

Deuteronomy 13:1-5
You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part I
February 21, 2021

"If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—'and let us serve them,' ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. ⁵ But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.

How is it that people get so easily swayed from what is right and proper? And how can people be kept from being cunningly deceived by others? The answer is to know what is going on in the world around you in relation to whatever subject is being presented.

If a person doesn't want to be deceived concerning financial matters, he will make himself aware of whatever financial issue is being presented to him. It could be buying real estate in an area he had never visited. If such is the case, he would be wise to make a visit there before buying in order to make himself aware of what he was getting into. The smooth talker is there to cheat otherwise.

Such is true with ten thousand other things you may be presented with during your life. If you are unaware of the events surrounding you concerning a matter, you are bound to be duped.

In 1504, Christopher Columbus was able to use an eclipse to convince the natives of Jamaica that his God was angry with them because they had stopped giving him and his men help and supplies. In this, they were in real trouble and desperate need.

In order to make the natives more compliant in this regard, he consulted his astronomical tables and found that there would be a total eclipse of the moon on February 29th of the year. This was based on the time in Nuremberg, Germany, but Columbus was aware of things concerning the subject at hand, and he was able to calculate when it would occur over them.

In knowing this, he then threatened the locals by saying his God would take away the moon as a sign of His anger at their lack of help, setting the time it would occur. It did. The moon disappeared from the sky. During that time, Columbus said he would go into his cabin to pray that God would return the moon to them.

What he actually did was to watch the hourglass until the forty-eight minutes of eclipse were up. Just as the moon was supposed to emerge, he came back out and told them that he had effectively convinced God that He should forgive the locals. His ploy worked, and from that point on, they received all the supplies they needed. Eventually, they were picked up and taken back to Spain.

Text Verse: *“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.” 2 Peter 2:1-3*

Based on how you take what he did, Columbus’ actions could be considered the work of a false prophet. Probably not, but it was cunningly deceptive. However you look at it, it was the effort of a man who was aware of how things worked in the natural world. False prophets also know how things work, and they exploit those things in order to deceive others in various ways.

A true false prophet (which sounds odd, doesn’t it) is a person who speaks in the name of the true God but who twists, misuses, and misrepresents what the true God has revealed. This may be (and usually is) for his own personal gain or exaltation. It may be that he is a perverse person that just wants to see others harmed.

False prophets also speak in the name of false gods to turn people away from the true God. In the end, the Bible speaks of such things, and of such people. They are out there, they have their own agenda, and they use the lack of understanding of God’s people concerning what is going on in the world around them in relation to what He has presented – meaning what is stated in His word – against them.

When one is uninformed, unschooled, or misdirected concerning the word of God, that person is open to whatever false teaching comes his way. This is a certain truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Lord Your God is Testing You (verses 1-3)

In our passage today is a short chiasm that will help us better understand the expectations of the Lord –

*Deuteronomy 13:2-5 – You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God
Contrasts and Confirmations (12/21/2020)*

- a. he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us walk after other gods’*
- b. which you have not known (unknown)*
- c. you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams*
- d. for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul*
- x. You shall walk after the LORD your God*
- d. fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him*
- c. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death*
- b. the LORD your God (known)*
- a. to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk*

The very last words of Chapter 12 said, “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.” That serves as an introduction and a warning to what is now stated. It is the false prophets and false teachers who are very likely to add to, or to take from, this word as given by God. And so, they are now addressed.

The chapter before us logically divides itself into three separate sections. Each (verses 1, 6, and 12) begins with the word *ki*, translated by the NKJV as “if,” in each instance. Such an event would then be possible, but not certain. In other words, “Suppose this was to happen,” or “Should this come about.”

Young’s translation takes it as a certainty. He translates each instance as “when.” In other words, “When this comes about.” Looking back from our time, and knowing the history of Israel, using the word “when” certainly fits well.

But, the words now are based on what was stated in the previous verse. Moses has been admonishing the people to observe what he says, holding fast to the unity of worship towards the Lord within the entire community by avoiding idolatry, pagan rituals, and the customs of those they will dispossess. Therefore, one would think Moses’ intent is, “Should this happen, you are to do this.”

And yet, reading Moses’ words in the Song of Moses of Chapter 32, he already knows the people’s proclivity towards going astray, and so translating it as “when” very well

may be what is on his mind even as he is speaking to the people. “When this happens, you are to do this.”

If I were to choose a word that would convey both intents of what is presented, it would be the word “though.” Thus, it is a challenge to right conduct and a rather certain fact that such conduct will be needed – “Though this happens, you are to do this.”

This may seem like over-analyzing a single word, but it is important to the overall scope of what is being conveyed. The people are shown challenges that must be faced by any or by all, and they are being warned in advance of how to face them. With this understood, we enter into the content of Chapter 13...

¹ “If there arises among you a prophet

ki yaqum b’qirbekha navi – “Though arises in your (singular) midst a prophet.” As the pronoun is singular, Moses may be speaking to Israel collectively, or to each person individually. In the end, the outcome will be the same. However, the words “in your midst” favor the thought of him speaking to the nation collectively.

The *navi*, or prophet, is a word coming from the verb *nava*, meaning to prophesy. Moses is not saying this is something either unusual now, or that will be unusual in the future. Rather, being the Lord’s people, it is an expected thing. However, care must be taken in accepting the prophet’s words. This will be noted.

The *navi* has already been seen, and the position will be common in Israel. Abraham was noted as a prophet in Genesis 20. Aaron was designated as Moses’ prophet in Exodus 7. And the Lord openly said that prophets would be among Israel in Numbers 12 –

“Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. ⁷ Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. ⁸ I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?” Numbers 12:6-8

One of the things about the prophets was that just because they uttered a word of prophecy, it did not mean that he understood all of what he was prophesying. This is seen in the words of Peter –

“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, ¹¹ searching what, or what

manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.” 1 Peter 1:10-12

In Scripture, prophets are seen to receive their prophecies in various ways, one of which was just seen from Numbers 12. That is again revealed by Moses with the words...

¹ (con't) **or a dreamer of dreams,**

o kholem khalom – “Or dreamer of dreams.” The verb is *khalam* and it has two separate meanings. One is to be healthy or strong. The other is to dream. Probably the verse that ties the two thoughts together the best is that of Psalm 126:1. There the psalm says –

“When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, We were like those who dream. ² Then our mouth was filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.” ³ The LORD has done great things for us, And we are glad.” Psalm 126:1-3

If one were to substitute the word “dream” with “healthy” the two thoughts merge – “We were like those who *were made* healthy.” It is as if life were a dream state when they were brought back to their precious homeland. This state of receiving a prophecy is referred to by Elihu, a man living outside of the covenant people –

“For God may speak in one way, or in another, Yet man does not perceive it. ¹⁵ In a dream, in a vision of the night, When deep sleep falls upon men, While slumbering on their beds, ¹⁶ Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction. ¹⁷ In order to turn man from his deed, And conceal pride from man, ¹⁸ He keeps back his soul from the Pit, And his life from perishing by the sword.” Job 33:14-18

This, however, does not make such a person a prophet, nor should it be considered as such among those in the church. The prophetic word of God is written, it is complete, and it is sealed. There is no need for more prophecies or prophets. This is explicitly stated by the author of Hebrews –

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things.” Hebrews 1:1, 2

The implication of the writer’s words is that God no longer speaks in those various ways. He has spoken, the word has been given, and we should expect no further word.

This does not stop a countless stream of people from making their false prophecies on a daily basis. Nor does it stop people who are unschooled in the word, or unwilling to accept the word as God’s full and final revelation of Himself, from listening to such people.

I would hope for better for those who hear what the word says, and who accept that what it says is sufficient for their life, doctrine, and conduct. And if you feel differently about this, you’re entitled to be wrong. Nobody is stopping you, and it is your walk with the Lord that will be harmed.

The transmission of false prophecies, that Moses will now warn against, is something found in abundance in the Old Testament, but most especially in Jeremiah. In Jeremiah, he combines the two thoughts, prophecy and dreams, into one warning, such as –

“The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?” says the LORD. ²⁹ “Is not My word like a fire?” says the LORD, “And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? ³⁰ “Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,” says the LORD, “who steal My words every one from his neighbor. ³¹ Behold, I am against the prophets,” says the LORD, “who use their tongues and say, ‘He says.’ ³² Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams,” says the LORD, “and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all,” says the LORD. Jeremiah 23:28-32

To analyze all that encompasses prophets, prophecies, dreams, and visions would take an analysis of the entire Bible, because the entire Bible is a book of revealing the mind of God as conveyed in the prophetic utterances of God through His people. And along with that, there are other ways God reveals Himself to them. That is found in the next words...

¹ (con’t) **and he gives you a sign or a wonder,**

Here, Moses refers to things already seen – the *oth*, or sign, and the *mopheth*, or wonder. The *oth* is probably derived from *uth*, which is a verb indicating consent or agreement. The *oth* is not something in and of itself. Rather, it is something that stands representative of something else. For example, the first time the word is used is in Genesis 1 –

“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for **signs** and seasons, and for days and years; ¹⁵and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth’; and it was so.” Genesis 1:14, 15

In saying this, the Lord was indicating that stars had varied purposes. The “seasons,” “days,” and “years,” is understandable. They mark out the times of life, and we can use them to determine things – like when to plant, when it will get cold, and so on.

However, they also are given by God to point to something else. That is seen in Scripture in the Star of Bethlehem. It was something given to reveal that Messiah had been born. Circumcision is also an *oth*, or sign. It stands representative of something else – meaning the cutting of the sin nature in man. It is thus a picture of the hope of Messiah.

The *mopheth*, or wonder, comes from *yaphah*, or beautiful. Thus, it is something that is conspicuous, like a miracle. It is an open demonstration of something that captures the attention. Unlike the sign that points to something else, it is the thing itself. Should someone give a sign or produce a wonder...

²and the sign or the wonder comes to pass,

u-ba ha’oth v’ha’mopheth – “and comes the sign and the wonder.” The words here mean that the prophet or dreamer of dreams gives a sign that then is fulfilled, or he actually produces a wonder. There is no doubt of it. What does that mean? Well, it depends on the next words of that person...

^{2 (con’t)} of which he spoke to you,

The idea here is that a person could make a claim such as “This is a sign to you that you will win the lottery tomorrow,” and it comes to pass. Or the person might do something like a magic trick that seems impossible to have been anything but of divine origin. In such an instance, one might be persuaded that this guy really has a connection with the divine. Such is seen in Acts 8:9-11 –

“But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, ¹⁰ to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the great power of God.” ¹¹ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.”

There is a difference between how people approach such things, and the distinction should be made. Some perform what we call today “magic.” They make no claims that they are in connection with the divine. Instead, they devise skilled forms of misdirection and challenge you to figure out how they did what they did.

And then, there are those who claim – like Simon – that they have a great power or divine ability to do the things they do. In this, they elevate what they are doing above the natural world to the supernatural. It is such as this that will be the ones...

² (con’t) **saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’ —**

lemor nelekah akhare Elohim akherim – “saying, let us walk after gods other.” It is an important contrast to what will be said in verse 4 – “You shall walk after the Lord your God.”

In such a case, when the thing happens that he said would happen, he then says, “This power came from this god or that god. He is the one we should be following.” Such a person may even claim he is divine, having the ability to tap into the universal conscience, the universe’s power, or even a power that is separate and above the created order itself.

In Daniel 2 (and elsewhere) the king had a dream. He wanted to know the interpretation of the dream and so he called an entire group of people like this, defined as “the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans.”

They claimed to have the ability to perform supernatural deeds, or that they had the ability to tap into the supernatural or even the divine. The king obviously questioned this, and so instead of just asking for the meaning of his dream that he described to them, he asked them to first tell him what dream he had, and then to explain its meaning to him. In a comedy of back and forth waffling on their part, the king saw through their supposed claims –

“I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: ⁹ if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for

you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.”

¹⁰ The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. ¹¹ It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.” Daniel 2:8-11

As stupid as falling for this in the first-place sounds, how guilty are we (meaning society in general or any one of us) of being tempted in this way – tarot cards, hearing someone say that “Allah accomplished the victory,” or simply believing a prosperity preacher (who is – by default – preaching a false gospel).

Daniel and his three friends with him could have joined ranks with these people, and they would have been found as false as the others were. Instead, they trusted in the Lord to provide an answer to the king’s demand.

They petitioned the Lord, and the Lord provided what they needed, telling what dream the king had, and then properly explaining it to him. In this, Daniel took no credit for what he had received, he rightly pointed out that the others were unable to receive what he had received, and that it was God who provided the answer, implying that those charlatans had no connection with God –

“The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. ²⁸ But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.” Daniel 2:27, 28

In this, Daniel did what was right and proper. He exalted the God of Israel, whom he knew. Of this precept for Israel, Albert Barnes rightly states –

“The Lord had said, ‘Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.’ A prophet is here supposed who invites the people ‘to go after other gods.’ To such a one no credit is under any circumstances to be given, even should he show signs and wonders to authenticate his doctrine. The standing rule of faith and practice had been laid down once for all - that the people were to hold fast. The prophet who propounded another rule could only be an impostor.”

Moses now warns against those who would do otherwise and follow after false gods...

² (con't) **which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’**

Such things as this, or a million other possibilities, happen on any given day. They happen to believers and unbelievers alike. We see the incredible, and we respond to it based on our faith in the Lord, in our trust in who He is, or on how well versed we are in His word and in how willing we are to hold solely to that same word.

For many, the connection with the true God does not exist. For others, their grounding in the faith, or their knowledge of the word, is so minimal that they are swayed from what is right. In this, they follow what that false prophet recommends, going after his false gods to serve them. But the word is spoken...

³ **you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams,**

The Hebrews is emphatic: “**that** prophet or **that** dreamer of dreams.” It is intended to set such a person off from one who is a true prophet or who receives a true dream. A true prophet is to be listened to, but the false prophet is to be ignored.

There is a term commonly used among Christian apologists known as syncretism. In short, it refers to the amalgamation of different religions, cultures, and schools of thought into one religious expression. A simple example of it is the mixing of Roman Catholicism with Santeria. Santeria is defined by Wikipedia –

“Santería, also known as Regla de Ocha, Regla Lucumí, or Lucumí, is an African diasporic religion that developed in Cuba between the 16th and 19th centuries. It arose through a process of syncretism between the traditional Yoruba religion of West Africa and the Roman Catholic form of Christianity.”

This isn't unique within the Roman Catholic Church. Rather, their adherents are found around the world to merge with cults of all types. And even what is considered mainstream Roman Catholicism is so tainted with heresies that it is – for the most part – actually Christian in name only.

The doctrines of Christ are taught to varying degrees, but they are so completely intermingled with the unholy and profane that very few adherents truly follow Jesus Christ alone. There are some, but they are a small minority.

Whether the RCC throws in Mary, the saints, and even the pope as intermediate access points to God, or whether the charismatic movement mingles the supposed divine utterances of prophecies and angelic tongues – making those who claim such things

intermediaries to the divine – or even to the evangelical movement when it claims a special access to riches for its adherents through the prosperity gospel – all such claims are false, they are damaging, and they pervert what is pure and good that stems from the Lord alone.

Though what Moses is referring to here is a precept of the Old Covenant, the truth it conveys is something that is rightly to be applied to our own walk at all times. We are not to listen to such a prophet or dreamer of dreams, and we are to hold fast to the Lord and His word alone. We are not to accept that which is false, even if it is mixed with some truth.

But one might ask, “If this person was aware of, or actually made to happen, the sign or wonder which came to pass, then how do we know it wasn’t that “other god” that did it?” Moses tells them that such is not the case. Rather...

³ (con’t) **for the LORD your God is testing you**

Here, the words go to the second person plural “for Yehovah your (all) God is testing you (all).” This will continue until the middle of verse 5. It is not that the entire congregation will be swayed, but that the people within the congregation will be. God is testing them in order...

³ (con’t) **to know whether you love the LORD your God**

The verb is a participle and gives the sense of that which is enduring and ongoing: *ladaat hayishkem ohavim eth Yehovah elohekem* – “to the end purpose of knowing you are loving Yehovah your God.”

This is important because it says in 1 Kings 3:3 that Solomon loved the Lord and walked in the statutes of his father David. However, in 1 Kings 11, it then says –

“But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites— ²from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. ³And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.” 1 Kings 11:1-3

Solomon loved the Lord, but it didn't continue. He wasn't "loving the Lord." This type of attitude is what the test of the Lord concerning such false prophets is intended to reveal.

It is the Lord who called Israel. It is the Lord who established Israel. It is the Lord who led Israel. It is the Lord who has done all things for Israel, and it is Israel who have been called as His people. As this is so, their allegiance is to be to Him alone. The test for all is whether they were loving towards Him...

³ (con't) **with all your heart and with all your soul.**

One can love in varying degrees. What the Lord calls for is to love Him entirely, both with the intellect and reason, and also with that which animates the person in his walk before the Lord.

To love the Lord with one's intellect (the heart), but without the soul is a person who is fickle – expressing love in mental assent, but whose actions fail to work in accord with that love. It would be the husband who loves his wife, but still chases other women.

To love the Lord with one's soul (that which animates the person in deed and action) but not with the intellect, is a person who is prideful, trusting that his actions are more important than truly seeking the essence of the Lord as its own prize.

A person who loves with the heart and the soul is a person who is both in love with the Lord, and who remains in love with the Lord – in mind, in action, and in continued pursuit. Even unto death, he is – and he will remain – faithful to Him.

The way to obtain this precious state before the Lord is next stated by Moses...

*Is this a word from the Lord? How can I know?
What if this preacher is just snuffing me?
Is his word true, or is it untoward? Even so...
To this puzzle, what is the key?*

*How can I know if the words are false or if they are true?
Please, what is the answer, where is the key?
From where comes the answer? What shall I do?
What is the resolution that is escaping me?*

*Wait! Are you telling me that really is the key?
Just read the word for myself? Is that what I am to do?
Yes! Why didn't that already dawn on me?
Take it off the shelf and read it through and through!*

*Yes, I shall take it off the shelf, reading it through and through
If that is what it takes, that is what I shall do!*

II. From the House of Bondage (verses 4 & 5)

⁴You shall walk after the LORD your God

This is set in contrast to verse 2 where the false prophet said, "Let us walk after other gods." Here Moses says that they are to rather "walk after the Lord your God." As always, in the Bible, to "walk" signifies the conduct of one's life and actions.

The path the Lord leads on, they are to follow. The precepts that He gives, they are to apply to their lives. And so on. Also...

^{4 (con't)} and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.

The Hebrew is more personal and emphatic, and the last verb bears a strong emphasis – "and Him you all fear, and His commandments you all keep, and His voice you all obey; and Him you all shall serve, and to Him you all (*shall surely*) hold fast."

The same word used here, translated as "hold fast," *dabaq*, is used of Solomon when he "clung" to his foreign wives in love. In this, he was seduced away from the Lord to their false gods in the same manner that a false prophet will seduce away a person to following his false gods.

The admonition is to devote everything that comprises the person into a heartfelt, intellectual, and physical pursuit of the Lord, clinging to Him with every fiber of one's being. A review of the New Testament epistles reveals that the exact same expectations are given to us toward the Lord Jesus as are laid down by Moses now.

We are to walk in Christ (Colossian 2:6), we are to fear God (Colossians 3:22), we are to keep His commandments (1 Corinthians 7:19), we are to obey His gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8), we are to serve Him (1 Corinthians 7:35), and we are to hold fast to Him (Hebrews 10:23).

It is through these things that we will be kept from being turned aside from Him by false prophets, or from any other distractions that will lead us down the wrong path.

Unlike the false prophets of today, however, Israel had another obligation levied upon them that was intended to keep such people from constantly arising and leading the people astray...

⁵ But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death,

Like verse 3, there is an emphasis in these words, “But **that** prophet, or **that** dreamer of dreams.” The true prophet is contrasted to the false. The true prophet was to live while the false was to be put to death. The contrast was important for Jeremiah –

“So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, ‘This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.’

“Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: ¹⁸ ‘Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘Zion shall be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple
Like the bare hills of the forest.’

¹⁹ Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and seek the LORD’s favor? And the LORD relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves.””” Jeremiah 26:17-19

On the other hand, Elijah did according to the word of the Lord after he had proven the prophets of Baal false –

“And Elijah said to them, ‘Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!’ So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.” 1 Kings 18:40

Score a big one for the winners! Such a false prophet was to be put to death...

^{5 (con’t)} because he has spoken in order to turn *you* away from the LORD your God,

Here is a new word in Scripture, *sarah*. It means turning aside, rebellion, defection, apostasy and so on. It comes from the verb *sur*, meaning to turn aside.

For Israel, in turning to a false god, the people had – by default – apostatized from following the true God. In this, any such attempt to do so was to be deemed a capital offense.

^{5 (con't)} **who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage,**

As with every passage relevant to the relationship of the people to the Lord, Moses reminds them of why they were so obligated to Him, stating that it is He who brought them out of Egypt, redeeming them from the house of bondage.

With this in mind, it cannot go unstated that this is an exact parallel to what Christ spiritually did for us. Egypt pictures bondage to sin. Christ Jesus brought us out from that, having redeemed us from that house of bondage.

Because of this, we have our own obligation to respond in the same manner to Him as Israel did to Yehovah. He is the same God in both instances, and whether physical or spiritual bondage, we have been brought out.

The major difference is that the Lord will judge the false prophets. Individually, we need to worry about our own relationship and let Him deal with the others. As a church, we are to weed out the false teachers and expel them from our gatherings.

Either way, Israel or the church, the false prophets have a set goal which is...

^{5 (con't)} **to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk.**

With the words of this clause, it returns to the second person singular. The intent of the false prophet is to turn Israel, the people, away from the Lord.

What is said here reflects the same sentiment that Paul expressed towards the Galatians. False teachers had come into the church and were attempting to get them to go back under the law of Moses, thus rejecting the finished work of Christ. In this, Paul said, "They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them" (Galatians 4:17).

The goal of the false prophet, false apostle, or false teacher is *l'hadikhakha min ha'derek* – “to entice you from the way.” It is always to a perverse path, and it always leads to a new form of bondage. The people can walk in the freedom of the Lord, or they can walk in the bondage offered by the false prophet.

Nothing has changed from the time of the law until now in this regard. The false teachers of the church want control over the flock. It is a control of power, of money, of sex, or of the very souls of the people they mislead, but it is not the freedom offered by the Lord.

If the teachers of the church want the best for the church, they will properly teach the core doctrines of the faith – freedom from the law, salvation by grace through faith with nothing else added, liberty in personal conduct and yet living in a proper and circumspect manner, eternal salvation, and so on.

Anything else is a false teaching intended to bind the saints once again into a life that lacks the true joy and eternal hope found in Jesus Christ. For those who teach otherwise, Moses says (and certainly what applies to the true church today as well)...

***5 (fin) So you shall put away the evil from your midst.**

For Israel, it was a large pile of stones to be hurled at the offender until he was dead. For the church, it is to reject false ideology, expel false teachers, and to have nothing to do with the darkness they teach. We must hold fast to our values in Christ, and we are to pursue Him and His word with all of our hearts and souls. To the glory of God.

Of this passage today, Adam Clarke says the following which must be corrected –

“God permits such impostors to arise to try the faith of his followers, and to put their religious experience to the test; for he who experimentally knows God cannot be drawn away after idols. He who has no experimental knowledge of God, may believe any thing. Experience of the truths contained in the word of God can alone preserve any man from Deism, or a false religion. They who have not this are a prey to the pretended prophet, and to the dreamer of dreams.” Adam Clarke

Clarke says, “he who experimentally knows God cannot be drawn away after idols.” I disagree. Solomon experimentally knew God. That is evident from his meeting with the Lord in 1 Kings 3 and again in 1 Kings 6. It is again evident from another meeting with Him in 1 Kings 9. Despite these occurrences, Solomon fell away to the point where this is recorded –

“For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶ Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. ⁷ Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. ⁸ And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.” 1 Kings 11:5-8

Clarke says that “Experience of the truths contained in the word of God can alone preserve any man from” such things. This is true, but only to a point. What is correct is that complete, continued, and constant experience of the truths of God will do so. And even that must be mingled with a purposeful pursuit of the Lord as revealed there, in a wholehearted devotion to that word.

Without these things being applied to our walk, it is not a maybe, but a certainty, that we too will fall away from what is expected of us as we live out our lives in His presence.

When I say a complete experience of the truths contained in the word, I mean reading it – from cover to cover. I mean knowing it in all it says. I mean keeping it in the context of what is being said. Without this foundation, any person can say anything and claim it is the word of God, and you have absolutely no reason to not believe him.

Unless you are versed in the word, you are at the whims and leadings of any false teacher that comes along. If you learn nothing else from the teachings of this church, I would hope you would learn that. You must pursue this wonderful treasure, God’s Superior Word, with all of your heart and all of your soul.

The Lord would ask you, and in fact, He would plead with you, to do nothing less. And, in fact, He has done just that through the words of Moses, and Jeremiah, and Paul, and through the words of all of the other authors of Scripture – “Listen to Me. Pay heed to My word. Be built up in My word so that you are not torn apart by savage wolves!”

This is the lesson of the false prophet. A word of the Lord is only the Lord’s word if it comes from His word. And so, know His word well. It is your safeguard until the day He comes for His people.

Closing Verse: *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Colossians 3:16, 17*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 13:6-18 *This is how you are to tread – yes, it is what you are to do...* (You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, **Part II**) (43rd Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part I

“If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams

And he to you a sign or a wonder is conveying
And the sign or the wonder comes to pass
Of which he spoke to you, saying

‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—

‘And let us serve them.’” Yes, serve them and not the Lord alone

You shall not listen to the words of that prophet
-----or that dreamer of dreams

For the LORD your God is testing you to know
Whether you love the LORD your God
With all your heart and with all your soul; thus, it is so

You shall walk after the LORD your God
And fear Him, and keep His commandments too
And obey His voice
You shall serve Him and hold fast to Him; so you shall do

But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death
Because he has spoken in order to from the LORD your God
-----turn you away
Who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you
From the house of bondage, to entice you from the way

In which the LORD your God commanded you to walk
So you shall put away the evil from your midst and
-----you shall end that false prophet’s talk

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...