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YouTube Prayer Link

Thou shalt not follow other gods: Christian beliefs and teachings

Deuteronomy chapter 17

17:2 If a man or woman living among you in one of the towns the LORD gives you is found doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God in violation of his covenant,

17:3 and contrary to my command has worshipped other gods, bowing down to them or to the sun or the moon or the stars of the sky,

De. 17:6 On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but no-one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

Christianity is one of the most widely believed religions in the world, and its core belief is the belief in one true God and not following other gods. This article will explore Christianity's teaching not to follow other gods and the profound implications behind this doctrine.

1. The basis of monotheistic beliefs

Christianity's monotheistic beliefs are rooted in the Bible, specifically the Old Testament. Christian doctrine teaches that God is the creator and ruler of the universe and the only true God. This belief is reflected in the first of the Ten Commandments: There shall be no other gods. This teaching emphasizes the core of monotheistic beliefs.

2. Reject idolatry

Christianity emphasizes the rejection of the worship of any god or idol other than God. This doctrine is also clearly stated in the New Testament, as stated in 1 Corinthians 10:14: "Flee from idolatry, therefore, my dear brethren." Christians are taught to refrain from having the worship of God for any other thing or entity in order to keep their minds focused on God.

3. Recognize the meaning of not following other gods

Not following other gods is not just a form of religious belief, it also has deep moral and ethical implications. This faith teaches Christians to be God-centered and follow His moral code and teachings. This includes loving your neighbor as yourself, caring for the weak, doing justice and kindness, etc. The belief that no one should follow another god encourages the pursuit of high moral standards in order to uphold social justice and peace.

4. Freedom and respect for religion

Christianity emphasizes religious freedom and respect, that is, everyone has the right to choose their own religion. Not following other gods does not mean forcing others to accept the Christian faith, but rather requiring Christians to hold fast to their faith while respecting the faith of others. This idea of religious freedom is a core value needed for an open and inclusive society.

The Christian faith, which emphasizes the teaching of not following other gods, is rooted in monotheistic beliefs and the principle of rejecting idolatry. This doctrine has a profound meaning not only in the field of religion, but also in terms of morality and ethics. It encourages Christians to be God-centered and follow high moral standards while respecting the religious freedom of others. This belief has not only shaped the lives of Christians, but has also had a profound impact on society and culture.

The doctrine of "do not follow other gods" is explicitly stated and supported many times in the Bible. Here are some related verses:

Exodus 20:3:

"Do not have another god before me. "

Exodus 23:13:

"Observe all that I have commanded you. Thou shalt not call other gods names, nor hear the words of other gods, nor serve them, nor do them what they have done, but thou shalt tear them down in whole their walks, and break in pieces their pillars. "

Exodus 34:14:

"Thou shalt not worship other gods, for the LORD is a jealous God, and his name is jealousy. "

Deuteronomy 6:14-15:

"Do not follow other gods, even the gods of the nations that are round about you, for the Lord your God, who is among you, is a jealous God, lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he will destroy you from the earth. "

Deuteronomy 8:19:

"I warn you this day that you may perish and not long in the land into which you shall cross the Jordan to possess it, for I know that you will do evil and turn quickly from the way in which I have commanded you, and evil will come upon you, because you have done evil in the sight of the LORD, and provoked him to anger, and you will quickly perish because you have done evil in the sight of the LORD. "

These verses emphasize the Christian faith and the prohibition of imitating, worshipping, or serving any god other than Jehovah. This belief is reaffirmed many times in the Bible and is one of the core of Christian monotheistic beliefs.

We pray together

Dear God, we thank You for the gifts of life and all that you have given us. We are gathered here to hear our prayers. Guard our hearts so that we can steadfastly obey your teachings, not follow other gods, and always put you at the center of our lives. Give us the strength and wisdom to face life's temptations and challenges, and help us to always remember your love and mercy for us.

Protect and encourage Christians in the face of adversity and make them feel comforted and strengthened. Redouble your blessings to those who work hard to proclaim your gospel so that their work can be fruitful. Please redouble your care for those in need, so that they can feel your love and compassion. Guide those lost souls to find their way back to your bosom.

God, help us to treat each other with humility and forgiveness, no matter where they come from or what religion they believe. Let our words and deeds glorify your holy name, and be kind and tolerant to those around us.

These we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Deuteronomy chapter 17

De. 17:1 Do not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep that has any defect or flaw in it, for that would be detestable to him.

De. 17:2 If a man or woman living among you in one of the towns the LORD gives you is found doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God in violation of his covenant,

De. 17:3 and contrary to my command has worshipped other gods, bowing down to them or to the sun or the moon or the stars of the sky,

De. 17:4 and this has been brought to your attention, then you must investigate it thoroughly. If it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done in Israel,

De. 17:5 take the man or woman who has done this evil deed to your city gate and stone that person to death.

De. 17:6 On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but no-one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

De. 17:7 The hands of the witnesses must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. You must purge the evil from among you.

De. 17:8 If cases come before your courts that are too difficult for you to judge — whether bloodshed, lawsuits or assaults — take them to the place the LORD your God will choose.

De. 17:9 Go to the priests, who are Levites, and to the judge who is in office at that time. Enquire of them and they will give you the verdict.

De. 17:10 You must act according to the decisions they give you at the place the LORD will choose. Be careful to do everything they direct you to do.

De. 17:11 Act according to the law they teach you and the decisions they give you. Do not turn aside from what they tell you, to the right or to the left.

De. 17:12 The man who shows contempt for the judge or for the priest who stands ministering there to the LORD your God must be put to death. You must purge the evil from Israel.

De. 17:13 All the people will hear and be afraid, and will not be contemptuous again.

De. 17:14 When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say,

“Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,” De. 17:15 be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite. De. 17:16 The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.”

De. 17:17 He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray.

He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold. De. 17:18 When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites.

De. 17:19 It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees

De. 17:20 and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

In Chapter 17, Moses continues to give instructions to the Israelites about how they should live in the Promised Land. He begins by discussing the importance of worshiping God alone and not engaging in idolatry. Anyone found guilty of worshiping other gods is to be put to death.

Moses then discusses the establishment of a legal system in the land. He instructs the Israelites to bring any difficult cases to the judges and officers appointed by God. They are to be impartial in their judgment and not show favoritism, and their decisions are to be final.

If a case arises that is too difficult for the local judges to decide, it is to be brought to the place where God chooses to make His name dwell. The decision of the Levitical priests and the judge who is in office at the time is to be final.

Moses then discusses the appointment of a king. He reminds the Israelites that if they choose to have a king, he must be someone whom God chooses and not a foreigner. The king is to be humble and not accumulate excessive wealth, wives, or horses. He is also to write a copy of the law and read it every day to ensure that he follows it.

The chapter ends with instructions on how to deal with false prophets. Anyone who claims to speak for God but speaks falsely is to be put to death.

Overall, Chapter 17 emphasizes the importance of worshiping God alone and establishing a just legal system. Moses instructs the Israelites to bring difficult cases to the appointed judges, and he discusses the appointment of a king, emphasizing the importance of humility and obedience to God's laws. He also warns against false prophets and emphasizes the severity of idolatry.

Here are some key verses from Chapter 17 of the Book of Deuteronomy in the Christian Bible:

1. "Do not sacrifice to the Lord your God an ox or a sheep that has any defect or flaw in it, for that would be detestable to him." (Deuteronomy 17:1)
2. "If a matter is too difficult for you to judge--cases dealing with bloodshed, lawsuits, or assaults--take it to the place the Lord your God will choose." (Deuteronomy 17:8)
3. "The witnesses must be the first to throw stones at the accused, and then all the people are to join in. You must purge the evil from among you." (Deuteronomy 17:7)
4. "When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, 'Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,' be sure to appoint over you a king the Lord your God chooses." (Deuteronomy 17:14-15)
5. "He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold." (Deuteronomy 17:17)

These verses contain commands and regulations related to worship, justice, and kingship. They emphasize the importance of offering only the best sacrifices to God and ensuring that justice is administered fairly and according to God's laws. The verses also warn against the dangers of seeking to emulate the practices of other nations, including appointing a king, and instead call on the Israelites to trust in God's choice of a king for them. Finally, the verses caution against the excesses of kingship, such as accumulating wealth or taking many wives, that could lead to corruption and idolatry. Overall, these verses stress the importance of following God's commands and laws, and seeking to establish a just and righteous society.

Chapter 17 of the Book of Deuteronomy addresses various instructions regarding the administration of justice, the authority of the judges, and guidelines for the future king of Israel. Here is a reflection on some key themes and lessons from this chapter:

Upholding Justice: Moses emphasizes the importance of administering justice among the Israelites. He instructs that cases of dispute and legal matters should be brought before the appointed judges and that their decisions should be followed. This underscores the value of a just and orderly society, where disputes are resolved in a fair and equitable manner.

Avoiding Idolatry: Moses warns against the worship of false gods and idolatrous practices. He commands that anyone found engaging in such acts should be investigated and, if found guilty, put to death. This highlights the seriousness of idolatry and the need for unwavering devotion to God alone. It reminds us of the dangers of spiritual compromise and the importance of staying faithful to God's commands.

The Authority of Judges: Moses establishes the authority of the judges and their role in maintaining law and order. He instructs the Israelites to respect and obey the decisions made by the judges, knowing that their authority is derived from God. This teaches us the importance of submitting to legitimate authority and recognizing the role of judges and legal systems in upholding justice.

Guidelines for a Future King: Moses provides instructions for the future king of Israel. He emphasizes that the king should not accumulate excessive wealth, marry many wives, or turn to foreign gods. The king should also possess a copy of the Law and study it daily. These guidelines remind us of the importance of leadership that is humble, just, and rooted in God's Word.

Capital Punishment: Moses establishes the principle of capital punishment for certain offenses, such as idolatry, blasphemy, and other serious crimes. This underscores the seriousness of these offenses in the eyes of God and the need for societal consequences. It prompts us to consider the importance of maintaining moral boundaries and the responsibility of the legal system to protect the welfare of society.

Integrity and Truthfulness: Moses warns against false witnesses and lying. He emphasizes the importance of integrity and truthfulness in legal proceedings and interactions with others. This reminds us of the value of honesty and the harmful consequences of falsehood.

In summary, Deuteronomy 17 prompts reflection on the themes of justice, idolatry, the authority of judges, guidelines for leadership, capital punishment, and integrity. These reflections call us to uphold justice, remain steadfast in our worship of God, respect legitimate authority, embrace godly leadership qualities, maintain moral boundaries, and prioritize integrity in our words and actions. They remind us of the importance of a just society, fidelity to God's commands, and the pursuit of truth and righteousness in all areas of life.