of blood, and he shall die. Your eye shall NOT pardon him, but you shall purge the blood of innocent blood from Yisra'el, so that it might be well with you - 19:11-13

Yahweh, Priests and Judges

- When a malicious witness rises up against any man to accuse him of turning aside, then both men who have the dispute shall stand before (19:16-17):
 - Yahweh
 - the priests
 - the judges who serve in those days
- And the judges shall diligently search and see if the witness is a false witness, who has falsely accused his brother, then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from your midst. And let the rest hear and fear, and never again do this evil matter in your midst - 19:18-20

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- And let your eye NOT pardon (19:21):
 - life for life
 - eye for eye
 - tooth for tooth
 - hand for hand
 - foot for foot
- When you go out to battle against your enemies, and shall see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do NOT be afraid of them, for Yahweh your Elohim, who brought you up from the land of Mitsrayim, is with you - 20:1
- And it shall be, when you draw near to the battle, that the priest shall come and speak to the people, and shall say to them (20:2-4):
 - Hear, O Yisra'el: You are drawing near today to battle with your enemies
 - Do NOT let your heart faint
 - Do NOT fear, or tremble, or be afraid before them
 - Yahweh your Elohim is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you

Officers

- And the officers shall speak to the people, saying (20:5-8):
 - Who is the man who has built a new house and has NOT dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it
 - Who is the man who has planted a vineyard and has NOT begun to use it? Let him also go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man should begin to use it
 - Who is the man who is engaged to a woman and has NOT taken her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man take her
 - Who is the man who is afraid and tender of heart? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brothers faint like his heart
- It shall be, when the officers have finished speaking to the people, that they shall appoint commanders of the divisions to lead the people - 20:9

Elders and Judges

- When anyone is found slain, lying in the field in the land which Yahweh your Elohim is giving you to possess, and it is NOT known who smote him, then your elders and your judges shall go out, and they shall measure the distance from the slain man to the cities round about - 21:1-2

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- And it shall be that the elders of the city nearest to the slain man shall (21:3-4):
 - take a heifer (female cow) which has NOT been worked and which has NOT pulled with a yoke, and the elders of that city shall
 - bring the heifer down to a wadi with flowing water, which is neither ploughed nor sown
 - break the heifer's neck there in the wadi

Priests

- And the priests, the sons of Lewi, shall come near, for Yahweh your Elohim has chosen them to serve Him and to bless in the Name of Yahweh, and by their mouth every strife and every stroke is tried - 21:5

Elders

- And let all the elders of that city nearest to the slain man (21:6-8):
 - wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the wadi
 - answer to Yahweh:
 - Our hands have NOT shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen it
 - Forgive Your people Yisra'el, whom You have redeemed
 - Do NOT allow innocent blood in the midst of Your people Yisra'el
- And the blood-guilt shall be pardoned to them. Thus you purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst when you do what is right in the eyes of Yahweh - 21:1-9

DIGGING DEEPER

Parents/Teachers may choose to use these prompts for further discussion of the Torah portion. This section would be ideal for the Katan B and Gadol students for deeper study.

- This parsha talks a lot about human government (judges, elders, officers, priests, Lewites, kings). Discuss the job description of these positions as well as how they are appointed. Are any appointed by the people? Talk about these various offices and give Scriptural examples of both bad leadership and good leadership.
- Although the 12 tribes would be operating more independently of one another in the land of Kena'an, discuss how Yahweh still expected His people to follow His commands.



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DIGGING DEEPER

- In Deuteronomy 16:18, it says that these judges and officers were to judge the people with righteous right-ruling (mishpat tzadek). Find the Scriptural instructions that these leaders were to follow. Who is the ultimate and final righteous right-ruler?
- Beginning in 17:8, we find instruction about matters that may seem too difficult for a local court to judge. These hard matters were to be brought to a *place which Yahweh your Elohim chooses*. Could it be that Yahweh set in place a higher court system, consisting of priests and Levites who understood the law better and could make the ultimate call in cases that were beyond the scope of a tribe? Once a case was brought here, what was the all-encompassing command? (17:11)
- In this parsha we see that Yahweh places upon kings these 4 boundaries: horses, wives, silver and gold. Where did the best horses come from? Why would a king want multiple wives? Could it be to make political alliances? How does a king get wealth? Would taxing the people be within the realm of possibility? Can you recall any kings who did NOT heed this instruction? What were their fates?
- The first duty for a king is to take the time to write all the words of the Torah for himself. What a beautiful instruction Yahweh gave to His leaders! Discuss how different our government would be if every president (ruler) did this.
- Discuss Yahweh's instruction that the people listen to the prophets as He puts His words in their mouths. Did Yisra'el listen to the prophets?
- A false witness incurred the just punishment of life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand and foot for foot. Do you think that just knowing this consequence might deter someone from committing such a crime?
- Discuss the 4 sound reasons for excusing a warrior from fighting in a battle (20:5-8)
- Discuss blood-guilt and the atonement for the shedding of innocent blood. Notice how the leadership themselves had to do the atoning for an unsolved crime. Does Yahweh take murdering seriously? Is murdering the same as killing?

