

## March 28th – Respect for Spiritual Authority

*“Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the Lord your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel.”  
(Deut. 17:12)*

God mercifully allowed His people to enjoy a second giving of the Law after their wilderness wandering and prior to entering the Promised Land. Among many other topics, God addressed the manner in which the Israelites submitted to their God-appointed authorities. Those spiritual authorities included priests, Levites, and judges. When the children of Israel had a dispute they could not resolve, they were to bring it to one of the previously mentioned authorities for a decision.

God was clear with His people – “You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which the Lord chooses. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you” (Deut. 17:10). Having heard the decision of his spiritual leaders, it was out of the question for an Israelite to reject that leadership and rebel against it. Today’s verse says that anyone who acted “presumptuously” by not submitting to authority was to be put to death!

You might say, “That seems too harsh! Why would God order the death penalty for someone who failed to submit?” It was God’s desire to “put away the evil from Israel” – taking the life of the offender before his life could infect many others. While we’re certainly not Israelites living under the Old Covenant, God has still appointed spiritual leaders for His church. The Bible calls them “shepherds,” and we tend to call them pastors. Ask yourself – am I respecting God’s appointed leaders and following their counsel?