

Deuteronomy 17:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment:

Analysis

The priests the Levites (הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְּוִיִּם, hakohanim halviyim)—Levitical priests serving at the central sanctuary possessed both theological training and judicial authority. **The judge that shall be in those days**—civil magistrate alongside priests, ensuring both religious and civil dimensions receive expertise.

Enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment (דָּבָר הַמִּשְׁפָּט, dvar hamishpat)—'the word of justice/judgment.' Their decision binds because they represent God's throne of justice. This combines theological interpretation (priests) with practical jurisprudence (judge). Malachi 2:7 describes priests' role: 'the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.'

Historical Context

The dual priest-judge system appears in 2 Chronicles 19:8-11: Amariah the chief priest for 'matters of the LORD,' Zebadiah the ruler for 'king's matters.' This prefigured separation of religious and civil authority, though both operated under God's law. Post-exile, the Sanhedrin combined priestly and lay members. Jesus challenged corrupt application of this authority (Matthew 23), but affirmed proper judicial structures (Matthew 23:2-3).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How should Christians balance submission to both spiritual leaders and civil authorities today?
2. What does this passage teach about the importance of seeking wise counsel in difficult decisions?

Interlinear Text

וְבָאֵת	אֶל	פְּכָדִים	פְּלִוִים	וְאֶל	פָּשָׁפָט
And thou shalt come	H413	unto the priests	H3548	the Levites	H413
	H935			H3881	
					and unto the judge
					H8199
רְאֵתִי הַיּוֹם	בְּמִינְיוֹן	בְּמִינְיוֹן	בְּמִינְיוֹן	יִדְרְשֶׁת	
H834	H1961	that shall be in those days	H3117	H1992	and enquire
					H1875
וְיִהְעֵד יְדֵךְ	אַתָּה לְבָבְךָ	אַתָּה לְבָבְךָ	אַתָּה לְבָבְךָ	פְּמַשְׁפֵּט	
and they shall shew	H0	H853	thee the sentence	H1697	of judgment
	H5046				H4941

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 44:24 (Judgment): And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.

Malachi 2:7 (Parallel theme): For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

Haggai 2:11 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,

Jeremiah 18:18 (Parallel theme): Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org