

One of the prerogatives of kings is to write the laws (or at least they did in the heyday of monarchy). They have the authority to determine what is allowed and what will be considered a crime and who will be punished.

In verse 18 the Lord tells the hypothetical future kings of Israel that they are to write not *their* laws but *His*. With their own hand they are to compile a full copy of the law, and then read it all the days of their lives.

A trained scribe would take about a year and a half to produce a full Jewish bible. The Torah by itself would be shorter but still would take several months. It

would be a painstaking labor. But how much more would the king be engaged in the law and learning the law as he wrote it out., And imagine reading it for the rest of his life – *God's* words in *the king's* personal handwriting. Not his father's handwriting or a scribe's, but his own.

Some Bible teachers recommend hand copying passages of scripture we are studying. It slows our natural tendency to superficially skim, aids memorization, and helps to personalize the words for us. But whether we follow this practice or not, it is vital for us to appropriate the Bible and make it our own, as the kings of Israel were told to do.

Questions:

1. Where do we see Christ in this passage?
2. What safeguards are given against false accusations of idolatry?
3. Why do you think verse 7 commands that all the people must stone the idolater? Is there an application for us?

4. Where is the “Supreme Court” for the people of Israel? What is the penalty for contempt of court?
5. Verse 8 speaks of distinguishing between different types of homicide, legal rights, and forms of assault. What are some examples of these distinctions in the law? (Hint: See Deut. 19:5, Ex. 22, Deut. 22)
6. Does the Lord prescribe establishing a king over Israel? Prohibit it?
7. For what purpose might a king acquire multiple wives? What problems would that lead to?
8. How well did the kings of Israel follow the rules given here, from what we know of them?