

Deuteronomy 17:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel:

Analysis

Due process requirements: **it be told thee** (formal accusation), **thou hast heard of it** (leadership awareness), **enquired diligently** (דַּרַשׁ הֵטֵב, darash hetev —'searched thoroughly'). No rushed judgment—investigation must establish facts.

Behold, it be true, and the thing certain (אֱמֶת נֶכֶחַן הַדָּבָר, emet nakhon hadavar) —'truth, established, the matter.' Two confirmatory terms emphasize evidentiary certainty. **Such abomination is wrought in Israel**—only after thorough investigation proving guilt beyond doubt. This protects against false accusations while maintaining covenant purity. Proverbs 18:17 embodies this: 'The first to state his case seems right, until another comes and examines him.'

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern law codes (Hammurabi, Hittite) required investigation, but Israel's law uniquely emphasized thorough inquiry before capital punishment. This balanced community protection with individual justice. Later rabbinic law made capital punishment nearly impossible to carry out (requiring specific warnings, multiple witnesses to each element, etc.), showing Judaism's movement toward protecting accused.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does this passage challenge 'trial by social media' or rushing to judgment based on accusations alone?
2. What does 'enquire diligently' require before confronting sin in the church (Matthew 18:15-17)?

Interlinear Text

וְהִגֵּד	לְ	וְשָׁמַעְתָּ	וְדָרַשְׁתָּ	הִיטָב
And it be told	H0	thee and thou hast heard	of it and enquired	diligently
H5046		H8085	H1875	H3190
וְהִנֵּה	אֵמֶת	נָכוֹן	הַדָּבָר	נַעֲשֶׂה הַ
H2009	and behold it be true	certain	and the thing	is wrought
	H571	H3559	H1697	H6213
הַתּוֹעֵבָה	הַזֹּאת	בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:		
that such abomination	H2063	in Israel		
H8441		H3478		

Additional Cross-References

John 7:51 (Parallel theme): Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

Deuteronomy 19:18 (Parallel theme): And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother;

