

gives itself to live as the people of God...a nation ruled by God and serving as a witness to God. Israel's faith is based on the law and love of God but is seen in the community life as the people of God. Chapter 17 tells a little about laws that will order the societal life. This material is found throughout Deuteronomy and is interspersed in the fabric of the book. Whether this is done for variety or emphasis is something we cannot know for certain but it is consistent with the way material is presented in Exodus, Numbers, and Leviticus. It means that the Israelites needed to be careful students of the total law of God and in their dedicated study they would learn much of God's requirements and directives for His people. Chapter 17 has these divisions:

- 17:1-7.....matters of unbelief
- 8-13....settling community controversies
- 14-20....the role of the King.

And while it might seem that the latter is in a different category from the former, the fact is that the correct ordering of government is fundamental to all other areas of life.

II. Discussion

- 17:1.....a direct statement tying this chapter to the correct order or worship as in 18:21-22.
- 17:2....."if ...any" has wrought wickedness in transgressing this covenant...
- 17:3.....and has worshipped a false deity
- 17:4.....and it is reported and found to be true...
- 17:5.....the guilty party will be brought forth and stoned!
- 17:6.....but note the witnesses and the certainty of the act
- 17:8.....a matter of controversy arises that cannot be resolved... don't take it into your own hands
- 17:9.....take it to the proper authorities
- 17:10....and the judgment will be observed and accepted
- 17:11....there is no departure from the statement of justice
- 17:12....the man who will not listen will die...self will is no substitute for obedience
- 17:13....and all will profit by the lesson (the rules for the judges are back in 16:18-20)