

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

DEUTERONOMY 17-21

Once, a golfer needed to make a forty foot putt to stay ahead of his competitors. As he looked it over a stranger appeared beside him, and said, "I'll make sure you sink that putt, but it'll cost you a quarter of your sex life?" Well, he was a really competitive golfer. He said, "*why not...*" The long putt rolled right into the cup.

Later in the round he had a four iron into a par 5, and needed to make up a few shots. *Oh, if I could eagle this hole...* The same stranger walks up and asks, "Would you be willing to give up another quarter of your sex life to make an eagle?" The guy thought for a minute, and said, "*Oh, why not...*" He hit his shot, it bounced onto the green, and rolled right into the cup.

On the final hole, a par 3, the golfer was a shot behind. He needed a hole-in-one. Again, the stranger showed up. He said, "I'll help you make a hole-in-one, but you'll have to give up the rest of your sex life?" This golfer was an intense competitor, who couldn't stand to lose. He said, "*Okay.*" His shot was the winning ace!

As the victorious golfer was walking off the course the stranger appeared, and said, "Let me introduce myself, I'm the devil, and from now on you'll have no sex life." The golfer smiled, and said, "Nice to meet you. My name is Father O'Malley." The moral of the story is... **some sacrifices are no sacrifice at all.**

This is what Moses addresses in 17:1, "**You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God a bull or sheep which has any blemish or defect, for that is an abomination to the LORD your God.**" You'll donate to the Goodwill that old threadbare sweater, or a dress that's out of fashion, *stuff you'd throw away anyway*. But when we give a sacrifice to God, He wants our best not our leftovers!

Once, a little boy had two five dollar bills. His mom suggested he give one to God, *but he couldn't decide which one*. As he walked to church, one of the bills slipped from his hand and fell down the storm drain. He looked up to heaven, and prayed, "**God, I'm sorry I lost Your \$5 bill.**" When you give to God, *give your best!*

Remember, Deuteronomy was God's instructions to Israel for how they should order their society once the second generation had entered the land of Canaan.

Those instructions continue in verse 2, "**If there is found among you, within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you, a man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing His covenant, who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or moon or any of the**

host of heaven, which I have not commanded, and it is told you, and you hear of it, then you shall inquire diligently.” Idolatry and astrology - any form of the occult - was a serious issue to God. If a report of this surfaces don't gloss over it, *check it out*.

“And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination has been committed in Israel, then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing, and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones.” That's how a person is usually stoned with stones... In ancient Israel idolatry was a capital crime. Its punishment was death by stoning. An incorrigible person - *that is, one who won't change* - wasn't tolerated, but was stoned.

That was the OT, thankfully we're now under the NT. The blood of Jesus and the power of God's Spirit is now available to soften the hardest sinner. Today, God deals with idolators differently... He saves them, not stones them. *Here's the point, how God deals with the sinner has changed, His attitude toward the sin hasn't.*

But there were rules for enacting the death penalty. Verse 6, “Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.” It took more than a single accusation by one person. There had to be corroborating testimony.

1 Timothy 5:19 tells us the same is true for an accusation against an elder in the church. The charge has to be substantiated by two or three witnesses.

“The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil person from among you.” These witnesses should be the first to throw stones. *This was a reality check*. Their testimony is about to end a man's life; they should have to pull the trigger. It forced them to be certain of his guilt.

Verses 8-13 set up an appeals court. In hard, controversial cases, town leaders could take the matter to the priests at the Tabernacle, who would help render a judgment. *But if you appealed your case to the priests; then you were bound to live by their decision*. If you didn't, you were put to death, *which made you think twice about appealing your case in the first place!*

Folks do this to the pastor. They come for counsel; then ignore what he says. I'm not saying they should be put to death, *but maybe flogged with a wet noodle*. If you ask for his counsel; at least take it seriously.

The end of Deuteronomy 17 is a strange text, since it anticipates a development that was not God's will. God wanted to be Israel's king, but when they entered Canaan, and looked at the nations around them, they all had a man on the throne. *Israel too wanted a king*.

They thought it would be easier to trust in someone they could see. So God gave them what they wanted. For 450 miserable years sinful and prideful men sat on Israel's throne. The nation swapped *virtue* for *visibility*.

But even before the choice was made, God in His foreknowledge knew what would happen, so He gave Moses instructions to regulate this human monarchy.

Verse 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,' "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." First, he's to be Hebrew by birth. It's interesting the US Constitution borrows this stipulation, our president also has to be born a native American.

And in the next verses Israel's king is forbidden to accumulate three items: *horses, or a cavalry - wives, or a harem - and silver and gold, or financial reserves*. This put a limit on the king's executive powers. Evidently, God does not believe in big government.

Verse 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.'" Horses were the military machinery of the day. Yet in **war time** the king was to trust in God and His power - not in his cavalry.

"Neither shall he multiply wives for himself..." In **peace time** God wanted the king to strengthen his ties with heaven, not foreign nations. In antiquity treaties were ratified when one king gave his daughter in marriage to another king. *You were less likely to attack an in-law*. But this was not God's desire for Israel. God wanted Israel's king to put his confidence in his relationship with God, not in his political alliances.

And the great danger of the Hebrew king marrying a pagan princess was her evil influence. Verse 17 Moses says, "lest his heart turn away." Pagan women worship pagan gods, and throughout Israel's long history it was often foreign queens who led their king astray and into idolatry. In the Prophet Elijah's day, King Ahab married a Phoenician princess, Jezebel, who indoctrinated the northern kingdom of Israel in the worship of Baal.

So the king was forbidden to accumulate *Broncos, babes... and bucks*. Verse 17, "nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself." In **war time** the temptation was horses. In **peace time** it was wives. **At all times** the temptation is money. We tend to trust in *our money* rather than *our God!*... Billy Graham once said, "The three greatest dangers to every pastor are power, women, and money." Most fallen pastors

are brought down by one of the three... All men need to beware of the *lure of power, lust of women, and love of money*. Trust in God - not **Broncos, babes, or bucks**.

Notice verse 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.**" The king is not allowed to hire this job out, or delegate it to a scribe or some subordinate. He's to pen a copy of the Scriptures with his own hand.

The king was to be personally acquainted with the Bible. And this should be true of anyone who leads...

A dad can't delegate Bible study and note-taking to his wife. He needs to be personally absorbed in God's Word. *God wants His Word in the heart of His leader.*

"**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, 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.**" Note, **the king is not above the law!** He's to be immersed in God's Word for a lifetime. It'll keep him humble, and guide his steps.

Chapter 18 covers some ground we've already covered. The priests and Levites were not to inherit tribal lands. Their inheritance was the opportunity to serve the Lord. They would eat from Israel's sacrifices.

Verse 9, "**When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire...**" This referred to the horrid worship of **Molech**. One translation of this name "**Molech**" is "**offering of a man,**" or child sacrifice.

The idol, Molech, had the face of an ox and body of a man. He was a fertility god, and all manner of lewd, perverse acts were carried out to appease him. The most severe was the offering up of Canaanite children.

The idol was hollowed out brass. A fire was lit inside the image - the medal heated until glowing hot - then a baby was laid in Molech's outstretched arms. Drums were pounded to drown out the baby's screams.

Human sacrifice sounds so barbaric - far removed from modern culture - until we compare it to today's abortion industry. We're sacrificing our children to the gods of sexual pleasure, while a liberal media beats the drum and drowns out their silent screams. *We want the pleasure of sex without its responsibilities.* Don't think our society would never tolerate child sacrifice!

In verse 10 Moses also warns against, “one who practices witchcraft.” The modern version is *Wicca*. Its adherents claim to be *white witches*, as opposed to *black witches*. Supposedly, they harness spiritual power and use it for good. White witches deify nature. They believe there’s a *life force* permeating all things. They’re usually feminists and worship Gaia, the Earth Goddess. But they reject and despise the one, true God. Thus, throughout the Bible God forbids witchcraft.

Also beware of the person who is “a soothsayer.” This is an astrologer, one who consults the stars for supernatural guidance. According to a 2024 Forbes online article 58% of younger Americans - Gen Z and Millennials - check their horoscope once a week. 72% rely on astrology to make major life decisions... Satan is replacing confidence in God with a sinister substitute. The Law of Moses prohibited astrology.

It also warns of “one who interprets omens” - tarot card readers, palm readers, crystal ball seers, tea-leaf readers - they’re all forbidden... “Or a sorcerer” This is a person who uses drugs to connect spiritually. Again, they’re not connecting with God, but with demons.

“Or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.” Mediums and Channelers supposedly stand between the psychic world and physical world, and communicate with the dead. In reality they’re being manipulated by demons.

The Bible prohibits any attempt to access supernatural power or derive divine guidance apart from direct communication with God. Bypass the God of Israel - the God of the Bible - and it’s forbidden. You’re opening yourself up to demonic influences.

Verse 12, “For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.” The Hebrew term “abomination” means “disgusting.” The ultimate insult to God is to bypass Him, and rely on other forces for guidance. This is why He’s driving the Canaanites out of the land. *And now if Israel becomes guilty, does she deserve a lesser fate?*

Verse 13, “You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.”

During Israel’s wilderness wanderings she had but one leader, Moses. But now when she comes into the land she’ll develop three types of leadership. There will be **kings**, and **priests**, and **prophets**. And Moses has something to say to each... In Chapter 17 he spoke to kings. In the first half of Chapter 18 to priests. And now the

chapter closes with him speaking to prophets.

Verse 15, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren." Moses was a prophet, a spokesman for God. And just before Moses died he predicted God would send another prophet like himself. This other Prophet will also be a Hebrew - and will work miracles like Moses.

"Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' "And the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.'" In Acts 3:22 Peter refers to Jesus as the Prophet that Moses said would come...

In John 5:46 Jesus told the Jews, "If you believed Moses, you would believe in Me; for he wrote of Me." I believe Jesus was referring to Deuteronomy 18:15.

Throughout the history of Israel no one rose to the stature of Moses, except Jesus. In his commentary on Exodus, AW Pink lists 75 ways Jesus was like Moses.

Both were shepherds... Both fasted 40 days... As infants, both were attacked by tyrants who slaughtered innocent kids... Moses turned water into blood - Jesus turned water into wine... Both were willing to die for their nation... Both interceded for God's people and saved them from judgment... Both were rejected by their brothers... Both were prophet, priest, and king...

The list goes on and on. Yet Hebrews 3 makes it clear Jesus was not only *like* Moses, but *far greater!* **Moses was God's servant, Jesus is God's Son.**

Jesus was the true prophet, but false prophets will also come. And the next few verses provide a couple of very simple tests for how to discern a false prophet...

Verse 20, "But 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 gods, that prophet shall die." If a man or woman contradicts what God has already said in His Word - or lures you after other gods - he should be branded a false prophet.

Verse 21, "And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken? - when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.'" Here's the other way to discern a false prophet - watch his track record. God is 100% accurate in His predictions. Thus, if a prophet continually spews falsehoods he's obviously not

speaking for God.

The Jehovah Witnesses said Jesus would return in 1914. When He didn't, they reset the date for 1975. Both predictions were bogus. They're false prophets.

Mormons - both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young - said God told them there were men on the moon six feet tall, and dressed like Quakers. We've now been to the moon and know that's not true. In fact, you can fill several volumes with the false prophecies of the Church of Latter Day Saints. JW's and Mormons are false prophets. *That means don't trust what they teach!*

In Deuteronomy 19 Moses gives instructions for the cities of refuge. Numbers 35 told us there would be six such cities - three east, and three west of the Jordan River. If a man accidentally killed another man, the family of the victim could exact vengeance, unless the manslayer fled to a city of refuge. There he was safe.

Here Moses tells them to build roads to these cities. Jewish tradition says the roads were quite wide - 48 feet - the width of a four-lane highway. These cities were to be easily accessible from anywhere in Israel.

In verse 5 Moses gives an example of a situation that necessitated the city of refuge... *"As when a man goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies - he shall flee to one of these cities and live; lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and kill him, though he was not worthy of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past."* It was an unfortunate accident. Let it go...

Yet in a sense, all sin is murder. The wages of sin is death; thus, when you sin you take your own life. Sin is a slow suicide. We all need a place to run where we can find a safe haven, and avoid the consequences of sin. And Jesus is that place of refuge. As long as we're in Christ we're forgiven and safe from judgment. *When we sin we need to run to Jesus as fast as we can!*

And it's assuring that the road to these six cities was wide and well maintained. Jewish tradition tells us the roads were marked by signs with large letters reading, *"Miklac"* or *"Refuge"* Everything was done to make it as easy as possible for the guilty person to find safety.

And this is our job. We need to make it as easy as possible for people to come to Christ. Keep the road clear of misconceptions - the bridges of understanding open... Live our lives as a road sign pointing to Jesus.

Yet there was one difference between Jesus and the cities of refuge. Verse 11 says there was no safety for someone guilty of premeditated murder. This provision only covered accidents. Yet even the intentional sinner finds refuge in Jesus. His forgiveness is that sweeping.

Verse 14 "You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark (or property pin), which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess."

Once, a man asked a farmer to walk off the borders of his land. The farmer asked him, "Are you a buyer or a tax collector?" His identity might influence the results.

But that wasn't to be the case with Israel. The land was God's gift; thus property pins and boundaries were considered sacred. No tampering with the landmarks.

In the rest of the chapter Moses emphasizes the need for two or three witnesses. And if a person falsely accuses another; then he who lied should serve the same sentence that the accused would've served.

We're told in verse 20, "Those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you." Swift and fair punishment was a deterrent to crime. That's why there's such recidivism in today's criminal justice system. People don't **hear** of the criminal's fate and don't **fear** it happening to them.

Moses says in verse 21, "Your eye shall not pity; but life shall be for life (capital punishment is a command of God), eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." And realize our human tendency is not foot for foot. Stomp my foot, and I'll want to both stomp your foot **AND** punch you in the mouth. Our tendency is one-upmanship. "Eye for eye" sounds harsh to our squeamish sensibilities and soft-on-crime attitudes, but God's Law curtailed human harshness and set the tone for more mercy and fairness in the ancient world.

Now in a few days Joshua will be leading his people into the Promised Land, and they'll encounter enemies. Chapters 20-21 are laws relating to ancient warfare...

"When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." God's people need to trust Him and have courage. God wants men with a backbone!

And for those who lack it - who, for some reason are weak-kneed - God would just as soon weed you out and send you home. We don't want to go to battle with a brother who's not all in - who wishes he wasn't there!

In the next few verses Moses goes through potential excuses... if you've built a new

house, but haven't closed - or planted a vineyard that needs harvesting - or you're engaged, and focused on your honeymoon... just go back home. If you'll be fearful and fainthearted in battle we don't need you. You'll just be in the way.

As far as God is concerned what matters is not *the size of the army in the fight*, but *the size of the fight in the army*. God cares not about **size**, but about **sizzle**!

And I agree. When it's time to serve and do battle for God I don't want half-hearted people by my side. In the midst of a battle you need people you can trust.

You want people at your side totally committed, and focused, and passionate. If they're half-hearted and lukewarm they'll end up being more of a liability than an asset. Even if you have to thin out your ranks, it's better to go to battle with folks who are up for the fight.

Verse 10, "When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it. And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people who are found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you." Now this did not apply to the upcoming invasion of the Promised Land.

This is forward-thinking. In future military campaigns if you come against a city, try to avoid bloodshed, and negotiate a peace... But if the city is unwilling; then fight to win. Kill the men and take the rest of the city as plunder. Verse 15, "Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations." He's speaking of future battles...

Verse 16, "But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let **nothing that breathes** remain alive, but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God."

Nothing that breathes should live... The Canaanites were so incorrigibly corrupt - so steeped in the occult and satanism - that they were to be totally annihilated - men, women, children, cattle - **all that breathes!**

Verse 19, "When you besiege a city for a long time, while making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them; if you can eat of them, do not cut them down to use in the siege, for the tree of the field is man's food." Don't use fruit trees to make battering rams. It's a source of food.

"Only the trees which you know are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, to build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it is subdued."

This was an environmentally-friendly view of war. God wanted Israel to take a long term approach.

The need for food was ultimately more vital than the need for a battering ram. Destroy a city's food supply, and it would defeat the reason for taking the city.

Chapter 21, "If anyone is found slain, lying in the field in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess, and it is not known who killed him, then your elders and your judges shall go out, and they shall measure the distance from the slain man to the surrounding cities." The issue is who's responsible for obtaining justice in the case of an unsolved murder?

This is a strange remedy. The city elders closest to the corpse are to bring a young cow to a nearby stream, break the cow's neck, call for the priest; then wash their hands over the neck of the heifer. Verse 7, "Then they shall answer and say, 'Our hands have not shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen it. Provide atonement, O LORD, for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, and do not lay innocent blood to the charge of Your people Israel.' And atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the blood. So you shall put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you when you do what is right in the sight of the LORD."

Here's what's happening, *I think*... There would be *unsolved murders* in Israel, but never an *unresolved murder*... If you've ever been the victim of a crime you understand the need for justice. It's hard to move on without the closure that comes when justice is served.

But how do you find justice when the culprit can't be punished because you don't know who he is? Well, the city's elders are to take responsibility, and this is appropriate since the elders' job is to oversee a civil and non-violent society. Thus, they should step up to atone for the damage the unsolved murder did to the town. Their sacrifice would bring a sense of justice to the town's citizens. Sin leaves scars. Even unowned sin causes damage and a debt that should be paid.

Verse 10, "When you go out to war against your enemies..." Again, these are instructions for wartime situations. "And the LORD your God delivers them into your hand, and you take them captive, and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your wife..." In antiquity it was common for conquerors to have their way with female prisoners. Women were considered the spoils of battle.

But that was not to be the case among the Hebrews. God had an dignified and elevated view of women.

If an Israeli soldier saw a beautiful prisoner of war he couldn't just take her, he had

to marry her, and only after certain procedures. **“You shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails.”** The idea, *is she willing to start over?* **“She shall put off the clothes of her captivity, remain in your house, and mourn her father and her mother a full month...”** She has to make a clean break with her past.

The potential husband has now lived with the woman thirty days. There's been no sexual contact. He's seen her bald not with the up-do she once sported, and in sackcloth or sweat pants instead of the skin tight dress he saw her in originally. And she's been wailing for a month in your ear. She's not as you saw her in the beginning. This insured your attraction was more than lust, but a real desire for marriage. **“After that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife.”** Only then can you make a V-O-W with a P-O-W.

And later, if the situation sours, verse 14, **“It shall be, if you have no delight in her, then you shall set her free, but you certainly shall not sell her for money; you shall not treat her brutally, because you have humbled her.”** You've uprooted her from *her home*; now you've kicked her out of *your home*... The least you can do is set the woman free and treat her with some respect.

And there's a lesson here... If you're single, and in the dating battle you see a beautiful person, *be careful, slow it down*. You want to see her head bald - and see her in her sweat pants - and realize she can wail, not just sing. Make sure you're not just feeling the heat of battle, but is this really somebody you want to marry.

Verse 15, **“If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved...”** You know this was a miserable home. And a great reason why polygamy is never a good idea. God tolerated polygamy, but it was never ideal.

“And they have borne him children, both the loved and the unloved, and if the firstborn son is of her who is unloved, then it shall be, on the day he bequeaths his possessions to his sons, that he must not bestow firstborn status on the son of the loved wife in preference to the son of the unloved, the true firstborn.” The rights of the firstborn were a big deal, and needed to be respected above a man's preferences in wives.

“But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.” The firstborn always received a double portion of his father's inheritance. If a man had three sons, his inheritance was carved into four portions. One portion each was given to the two younger sons. A double portion was given to the older.

When my kids were young we *made* them obey. We were bigger than them. If we wanted them to be still, we sat on them. But eventually they got bigger and stronger. By then though, we'd trained them to show some respect. We could now control them with a word.

But what happens when normal development never occurs? You end up with an incorrigible, rebellious teenager, or a twenty-something who terrorizes his parents. This never existed in Israel because of verses 18-21. And if you're one of these teenagers buckle up. These verses should cause you quake in your boots. This is what I call "**fear therapy**" - it's good for you...

"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' "Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear." *And parents today lack the courage to administer a good spanking...* Here's a kid who's unresponsive to discipline. He's destined to be a drain on society, so he was taken to the men of the city and stoned to death.

Actually, the rabbis said in all Hebrew history this law was never enacted. Apparently, "*fear therapy*" worked. The mere threat produced in kids the desired results.

Don't misunderstand, I'm not suggesting we revert back to this law. Today, God's love and power - not the threat of punishment - transforms people. The Law was an external standard, but it lacked the power to change hearts. Thus, habits set in childhood rarely changed.

Yet under the NC, through the work of Jesus, God takes out our heart of stone, and replaces it with a soft, compliant heart. Today, there's hope for an incorrigible kid. Jesus has the power to crack the toughest nut.

Verses 22-23 explain one of the reasons the Jews had a hard time accepting Jesus as their Messiah. "If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God."

Since Jesus hung on a cross how He could be God's Son. Here a person hung was *"accursed of God"*?

In Galatians 3:13, Rabbi Paul gives us the answer, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.")." The curse Jesus bore was not His own. Our Lord carried our curse. Jesus was cursed, so that you and I could be blessed!