

## **Dr. David Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 12**

### **Covenant Excursus**

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This is Dr. David Howard in his teaching on the books of Joshua through Ruth. This is session 12, Deuteronomy 17, and Joshua, Excursus.

I would like to make one additional comment and point out a connection to this discussion of the kingship in Israel particularly the model of the king that is given us in Deuteronomy 17.

So if you have your Bibles open again to Deuteronomy 17, we'll just highlight one thing. If you remember, this is when Moses is anticipating that Israel would ask for a king. It gives them some criteria, verses 15 to 17, that it's fine with God for them to have a king.

Actually, that's part of his intent, but here's the limiting criteria. Then verses 18 to 20 talk about the key to success for the king, which is essentially to be rooted in God's word. So, we'll kind of review 18 to 20 again.

So, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law approved by the Levitical priests. It shall be with him. He shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and by doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right or the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children in Israel.

So, this is the model for the ideal king, but I would say it's also a broader model for any type of godly leadership that we see in the Old Testament. We see that in, for example, leaders years later, like Ezra and Nehemiah, were rooted in God's word. There was a public reading of scripture.

We see that all the way through, and an important example of this is precisely here in Joshua chapter 1. So if you flip over to that chapter, we will see, look at God's charge to Joshua again, particularly starting in verses 6 to 9. God says, be strong and courageous. You shall cause these people to inherit the land, and so on. But then verse 7, verses 7 and 8 are the core of that passage.

Verse 7 says, be strong and very courageous. Be careful to do according to all the law that Moses, my servant, commanded you. Do not turn aside from the right or the left, so that you may have good success wherever you go.

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth. You shall meditate on it day and night. So be careful to do according to all that is written in it.

So, I hope you can see the echoes of the passage in Deuteronomy 17. The key to success for the king is to do these things, meditate, and have God's word with him. Don't turn to the right or the left.

Echoes of that here in Joshua. Now Joshua, the man, is not a king, but he is the leader of the people. He is not just a military leader, but he is a leader who is intended to point people to God and be a model and example in his own life.

Same way that the king was to be a model and example to the people in his life. And years later, sadly, most of the kings were not like this. But the godly kings, the good kings, there are about eight of them in Judah, they did follow the model to one degree or another.

And so, this larger principle of godly leadership that we've mentioned in the book of Joshua is one that is found throughout the Old Testament and has significant roots in Deuteronomy 17, Joshua 1. It's been pointed out, if you know the structure of the Old Testament in the Hebrew canon, we have the law, the prophets, and the writings. And the law ends in Deuteronomy 17 with this admonition. And then the prophets begin with Joshua, Joshua, Judas, Samuel, Kings, and then Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, or Ezekiel in the 12.

And the section of the Hebrew canon beginning with the prophets begins with Joshua 1. And this also, the key to success is rooted in God's word. And then the writings begin with the book of Psalms. And miscellaneous books throughout the rest of that third section.

But the book of Psalms begins in a very similar way, with the contrast of the godly man versus the wicked man. The godly man's key to success for him is to not walk in the ways of the sinners and so on, but rather his delight is in the law of the Lord, Psalm 1, verse 2. And on his law, he meditates day and night. Those words are almost exactly the words here in Joshua.

So, the three sections of the Hebrew canon also tell us about this key to success, which is an interesting observation. Not my observation, but I think it's a wise one. This is Dr. David Howard in his teaching on the books of Joshua through Ruth.

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