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Rules applied during the translation:

The translation preserved the paragraph structure published in the contemporary Hungarian transcript.

Bible book, chapter and verses indicated in parenthesis are additions from the transcription process. Typically, such addition immediately follows the chapter and verse citation Enyedi György provided. In some places the additions are placed in the text where text of a Bible verse is spelled out by Enyedi György, but he didn't include the chapter and verse citation. Both type of additions allow the reader to follow the train of thought of Enyedi György through the Bible.

All Bible quotations use the English of the King James Version, 1611 edition. The abbreviated Bible quotes Enyedi György closed with the word "etc." are expanded to their full length, as they were most likely delivered in his sermons.

The asterisk (*) towards the bottom of page 8 indicate a Bible verse reference named incorrectly in the original text.

The Latin and Greek phrases used by Enyedi György are preserved, and the English translation is provided in parenthesis right after the original phrase.

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"Concio. Deut. 16."

"Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment."

Deuteronomy 16:18 KJV

It is not expedient just to seek out and find something; in addition, we ought hold onto and guard what we have found. As told by a wise man: *Non minor est virtus quam quaerere, parta tueri.* (It is no less a virtue to keep a possession than to acquire it.) When God wanted to establish the Jews in the land of Canaan He didn't only give them the power they needed to acquire and to take over the land, but He also showed them the means by which they could remain in that land. Those means are none other than the many regulations and laws intended to maintain order and morality. Thus, in our Bible verse Moses instructs the nation of Israel how to go about electing officers for their communities. His instructions have three parts to it.

In the first part of the verse he cautions that under no circumstances should they be without officers and judges. In the second part, he describes the most important duties for judges. In the third part, he describes the rewards of truthful and righteous judges. Thus, he writes: "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment."

If the nation of Israel - the very nation to whom God promised that He would dwell among them - needed officers, then it surely follows that other nations need officers even more, because God has never been that close to those other nations. Without a doubt, though, we clearly hear that God directs the Jewish people to select judges.

Based on that, we can recognize the truth Apostle Paul stated in Rom. 13 (Romans 13:1-2): "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

That is why we can say that those who resist an officer also oppose God's command. But let us discuss this in more detail. To begin with, why do people need officers and magistrates? It is obvious that no group of people, no community could remain in existence for long without some means of connection that ties them together. Very much like a stone tower whose stones wouldn't remain on top of each other unless you fasten them to each other with iron spikes or lime mortar. Similarly, the roof covering wouldn't stay on the rafters unless you secure them with an iron nail or by some other means.

Now, if lifeless and immobile items don't stay next to each other very long without some type of fastening, then living, moving creatures will stay next to each other to an even lesser degree. It is like with birds; unless you lock them up they will not stay in one location. You ought to recognize that those observations are not only true for the things we see around us, but true also for the things we don't see. After all, God gave us intelligence so we can rise above our usual thinking, so we would not just rely on our senses for decision making.

Now that you see that there is a need for fasteners to keep together visible objects, and see that people come together to form groups and communities, and remain with each other, it follows that it is necessary to have a binding that keeps people together, that doesn't allow them to disband, and go their separate ways. But what could that binding be? It certainly could not be a stone wall that surrounds a community. First, many towns don't have such a perimeter wall, but they retain a community. Second, a stone wall would be an ineffective connector, because people would find the gates on the wall, or scale the wall.

What could then be the binding that keeps such mobile creatures staying close to each other, almost as if in a cage? That binding is nothing else but the law, the sum of ordinances and legal judgements. That is the binding that keeps communities of people together. What is the reason people don't dare commit murders? What is the reason we don't dare take away farmland and vineyards from our neighbors? Because we are afraid of the law. Thus, that is the binding between people, without which there is no community of any sort. It is true what Demosthenes, an ancient wise man said: "The law is like the soul." As the body is destroyed once the soul departs from it, a town without law will likewise be destroyed. As long as the soul resides in the body, all joints and bones are well, but once the soul - that connected all of them - departs from the body, the bones and joints come apart, and eventually decompose. As the wise man said, similar is the fate of a town, because as long as law is present the town fares well, but once the law disappears the town can no longer exist, because its soul flew away.

However, the law itself is mostly invisible, powerless and silent. Have you ever seen the law strolling through the market? You could hardly find it at the town hall either. So then where is the law found? An ordinance might be written on a piece of paper, but that's not going to coerce anyone, not going to call anyone to account. The law might be in the thoughts of wise elders, but in those thoughts the law remains invisible, and those thoughts don't coerce anyone. So, how could the law serve as the binding inside a community to hold it together? Because it is true: if you consider the law by itself, you will find it insufficient and unsuitable to influence people. As people are made of a physical body, an invisible law cannot govern them unless the law is made visible. Moreover, people are power hungry and ambitious, and a powerless piece of paper or thoughts cannot coerce them, so the law must be made strong and sturdy. The silent law must be given a voice. How can that be done? We must select people who will be guardians and servants of the law.

Who would those people be? They are the judges, council members and justices. Through them a dead law will be animated, the powerless law will gain strength, and the silent law will talk. The ancients stated this eloquently and truthfully: "Lex est mutus magistratus, est magistratus est lex loquens." (The law is nothing more than a silent justice, but a justice is nothing less than talking law.) From these discussions you now comprehend the need for officers, as without them a human community is for naught, and cannot survive. Thus, Moses isn't directing the Sons of Israel to elect judges and lawgivers in all towns without reason. 1. From this first part let us conclude first that it is

not only false reasoning when someone believes that officers and justices ought to be removed from communities; therefore, the people acting on such belief, like the Anabaptists, are incorrect in their action.

Because the Anabaptists not only dislike the existence of local governance, but they outright despise it. Those who follow such ideals deserve chastisement. Because those who want to scrape out the lime and mortar from between the stones are the cause of the collapse of that stone wall, in other words, those who want to tear up the law are the cause of the ruin and disintegration of the community.

Second, let us conclude that the thriving or the demise of a community is dependent on the officers, because if they guard that binding - fulfill the law - and prevent any damage to it, then the community will fare well. On the other hand, if they don't follow the law, then the community cannot thrive. Keeping this in mind then you can see, just what ought to be the main task and concern of the justices – considering that they are indeed called community servants? They ought to care for and look after those things that bind the community together, and to keep it that way.

Third, let us conclude that justices are not only necessary but also valuable people, because they are preserving peace, and making it possible for communities to thrive. That is the reason why in the Scripture the judges and rulers are called gods in Psal. 81 (Psalms 82:1): “God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.”, and in a later verse in the same Psalm (Psalm 82:6): Ego dixi dii estis (I have said, Ye are gods). Just as God is the reason for the existence of the world, the judges are, after God, the reason for the preservation of it. In addition, just as God has the power to punish whom He wants and to lift up whom He wants, the judges are given power to punish or exonerate. Therefore, it is not without reason that the Scripture calls these people gods, deserving to be respected and held in esteem. Consequently, those who don't respect the officers - or dislike either them or their superiors - are deserving of punishment and dishonor.

Moses states in the second part of our Bible quote: “they shall judge the people with just judgment.” He describes therein the most important task of officers. It was not without reason when a wise man once said that neither the Evening Star nor the Morning Star shine as bright as the fair judgement. Just as those stars stand out among the rest of the stars, a fair judgement sparkles more intensely than any other good deed.

Now, fair judgement is wanted from people of all ranks, but especially from judges, not only because – according to that wise man – fair judgement surpasses acts of all good deeds, but also because carrying out justice is a requirement of their duties. It is for this reason that knowledge about the making of laws carries the same name, *justice*, as the people who discharge it. This is the reason why the Scripture links bringing judgement with discharging justice. It is written (Ezekiel 45:9) that “.... *and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the*

Lord God.” Thus, a fair judgement could not be brought if it doesn’t represent justice, and a judgement without justice is not a fair judgement.

Even in the Hungarian language there is a saying *from laws ought to come justice*. It is also written in Esa. 60. (Isaiah 60:17): “*Pro aere afferam aurum, et pro ferro afferam argentum, et pro lignis aes, et pro lapidibus ferrum: et ponam visitationem tuam pacem, et praepositos tuos justitiam.*” (For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.)

For a judge, there are two requirements to bringing a fair judgement. The first is that the judge must be able to discover what the truth is. The second is that the judge must be able to render a judgement based on justice. In order to learn what the truth is the judge needs cleverness, wisdom, and knowledge. These attributes are needed because truth is frequently found in the shadow, and not everyone can see it, and then there are cunning people who obscure the truth so much that it becomes difficult to recognize what and where the truth is. That is why the Scripture requires wisdom from judges. When Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, gave advice to Moses in Exod. 18 (Exodus 18:21) he said this regarding the selection of judges from the nation: “. . . thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.” In Deut 1 (Deuteronomy 1:15) Moses said: “So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you . . .” When God appeared to Solomon, he said (1 Kings 3:7 - 9): “And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?” Therefore, Solomon understood that wisdom was necessary for bringing a fair judgement, and that is why he prayed to God to gain it.

From all these discussions you ought to conclude that officers must be selected from those to whom God gave wisdom and intelligence, because crude and ignorant people can not find the truth in the shadows. And without the ability to recognize truth the work and actions of officers become worthless. The second thing required of judges is that they not only recognize truth, but that they also render a fair judgement. The two circumstances that keep judges from rendering a fair judgement are prejudice and bribes. That is why Moses forbids those (Deuteronomy 16:19): “. . . thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift.” God frequently warns us against prejudice, the bias toward certain persons. Let us examine then just what prejudice is. The personal aspect of this doesn’t refer to the human being itself, but, rather, to conditions such as beauty, ugliness, poverty, wealth, possession of commanding power, having no power to command, friendship, animosity, and similar conditions that appear in that human beings.

When God forbids prejudice, He is not saying that we ought not recognize personal attributes, as a community would be in turmoil without such recognition. But we ought to have the cleverness, so we do not turn away from the truth, and, so we are not deterred from the delivery of justice by those human attributes, meaning that all who are guilty to a similar degree will receive a similar punishment.

If you would hang a stranger caught stealing, but only pillory town folk for the same stealing, then you would have shown prejudice. There was no prejudice in the action of Zaleukos who created the law that whosoever caught in fornication have both eyes gouged out. The first person caught was his son, and, in order to preserve the respect of law, he himself gouged out one of his son's eyes. Manlius Torquatus, Roman consul prohibited dueling under the penalty of beheading, and he showed no prejudice when his son violated the prohibition, and he had his son beheaded.

Let us recognize that prejudice doesn't appear in the legal process because a transgression is not identified, but because a just decision is not rendered. In other words, prejudice appears when a judge identifies and understands the wrongdoing, but because of a personal relationship or friendship he doesn't render a judgement that would be dictated by the law. However, it is not prejudice when a wrongdoing committed against a person of high-ranking is punished more severely than the same wrongdoing committed against average person, because we have to weigh the seriousness and the nature of the wrongdoing. It is obvious that the perpetrator commits a more serious offense when attacking a prince, a judge, or a family member, than when attacking an ordinary person or a stranger.

The perpetrator deserves a more severe punishment for attacking a judge, and, indeed, it is not prejudice, but rather, a situation where an identical offense receives a different punishment because of special considerations. It is up to the wisdom of the judge to determine which offenses are equal and which are not.

The second factor that divert judges from the truth: the bribes. That is why Moses said (Deuteronomy 16:19): ". . . neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous." There is no need for a great deal of explanation here, because we see evidence of bribery with our own eyes every day. Has anyone committed such a great offense that could not be lessened by a bribe? Who could ever dare to bring an issue in front of a judge – even when they have the truth on their side - when their dispute is with an offender who is wealthy? Indeed, the prophet spoke the truth when he said (Deuteronomy 16:19) that a gift blinds the eye of the wise because when one party gouges their eye out with a bribe, the judges either don't make an effort to uncover the truth or they meditate about diminishing the wrongdoing of the guilty party. And even when the judge uncovers the truth, they don't bring a fair judgement. This is why Solomon said in Prov. 17. (Proverbs 17:23): "A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment."

Therefore, a truthful judge must remain without prejudice and must not accept bribes. Even the people of the town of Thebes expressed that. When they wanted to

illustrate their desire for truthful judges, they drew the ruler as a blind person sitting on the throne, and next to the ruler sitting around an altar are the council members and officers all drawn with no hands. The altar represents the duty of the lawmakers is to render judgement in accordance with the oath they took to their faith, to the truthfulness of God. The blindness of the ruler does not mean, as some foolishly asserted, that when the ruler discovers a wrongdoing - but there is no direct evidence for it - he ought to remain quiet, making the wrongdoing invisible, inaudible. That would be misrepresenting God's intent.

Instead, the blindness of the ruler represents the desire that the rulers ought not to look at the appearance of the person, so they won't take into account that someone might be dressed in fine grenadine felt, or that some others are dressed in course felt, but, rather, if they committed identical offenses, then the rulers ought to punish them in identical fashion. The cut-off hands of the officers represent the desire that they wouldn't accept bribes.

From these discussions you now understand what the duty of the judges is: to truthfully judge the people, as Moses said (Deuteronomy 16:20): "That which is altogether just shalt thou follow . . ." That duty can be accomplished by judges if they are wise, and, thus, avoid the two obstacles: prejudice and accepting bribes. But such conduct is never found in anyone unless they are God-fearing, and that was the reason why Jethro told Moses to select God-fearing judges. In addition, we read about that topic when Jehosaphat who ordered the selection of judges in all towns of Judea. He told them in 2 Paral. 19 (2 Chronicles 19:6-7) the following: "Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you." because the fear of God gives wisdom to people. That was illustrated by the example of Solomon we spoke of earlier. In Job. 28. (Job 28:28) God told the people: "Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." In Psal. 110. (Psalms 111:10) and in Eccl. 1 (Proverbs 1:7), we read that: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." The son of Sirak said (Sirak 51:18-38) that he received wisdom by praying to the Lord. In Jac. 1. (James 1:5), we read: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

Only the fear of God can keep people from accepting bribes and from being prejudiced, because anyone who believes that the Lord sees their deceitfulness would not dare to bend the law by their prejudice or bury the truth because of a bribe. The fear of God is even more important for lawmakers because as David said, God sits among them and judges with them, and he believed that in time they will be held accountable for the fulfillment of their duties. Indeed, only God-fearing people are suitable to occupy the position of a judge, and to fulfill their duties.

We can learn three lessons from this discussion: when we select a person for a public duty, let us not consider anyone other than people with God-fearing nature, and if

we see that the person loves God, frequently studies His words, then such person will be worthy of the post of a judge or a council member.

You can trust such a person to take good care of the affairs of your town and also your personal affairs and litigation. Don't ever believe that people who don't believe in God - who abhor the laws of God - would enact anything beneficial.

Because godless people, even if they speak nice words, they may do that only for no other purpose but to gain a good reputation for themselves, so, after their election they may cause great harm and bring on great destruction. In all sorts of official affairs fairness is desirable, but especially in the management of the affairs of a community, and in the workings of the justice system. There is no greater degree of unfairness than acts committed by people who – through emphasizing disagreements in the matters of God - declare others as godless, or believers of a false religion. When such office holders argue with others, they twist the words of the other party, and they find it expedient to squabble endlessly with those whose religious beliefs they disagree with. Those kind of disagreements are a danger to the interest of the community.

I wish those high-ranking people who are in the position to select justices would open their eyes and see to it that people of agreeable heart and soul will be selected. If they do otherwise, they will invite chaos and turmoil, and for causing that they will receive severe punishment from God, both in this world and in the afterlife.

Thirdly, Moses said this about the rewards of fair-minded judges (Deuteronomy 16:20): “. . . that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

People delight in rewards - as they don't work happily when they don't see any benefit from it - so there are rewards for truthful judges. Moses names two rewards. The first reward is life, as he said: “ so you mayest live”. Obviously, Moses is not speaking of the worldly life that passes on quickly, because it wouldn't be much of a reward, as that life is nothing more than worry, mourning, and sadness. It wouldn't be compatible with God's will to offer pitiful rewards such as that. In addition, we have to keep in mind that in addition to truthful judges there are deceitful judges. Thus, God offering those pitiful rewards wouldn't offer anything better to the truthful judges than to the deceitful ones, despite that sometimes deceitful judges are shamed in this life, and pay for their transgression. We see such an example in the story of the deceitful judge Sisamnes, who was skinned alive by Cambyzes, and his skin was used to cover the chair of the judge. Cambyzes appointed the son of Sisamnes to the judgeship, and ordered that the new judge must sit on the chair covered with the skin of his father. This was done to remind the new judge that a dishonest ruling may result in the same punishment. We do see, however, that deceitful judges frequently live out their lives, and escape punishment. That is why Moses wasn't speaking about this earthly life which is shared by both truthful and deceitful judges. What he was speaking about is the life specifically given by God to devout, God-fearing judges. As Saint Peter says in cap. 1 of Eph 4.* (1 Timothy 4:8): “. . . godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life now

that is, and of that which is to come.” In Dan. 13. (Daniel 12:3) we read: “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

The second reward is: “. . . inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” Here Moses is referring to that carnal blessing of our surroundings, and with that he is saying that while God may bring suffering to His people from time to time, He will never altogether leave them. This is why David states in Psal. 36 (Psalms 37:25): “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” The reason why Moses frequently mentions the land, because that land was promised to his people, and the Jewish nation has been waiting with great hunger and thirst for that precious land they knew was flowing with milk and honey, but they couldn’t enter that land for forty years. When it comes to the things of the future people are more attracted to visible attributes, features they can directly encounter than to concepts they could experience only in their minds. That is the reason why Moses is encourages his people with the promise of happiness on this earth.

We, too, have a land of milk and honey, a land where the Lord in His pleasure sent us and settled us. We know that the Almighty keeps us in our land, and blesses our lives as long as we live truthfully, and follow His commandments. What He offers to judges He also offers to all believers. We understand that all our happiness rests on the mercy of the Lord. Let us then walk in His commandments only, so that after our death we, too, can partake in the eternal joy. Amen.