

God's Leadership of His people!

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Open your Bibles, if you would, to Matthew Deuteronomy 16, 18.

Deuteronomy 16, 18. And we're going to start there, Deuteronomy chapter 16 and verse 18. And I want to talk to you tonight and show you in this passage of Scripture, or these passages, we're going to look at quite a few verses, Lord willing.

He's going to talk to us about how He set up the leadership of His people. And God will clearly lead His people. He will tell them who is to be their leader. He'll tell them how to take care of their leaders.

He'll tell the leaders how to guide and lead His people. He is God, and He wants things done His way. Read with me, if you would, Deuteronomy chapter 16 and verse 18. The Bible says, Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee throughout thy tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

So if you have your Bible, just because this isn't really part of the message, I just want to make sure you know, look at the word gates. That's their center of government, and the gate. When you got to the city, you saw those people.

[1 : 19] And God is providing leadership for His people. Among His people, God's going to tell them what kind of leaders He wants. And He wants leaders that are very honest. Keep your Bible open.

Deuteronomy chapter 16 and verse 19. He said, you will not twist the law. You will not play favorites. You will not accept gifts, because they could blind your eyes to the truth or cause you to twist the truth.

You will not accept those gifts. And they were to do altogether right. Look at verse 20. Deuteronomy 16, 20. That which is altogether just shall you follow.

They were to always be way above board in doing whatever was right. Following God's direction and laws would ensure them His blessings in the land that He had given them.

They weren't to do anything that went along with the world. Here's a big lesson for all of us. We don't follow modern worldly trends. We don't do what the world does. He said, now, chapter 16 and verse 21, I do not want any groves.

[2 : 18] I don't want any trees planted in a grove anywhere near the altar of God. In verse 22, He said, and don't you be setting up any images.

I hate them. I hate images. I hate idols. Then in chapter 17 and verse 1, He said, and don't you ever bring me cheap stuff. Don't you ever cheapen things and bring it to me.

Read with me chapter 17 and verse 1. Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord thy God any bullock or sheep where it is blemish or any ill-favoredness. You should underline that word.

That's a really big word. You know what it means? Stuff you don't like. Stuff other people wouldn't like. Don't you bring me stuff nobody wants. But that's an abomination. I don't like that. Never bring God what you wouldn't want for yourself.

Worship and giving was not a way of getting rid of your junk. God wants you to love Him enough to give Him what costs. Don't give God what's left over. Don't give God what you have that's extra.

[3 : 16] Don't give God cheap stuff. I know I probably heard it tonight in the Testaments. I talk too much about Peru, but this is so true. In Peru, when I first got there, the word they used for offerings was a word that means alms.

It's like what a beggar gets. And they said, the other missionaries had let them say, we will now take up the beggar's money. And I got up my, when I first became a pastor, I said, that word's out.

We no longer do limousines here. We don't do alms here. We take up offerings. Tithes and offerings. We don't give God what's cheap. Amen? We don't give God what's ill-favored.

We give Him what costs us. And then if you'll check out chapter 17 and verse 8, the leadership and the laws and ideas would come from God. This is a theocracy.

God's in charge of the nation of Israel still. They will soon put up a king. But He said, but whenever I'm teaching y'all how to be judges, I'm picking you the judges. I want you to do the judges like I say.

[4 : 14] And sometimes y'all are going to come across something you don't understand. Look at 17.8. Maybe it'll be a matter that's too hard for you in judgment. Between blood and blood, family fights, plea and plea, stroke and stroke, matters of controversy, get you to my place.

You remember that word? We've been looking at it. I hope you underlined that. The place. You got that underlined there? God had a place. The temple. He said, get you to the place, the tabernacle in these days, which the Lord God shall choose.

They were going to be taught by Moses and Aaron and later Joshua what the law should be. Here's a good lesson for you. That was discipleship. That was foundations before it ever got called foundation.

At vision, it was those guys who God taught teaching other people who taught other people to become into leadership. You should be involved in that. You should be trying to learn what you can do to teach others and help others.

If there's something too hard to understand, get back to the leadership. Chapter 17, verse 9. Get to the priest. Get to the guys who are dealing directly with God and he will show you what to do.

[5 : 16] Chapter 17, verse 9. And once God tells you what to do, don't question it. That's a wild lesson for us, isn't it? When you know what this book says, it's no time for a discussion.

No time for you to make a decision. No time to see if you can come up with an alternate reading of it. Just take God's word. If you don't, there will be horrible consequences. Chapter 17, verse 12.

Look at it. And the man that will do presumptuously. The guy that will just do his own thing. Make up his own mind. Do the things the way he says. And will not listen to the priest that stands to minister.

Therefore, before the Lord thy God or the judge, that man shall die. And you put away evil from Israel. So God was saying, hey, I want my word to be what you do.

When I say what to do, you do what I say. And you know, today we don't kill people. But there's an attitude ought to be in your heart. And that says, whatever God says, that's where I'm going. I want to do it God's way.

[6 : 14] I'm God's man. I follow God's book. Look at chapter 17 and verse 13. God wanted people to know that you do not ignore his leadership. God want people to know you do not ignore his leadership.

If you do so, you do it at your peril. Chapter 17 and verse 13. All the people shall hear and fear and do no more presumptuously. So you got this one guy who, like, he says, I know what God said, but I don't quite agree with God.

I'm not involved. I don't agree with his opinion. They were presumptuous. And when they said that, they were presumptuous. God said, all right, I want him put to death. That way, everybody else will quit being presumptuous. Amen. Can I just tell you, you also stop a fool when he says something foolish.

And so here's the deal with us. You and I ought to be people that walk to the Bible and say, I come to the word of God. And God's word speaks to me. We don't need, hey, listen to me. We don't need what God told you in prayer unless he told you from the Bible.

We don't need what you feel in emotion. We don't need what you got in a vision. We don't need what you got in a dream. We don't need what some preacher said. We got the word of God. Today, those that God allows to be in leadership in the church are taught to follow the same ideas.

[7 : 22] This is me and the church staff, all the pastors on our staff. But it's also our deacons. It's also our Sunday school teachers. Let's realize this. God picked us. God picked us up to the church. And we should not make decisions based on money or favoritism.

That's what he told those leaders. If you're a leader in God's work, don't you let money, don't you let popularity, don't you let that be what makes a decision. As a church, we should be careful to pattern all we do after God's will.

That's clearly expressed in his book. That's why we're so big on verse by verse. Study the Bible. Read the Bible. Discipleship foundations. We must never cheapen our worship.

Now, this is what I'm going to tell you. I hope. I hope you don't just come to church and get, get, get, get, get. Every Christian ought to know God expects you to be giving. Not just money.

Prayer. Time. Effort. You're serving God. You're not here for me to serve you. You're here for us to serve God together. And God will meet our needs. But we don't cheapen worship.

[8 : 23] We don't just say, well, I got 15 minutes extra. I got an hour I can give God this time. We should, we should make an effort. We give the best of ourselves, the best we have. Because our God is worthy.

True men of God will not be saying what they want to. They'll say what God says. True men of God won't say what they want to. They'll say what God says. We should take very seriously God's instruction in our lives.

Go with me if you would to chapter 17 and verse 2. First thing, God places the leadership. Second thing I want you to notice. Listen to me closely before you read. Would you listen to this? God is a God of separation.

Now that word got a bad name among independent badminton. Some of us overreact and we're like, I don't want to be separate. I don't like that word separation. I'm just going to be honest with you. That's a God word.

It's a God word. If you love God, hey, it's us or them. It's him or the world. You've got to choose. Look if you would at chapter 17 and verse 2. See, we're to separate to God and stay away from things that are against God.

[9 : 24] You're not going to like these verses. These were given to Israel, but the same verses and the same ideas are found and taught in the New Testament. Look at 17.2. If there be found among you within any of your gates which the Lord thy God gives thee, man or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God in transgressing his covenant.

So he said, hey, there might be found among you. There might be somebody at Vision Baptist Church or later would come in here. And they're going to be wanting to lead people away from God and lead people away from biblical doctrine.

So as a church, you and I got to learn to know what the Bible teaches and stand for truth. Underline in verse 2, be found among you, further on down wrought wickedness.

Now look at verse 3. What they're doing is they've gone out and served other gods. He's talking about going out and serving and worshiping other gods. What was going to happen in Israel was some would worship nature, some would worship the sun and the moon and the stars.

But all of that would be demon worship and the worship of false gods. I'm going to say something now that would make you a little mad at me. But let me explain something to you.

[10 : 34] You should have no... We love everybody everywhere in the world and we want to get the gospel to them, but you need to know something. A person who believes anything other than Jesus Christ for salvation is worshiping demons.

Islam is a demonic worship. Hinduism is a demonic worship. Mormonism is a demonic worship.

Seventh-day Adventist, any works-based thing, it's all demonic. You see, if you don't come through Jesus, you're wrong. You say, that's just too closed-minded.

I ain't the one that's saying it. He's the one that's saying it. That's what his book is saying. And so, we don't want to do that. So, they were to investigate the false worship so they could get rid of it out from among them.

Chapter 17, verse 4. He said, somebody might tell you all about it. You might hear about it. If you do, you're to inquire diligently and find out if it's true and make sure that something wicked has been done in Israel.

[11 : 40] They were to look into it. And they were to find out if it was something that God hated. And if they did, they were to kill him.

17, verse 5. 17, verse 5. Then shalt thou bring forth that man or woman which hath committed that wicked thing unto thy gates, even that man or woman, and shall stone them with stones till they die.

Now, we're talking about Israel. We're not talking about us. We're not talking about the New Testament. We're talking about the Old Testament. We're not talking about America and democracy. We're talking about a theocracy where God is in charge and things are done.

But here's where God stood. I'm going to show you where it works in the New Testament. Watch this. Here's where God stood. I'm God. And I fully expect to be loved and honored and treated like God.

And no, I'm not a nice guy about that. Nor is anybody else in this room. If your spouse decided to get other friends and to be intimate with them, you might stand up and say, I ain't allowing that.

[12 : 45] And that's exactly where God is. It was not to be taken lightly. Chapter 17 and verse 6, they had to have two or three witnesses to find out what had happened because you don't just accept gossip.

In chapter 17 and verse 7, the witnesses were the first ones to throw the rocks. And then afterwards, people came in. So let me bring it to you in our church now.

Now, that's Old Testament. We don't kill anybody. Say amen. Amen. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities of the air. So this is a spiritual war for us.

But at Vision Baptist Church, the day will come when someone will bring work salvation in here. The day will come when someone will bring in, to be saved, you must speak in tongues, or you must have the second blessing, or they may bring in some other false doctrine.

And we as a church have got to be able to stand up and say, we know what the Bible says, and we don't go with that. And we've got to be ready to take a stand. So separation and church discipline, there will be people doing wrong and trying to get others to follow after them.

[13 : 49] And we should carefully examine and evaluate anything we hear. We were given instructions in Matthew chapter 18. If you know about something, you go to that guy in private. You talk to him.

If he will listen, that's great. You can win your brother back. But if he won't, you take two or three other people and help him try to understand the error of his way. And if he won't, then you tell them, you're a publican and a sinner. You're out. You're not one of us.

In other words, you need to understand, are you ready? You're in a war. You're in a war where people would bring in false doctrine. You say, what's false doctrine? What is not taught in this book?

What is not taught in this book? Regardless, we stand with the truth no matter who is at fault. We take a stand as witnesses. We willingly risk our friendship over biblical issues.

Guess who threw the first rock? The guy that found out about it. You know how he probably found out about it? His buddy was telling him, let me tell you what's going on. And the buddy said, you know, we don't do that. We stand with Jesus.

[14 : 47] We stand with right. We don't talk about them behind their backs. We stand up and say what's right and wrong right to their face. Ready to shoot me?

Y'all go read the passage. See if it's in here. Okay? Go read the passage. You say, well, that's Israel. Go to the New Testament. You're going to find the same thing. By the way, Barnabas was in Galatia.

And Barnabas was practicing a little racism and looking down on Gentile people after he'd been working with them. And Paul stood up and withstood him to the face and said, because he was to be blamed.

So we have to take a stand for right and truth. Sorry, it's not go along, get along. It's God's word first. Nine minutes.

Are y'all sweating as bad as I am? Chapter 17, verse 14. He warns them about the king they will request. See, he says, y'all are going to want a king. And when you get over to this new land I've given you, you're going to say, we would like to set a king up over us.

[15 : 53] And we want to be like other countries. And he said, well, if you want to do it like the world, you're going to suffer the abuses of the world. But if you're going to do it, at least seek my will. Chapter 17, verse 15.

And get a king over you that I want you to have. And don't set a stranger over you. And then God gave instructions to those kings. This is a good lesson for us in the ministry.

I'm not talking about politics right here. Although it certainly applies to politics. But here's a lesson for all people in leadership. Guys that are missionaries. Guys that are pastors. Remember, we don't multiply horses.

We don't get things for ourselves. Chapter 17, verse 16. We don't make political alliances with the world, Egypt, where they came out from. We don't multiply wives or gold for ourselves.

Chapter 17, verse 17. But I've got to get you to chapter 17, verse 18. I want you to look at it with me. When they got a king, he said, this is what I want the king to do. Can I remind you how important he thinks this book is?

[16 : 49] Are you with me? This is how important he thought the book was. Chapter 17, verse 18. He said this. And it shall be when he sets the king upon the throne of his kingdom. Now look what he does.

He shall write him a copy. You tell him to make a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priest and the Levites. Now I want you to get a picture of that.

They don't have a printing press. And so over here at the temple in the priest, there's a copy of the word of God. And so he was to go get a copy of the word of God. I'm pretty sure probably a priest went with him to make sure he was going to take care of it.

And he has to get that copy. He has to set it down right there and he has to get his ink pen out and say, all right. Genesis 1.1. In the beginning. And he was to write.

Look at what it says there. Can you read? He was to write him a copy of this law in a book. That was before the priest. That is before the priest, the Levites.

[17 : 45] He was to write himself a copy. And he was to keep that copy of the word with him. Look at 17:19. And it shall be with him. Underline that. You going on vacation? Where's your Bible?

It shall be with him. And this is a king. You're just a peon so it don't matter, right? Until you get to the New Testament and you find out. It shall be with him. And look at this. And he shall read therein all the days of his life.

So he's supposed to. He didn't go buy a copy. You don't call up local church publishers to get you a nice cheap copy of a Bible with good leather and good paper. No, he hand wrote.

You say, what did he hand write? Well, at least Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Five books. Go read them and see how long it would take you to hand write them. When I was a kid, I tried to hand write them. I usually got to about Genesis 5 or 6 before I got tired.

To read them. Now look what he was to do. So that when he read the Bible, verse 19, he would learn to fear the Lord is God. You see, when you read the Bible, you'll figure out he's a big God.

[18 : 50] You can't start off Genesis 1.1 will scare you to death. Before there ever was anything, I already was. And then I made the world. I just spoke and it happened. I mean, can you imagine reading that going, well, before there ever was a beginning.

He said, in the beginning, I already was. That's pretty strong. And then you keep reading through it and you find out then he destroyed the world with a flood. Time you get to Genesis chapter 6, you're like, God's like, he's a big God. Then as you're reading along, you're finding all this stuff out.

He said, he'll fear the Lord. He'll respect the Lord. And that'll cause him to, verse 19, keep all the words of this law and do the statutes. So you don't just have a copy of the Bible.

You don't just read a copy of the Bible. So you keep the words of the Bible. That's what it says. If you're with me, say amen. Okay, how many of you are reading your Bible? I know you got a copy.

You got 900 of them at your house. We have more Bibles we don't read than anybody. Then he said in verse 20, if he'll read the Bible, it'll keep him humble.

[19 : 56] That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren. You see, when you read the Bible, you find out all have sinned and come to the glory of God. And ain't none righteous. That counts you too, Austin.

The deacons of our church read their Bibles. You know, if they don't read their Bibles, they might get to thinking there's something. The pastors might get to thinking there's something. The Sunday school teachers might get to thinking there's something. But when we read our Bibles, we're like, oh, we ain't much.

He's everything. We ain't nothing. That's exactly what he was saying. Bible keep us humble. Amen. The Bible will keep us knowing he's in charge. And he won't turn aside from the commandment.

And it will prolong our days in the kingdom. That was for Israel. Now, before I stop and finish for the night, just can I say, it's the Word of God.

You don't have to read the Bible an hour a day. But everybody in this church ought to have two or three little practices from the Word of God. Number one, you should read some of it every day.

[20 : 57] And don't you do the hunt and poke. You don't open your Bible and say, okay, God, what you got to say for me today? Boom. Oh, it's a center column. Can't read that. You know, that's how you do it. You need to read the Bible in an orderly fashion.

You need to start in Genesis. You say it's tough reading in Deuteronomy. You ought to be the one preaching it. I mean, you read it and get through with it. I spent about six hours, eight hours in it yesterday getting ready for you tonight.

Read the Bible. Hey, it's a good book. Say amen. You found out it's good. Hey, you found out Numbers was sweet. You found out Deuteronomy's been a sweep. It's God's book. Okay, so let's get in the Bible.

Hey, when you go on vacation, you take it with you. Memorize Bible. Hey, you need to put the Word of God in your heart. As you memorize the Word of God, and as you get it in your heart, it's going to help you face the world.

It's going to help you stand for God. Because this is alive. And it is powerful. And it's how God speaks to me. Whenever God wants to convict me, He doesn't use Archie from a comic book when I was a kid.

[22 : 01] I don't guess anybody's ever heard of that. He doesn't use no television character. He speaks from His Word. Get into the Bible. Now, the leadership in our church, and this is all New Testament that I would give you, but I don't have time.

We should seek God's will to know who should be our pastor, our staff, and our deacons. As a church, I think we've tried to do that. We have tried to be a church that has tried to do what's biblical and follow what the Scriptures say.

Our leadership should always know that we are serving God and His people. Nobody ought to ever be in leadership at Vision Baptist Church to be served. From me to anybody else in our church.

None of us should be in it for our own gain or our own good. Here's a good one for you. Being in leadership in the ministry gives us nothing over our brothers and our sisters.

He said, you read the Bible to keep you humbled. You won't think you're better than your brothers. God's leadership should be in the Bible on a constant basis. The king was to read the Bible.

[23 : 05] We should be reading and studying, not for others, but for God to teach us how to do our job. See, you know, you're going to teach Sunday school next week. I'm going to just say something to you.

Honestly, you're going to do discipleship? Be careful that this doesn't become a monotonous job you do. Be careful you don't just repeat whatever you've heard and regurgitate stuff you heard.

Have time with God every day. Read that lesson. Pray for those students. Make this real. You're in a war against hell itself to save souls and see lives change.

And it's this book that makes a difference. By the way, if we keep in the Bible, it'll keep us humble. We won't have any proud and lifted up people because every one of us in the Bible will be reminded on a constant basis we are nothing and he is everything.

I hope you can see what your relationship ought to be with the word of God. I would like to ask you tonight, what relationship do you have with the word of God? We have some people in our church that I've had the privilege to talk to and they're not doing too good in their spiritual lives.

[24 : 14] They're not doing too good in their finances. And they're not doing too good in their emotions. They're not doing too good in their marriage. And when you say to them, how much time are you spending in his book?

The answer is almost always the same. I really don't have that much time. But you're asking for it. The way God works in your life is through his word.

Some of you pray more than you read the Bible. It might do you better to be quiet and listen more. Because what you say to God ain't near as important as what God says to you. And your prayers ought to be a response to what he says to you through his word.

Often your prayers to him are more based on what you want than what he wants. Instead of saying, God, whatever your will is, I'll do it. So let's become people of the Bible. It's the word of God that changes us.

Father in heaven, I love you and I thank you for the chance to share your word. I pray you bless your people. I pray you grow them. And I pray your name would be honored and glorified. God, I pray you would bring our people to a point of loving your book and making your book the center of our lives.

[25 : 20] That we'd read it in the morning. We'd read it in the night. We'd meditate on it. We'd memorize its scriptures. That the Bible would become a part of our heart and our life. And I'll give you praise for what you do. I love you, Lord.

And I thank you for your goodness. And I pray, please, challenge your people to get into your book and your book into them. And I'll give you praise. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

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