

The King And The Law

Introduction. Psalm 147:5 states, "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite." This verse is declaring the fact of God's omniscience, or His ability to know everything. In Deuteronomy 17:14-20, the Lord, knowing that the children of Israel would eventually beg for a king (1 Samuel 8:5), set forth guidelines for the relationship between the king and the Law of Moses. What is interesting is that these guidelines are relevant for us now.

I. ***What The King Was To Do With The Law***

- A. "He shall write him a copy of this law in a book" (vs. 18).
 1. The king had to write his own copy because copies were not readily available. In one way we are blessed today by having copies of God's word so readily available.
 2. At the same time, we may be better off if we did have to write for ourselves a copy. Assuming we desired His word enough to make a copy for ourselves, we would learn it better and be less likely to take it for granted.
- B. "It shall be with him" (vs. 19).
 1. In physical form.
 - a) The king was to always have his copy of the law physically with him (Joshua 1:8/ Psalm 119:98; Romans 10:6-8).
 - b) Is the law, God's word, physically always with us? Is it at every service and all of the service? Do you only bring it for class and not for the sermon? Will you bring it every service during the meeting? On vacation? Do you take the law with you, or do you take a vacation from it, too?
 2. In mental form.
 - a) The law was not only to be in the king's hand, but also in his heart (Psalm 40:8; 119:11; Jeremiah 20:9).
 - b) Why were members of the church once called "walking Bibles"? Could such be said of you? If not now, are you striving for such? Our homes may be full of copies of God's word, but are our hearts full of it?
- C. "He shall read therein all the days of his life" (vs. 19).
 1. If we want God's word to be with us in our hearts, then we must read it (James 1:25). Do we only read it to prepare for or maybe even just during Bible class, when the preacher says something with which we disagree, when a friend asks us a Bible question, or some other such occasion?
 2. God told the king to read it "all the days of his life" (Psalm 119:97). Do you honestly think that God expects any less of us? But what

about those who do not have this attitude toward and diligence in the law (Psalm 1:1-4)? Which better describes your attitude toward and diligence in the law?

II. ***Why The King Was To Do This With The Law***

A. "That he may learn to fear the Lord his God" (vs. 19).

1. King Jehoiakim had not learned to respect God's word or to fear the Lord (Jeremiah 36:21-24, 29). God punished him for this (Jeremiah 36:30-31).

a) Would we stoop so low as to literally cut out of God's law what we do not like? We figuratively do just that when we fail to obey His commands.

b) Not only does the king not fear the Lord, but also he goes after the Lord's messengers, the ones who presented God's word (1 Kings 18:17-18). The troublers are not the ones presenting God's law, but rather those who fail to obey it. It is a shame when one turns on the messenger instead of obeying the message.

2. King Josiah heard God's word and feared the Lord (2 Kings 22:8-13).

a) God's response to Josiah's actions was quite favorable (2 Kings 22:18-20).

b) God says we learn to fear Him when we hear Him, when His law is before us (Deuteronomy 4:10).

B. "To keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them" (vs. 19).

1. King Asa was very obedient to God's law (1 Kings 15:9-14).

a) Probably all of us would consider our grandmother one of the most cherished people in our lives.

b) But Asa was willing to set aside family ties to obey God's law. Are we willing to do that today? We must do so to be like Asa and be loyal to the Lord (Matthew 10:37).

2. King Josiah took a stand for God's law (2 Kings 23:3).

a) There is an obvious correlation between having God's law in our hearts and being careful, even delighting, in observing all the words in it (Psalm 40:8).

b) It is hard to observe what we do not know. We must have God's word open in front of us and hidden within us to be able to observe all the words contained therein.

C. "That his heart be not lifted above his brethren" (vs. 20).

1. King Uzziah allowed this to happen (2 Chronicles 26:16-21).

a) Uzziah became angry instead of obedient when his sin was exposed. As a result, he was struck with leprosy and cut off from

the house of the Lord.

- b) This happens when we think beyond what is written in God's law (1 Corinthians 4:6). Some try to reason away what God says, thinking beyond what He commands in His law. But such behavior shows a lack of true knowledge and acceptance of God's law.
 - (1) This was the case in Corinth (1 Corinthians 5:1-2). Instead of being dedicated to obeying God's word and withdrawing from the one in adultery, they were puffed up. Their heart was lifted above those who are trying to stand for the truth. Paul rightfully rebuked them for their sinful conduct.
 - (2) When we fail to hold fast to Jesus Christ and His law, we are puffed up, just like God warned the kings (Colossians 2:18-19).
- 2. King Hezekiah's heart was lifted up, but he responded in the right way (2 Chronicles 32:24-26).
- D. "That he turn not aside from the commandment" (vs. 20).
 - 1. In 2 Kings 23, the nation had turned away from the law. Upon hearing the law, Josiah set about turning the nation back to God's will (2 Kings 23:24-25; Psalm 119:11).
 - 2. David did not turn from the word of God and was rewarded (1 Kings 15:4-5). God will likewise reward us if we do not turn aside from His word (Romans 3:23).
- E. "That he may prolong his days" (vs. 20).
 - 1. The same promise was made to Solomon (1 Kings 3:14).
 - 2. Does this mean that those who obey God's law will always have a long life?
 - a) Jesus is probably the best example to show that this is not always the case.
 - b) Scientists today, though, have shown a correlation between religious devotion and the quality and length of people's days.
 - 3. David's final words to Solomon reflected the same truth spoken of in Deuteronomy 17:20 (1 Kings 2:1-3).

Conclusion. God's people today are expected to do the same (Deuteronomy 6:1-2). What is your attitude towards God's law? Have you obeyed what it teaches to become a Christian? Once doing so, have you continued to obey it?