

Deuteronomy Chapter 18

Verses 1-8: Care is taken that the priests entangle not themselves with the affairs of this life, nor enrich themselves with the wealth of this world. They have better things to mind. Care is likewise taken that they want not the comforts and conveniences of this life. The people must provide for them. He that has the benefit of solemn religious assemblies, ought to give help for the comfortable support of those that minister in such assemblies.

The priests, the Levites and all the tribe of Levi need to be distinguished in that all the priests were descended from Levi, but only Aaronite Levites were priests. In general, they had “no part nor inheritance with Israel”, that is, they possessed no unified tribal territory (10:9; 12:12; 14:27, 29).

Three families made up the “tribe of Levi”: The Gershonites, the Kohathites and the Merarites.

Deuteronomy 18:1 "The priests the Levites, [and] all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance."

“All the tribe of Levi”: Unlike the other 12 tribes, none of the tribe of Levi, including the priests, was given an allotment of land to settle and cultivate. The Levites lived in the cities assigned to them throughout the land (Num. 35:1-8; Joshua chapter 21), while the priests lived near the central sanctuary, where they went to officiate in their appropriate course (compare 1 Chron. 6:57-60). Levites assisted the priests (Num. 3-4, 8).

The Levitical tribe belongs to God, in place of the firstborn of each family. They do not inherit land with the other tribes, because they live of things offered in the temple. They are to share with the altar. The Levites were not all priests, but were in the service of God in some manner. The meal offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering are what is meant by the offerings above. The things appropriated to the LORD are also, to be used by the Levites. This included the tithes and offerings.

Deuteronomy 18:2 "Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD [is] their inheritance, as he hath said unto them."

“The LORD is their inheritance”: He had chosen the Levites as His firstborn consecration portion of Israel (verse 5), and then gave Himself to them as their portion. Their portion of the offerings is assigned (in verses 3-5).

Verses (6-8), state an important principle in that the rights of all Levites are guaranteed against any possible restrictions imposed by vested interests at the central sanctuary. The priests were to be treated generously, and they could keep anything received from the sale of property as they came to the sanctuary.

They do not live by raising crops or animals. Their livelihood comes from God. The things offered to the Lord, in turn, are used to support the Levites.

Deuteronomy 18:3 "And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether [it be] ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw."

Not from the priests, as Jarchi observes, but from those that bring the sacrifices to the priests, particularly the peace offerings.

"Whether it be ox or sheep": The one of the herd, the other of the flock. Creatures used in sacrifice, and takes in goats and the kids of them, rams and lambs.

"And they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw": The first of these designs the upper part of the arm that joins to the neck and back. And the next the two cheeks with the tongue, as both Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe. And indeed the whole head is meant. "The maw", the Hebrew word here rendered maw, or stomach, may have another signification; and some render it the breast; others take it for the part which lies under the breast.

They bring the animal to sacrifice, and this is the portion of the priest.

Deuteronomy 18:4 "The first fruit [also] of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him."

This is the "terumah", or heave offering, the offering of the firstfruits. What the measure or quantity was is not declared, but is fixed by the Jews (see notes on Exodus 22:29).

In addition to the first fruits already prescribed by the Law to be given to the priests (Num. 18:12-13). Moses here enacts that the first fleece of the sheep shall be given. All these, though legally prescribed, were free gifts on the part of the people. The neglect of the prescription incurred only moral blame, not judicial penalty.

In the 18th chapter of Numbers, we read of the first of the fruit, corn, wine, and oil. In this, we see the first of the fleece of the sheep added.

Deuteronomy 18:5 "For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever."

That is, has chosen the tribe of Levi out of all the other tribes of Israel.

"To stand to minister in the name of the Lord": The priests to minister to the Lord by offering sacrifices, and the Levites to minister to the priests in assisting them in their service. And both their ministry was in the name of the Lord, and for his glory. And done standing; for there was no sitting in the sanctuary; the priestly ministry was only performed standing. Whatever was done sitting was rejected (see Heb. 10:11).

"Him and his sons for ever": Levi and his posterity, or the posterity of the tribe of Levi, were chosen by the Lord to this service. To be employed in it as long as the ceremonial law continued, on which stood the Levitical priesthood. But both are now abolished by Christ, having their accomplishment in him (Heb. 7:11).

The Levitical tribe was trained in spiritual things. The priest represented the people to God, and God to the people. When he had on the priestly garment, he was speaking in the power and authority of God. He was God's representative on the earth. They were a separate people, because the oil of anointing was upon them.

Verses 6-8: "A Levite": If a Levite wanted to go to the central sanctuary to minister there in the Lord's name, he was permitted to do so and to receive equal support along with other Levites.

Deuteronomy 18:6 "And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the LORD shall choose;"

In any of the cities through the land, for they were dispersed all over the country, and employed in instructing and teaching the people. And, excepting the cities which were given them to dwell in out of the various tribes, they were but sojourners.

"And come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the Lord shall choose": The city of Jerusalem, where the temple would be built, and sacrifices offered. At which the Levites were assisting to the priests, and in various parts of the service of the sanctuary. And to which they are supposed to come with a hearty good will, with great eagerness of soul, and a vehement desire of being employed in the work of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 18:7 "Then he shall minister in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites [do], which stand there before the LORD."

The Targum of Jonathan is, "he shall minister in the name of the Word of the Lord his God". In the name of Christ, as a type of him, as every priest and every sacrifice were. He was to be allowed to officiate, though it was not his course or turn.

"As all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before the Lord": Daily offering the same sacrifices, and whatsoever are brought unto them. Who might be said to stand before the Lord, because they stood at the altar of the Lord, and offered the sacrifices of the people to him. And a country Levite or priest was to be admitted to do the same thing at Jerusalem, and in the temple there, as they did. And this shows that a priest is meant by the Levite.

All of the Levites were a separate people to the service of God. They could all minister, when they came to the sanctuary. They all lived of the gifts given in the temple.

Deuteronomy 18:8 "They shall have like portions to eat, beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony."

Equal parts of the sacrifices with the priests that usually ministered there. Hence we learn, says Jarchi, that they divided the skins and flesh of the sin offerings. Perhaps even such as did not come by virtue of the feast. As the daily sacrifices, and the additions of the Sabbath, and the vows, and the freewill offerings.

"Beside that which cometh by the sale of his patrimony": For though the priests and Levites had no inheritance divided to them in the land, yet they might buy houses and fields, and leave them to their children. And this may be called their patrimony (heritage or inheritance). Now it was not reasonable that they should wholly live upon this, or spend what their fathers left them. But, besides the income of that, were to have their part and portion with their brethren in the sacrifices of the sanctuary.

There would have been far too much meat for just the priest's and the high priest's families from the offerings. The foodstuff was to be shared with the entire Levitical tribe. "Patrimony" means his price upon the house of his fathers. This means they were to live of the things of the temple.

Verses 9-14: Was it possible that a people so blessed with Divine institutions, should ever be in any danger of making those their teachers whom God had made their captives? They were in danger; therefore, after many like cautions, they are charged not to do after the abominations of the nations of Canaan. All reckoning of lucky or unlucky days, all charms for diseases, all amulets or spells to prevent evil, fortune-telling, etc. are here forbidden. These are so wicked as to be a chief cause of the rooting out of the Canaanites. It is amazing to think that there should be any pretenders of this kind in such a land, and day of light, as we live in. They are mere impostors who blind and cheat their followers.

"Pass through the fire": This section contains some stern admonitions against any indulgence in sorcery. The exact nature of this practice seems to have been a kind of trial by ordeal. The context indicates that the offering of a child is for the particular purpose of determining or discerning the course of events. This probably was the motivation behind the Moabite kin's sacrifice of his son (in 2 Kings 3:26-27).

The Canaanites, heavily involved in the occult, practiced witchcraft, interpreted omens, called up the dead, and listened to soothsayers and diviners, in addition to child sacrifice. The Israelites were moving into a dark land and needed to be careful to destroy the people and so avoid their wickedness.

Verses 9-12: "After the abominations of those nations": Moses gave a strict injunction not to copy, imitate, or do what the polytheistic Canaanites did. Nine detestable practices of the Canaanites were delineated in verse 10-11, namely:

- (1) Sacrificing children in the fire (see 12:31);

- (2) Witchcraft, seeking to determine the will of the gods by examining and interpreting omens;
- (3) Soothsaying, attempted to control the future through power given by evil spirits;
- (4) Interpreting omens, telling the future based on signs;
- (5) Sorcery, inducing magical effects by drugs or some other sort of potion;
- (6) Conjuring spells, binding other people by magical muttering;
- (7) Being a medium, one who supposedly communicates with the dead, but actually communicates with demons;
- (8) Being a spiritualist, one who has an intimate acquaintance with the demonic, spiritual world; and
- (9) Calling up the dead, investigating and seeking information from the dead.

These evil practices were the reason the Lord was going to drive the Canaanites out of the land.

Deuteronomy 18:9 "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations."

The land of Canaan, often thus described, to express the goodness of God in bestowing it on them, as a mere favor of his, without any desert of theirs. And so typical of the heavenly Canaan, or eternal life, which is the free gift of God through Christ.

"Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of these nations": The seven nations which before inhabited it; they might learn, as Jarchi observes, to know how corrupt their works were, and to show to their children, that they might not do so. But they were not to learn them so as to practice them, but to have them in the utmost abhorrence. As being abominable to God, and which should be so to them. Some of which are as follow.

One reason God had them to kill, or drive out the people, was so they would not follow the ways of the people of the land. They were to remain a holy people. These people worshipped false gods, which were abominations to God.

Deuteronomy 18:10 "There shall not be found among you [any one] that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, [or] that useth divination, [or] an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,"

"Divination": (*qesem*) was used of Balaam in (Num. 22:7 and Joshua 13:22). Saul asked the witch of Endor to "divine unto me" in (1 Sam. 28:8). The same word in (Ezekiel 21:21), refers to the practice of whirling arrows in a quiver and deciding the answer to the question by the first arrow thrown out.

"Observer of times": (*meonen*) may be a reference to divination by reading clouds.

“Enchanter”: (*menachesh*): In (Genesis 44:5, 15), it refers to Joseph’s divination by means of a cup, and may point to a kind of hydromancy, in which reflections on the water in a cup are observed.

“Witch”: (*mekashep*) denotes a form of magic. The root means “to cut up”, and thus may refer to one who cuts up herbs and brews them for magical purposes (Greek *pharmaka*, drug). The term is used in (Micah 5:12), for some such material as drugs or herbs used superstitiously to produce magical effects. The noun therefore means enchanter or sorcerer (Exodus 7:11; 22:18; 2 Chron. 33:6; Dan. 2:2; Mal. 3:5).

The worship of Molech involved causing the children to walk through fire. This was strictly forbidden. "Divination" is the same as witchcraft. "Observers of times" are people who read their horoscopes. "Enchanters" are people who cast spells, such as a hypnotist. All of these, including a witch, are things or people who the person puts his trust in rather than in God. Their power comes from the devil, and not God.

Deuteronomy 18:11 "Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer."

“Wizard”: (*yide oni*): This term is related to the verb “to know”, or “to consult” a similar spirit.

“Necromancer”: The Hebrew for this term means “one who asks of the dead”. All these practices (in verses 10-11), are clearly condemned.

Persons such as palm readers, all sorts of mind control, and even the martial arts fall into this category. A "necromancer" is someone who conjures up the spirits of the dead for purposes of magically revealing the future. The sad thing is that much of this is a part of our society today.

Verses 15-22: It is here promised concerning Christ, that there should come a Prophet, great above all the prophets. By whom God would make known himself and his will to the children of men, more fully and clearly than he had ever done before. He is the Light of the world (John 8:12). He is the Word by whom God speaks to us (John 1:1; Heb. 1:2). In his birth, he should be one of their nation. In his resurrection, he should be raised up at Jerusalem, and from there his doctrine should go forth to all the world. Thus God, having raised up his Son Christ Jesus, sent him to bless us. He should be like unto Moses, only above him. This prophet is come, even JESUS; and is He that should come, and we are to look for no other. The view of God which he gives, will not terrify or overwhelm, but encourages us. He speaks with fatherly affection and Divine authority united. Whoever refuses to listen to Jesus Christ, shall find it is at his peril; the same that is the Prophet is to be his Judge (John 12:48). Woe then to those who refuse to hearken to His voice, to accept His salvation, or yield obedience to His sway! But happy are they who trust in Him, and obey Him. He will lead them in the paths of safety and peace, until He brings them to the land of perfect light, purity, and happiness. Here is a caution against false prophets. It highly concerns us to have a right touchstone wherewith to try the word we hear, that we may know what that word is which the Lord has not spoken. Whatever is against the plain sense of

the written word, or which gives countenance or encouragement to sin, we may be sure is not that which the Lord has spoken.

Deuteronomy 18:12 "For all that do these things [are] an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

Not that do all these things, but whoever does any of them, as Jarchi notes. All such persons that use such unlawful methods, or any of them, to gain knowledge. And likewise all those that consult them, and make use of them. And especially it must be very abominable in the people of Israel to encourage such persons and practices. Who had the knowledge of the true God, and him to consult on all occasions. Had his law and testimony to attend unto as the rule of their conduct, and his prophets to advise with in matters of difficulty (see Isa. 8:20).

"And because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee": As well as other sins mentioned in (Lev. 18:24). And, as before observed from Cicero, all nations have been addicted to the arts of divination here condemned.

An "abomination" is not just a sin, but a revolting sin. These are totally impermissible. God wants your total loyalty. He does not want anyone or anything else, in control of your will.

Deuteronomy 18:13 "Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God."

Sincerely serve and worship him, faithfully adhere to his word, laws, statutes, and ordinances, and walk uprightly before him.

To be perfect with the LORD thy God, does not mean that you will be perfect as far as the world is concerned. In fact, if you try to live perfect before the Lord, you will be an outcast of the world.

Deuteronomy 18:14 "For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so [to do]."

Such as are before mentioned, and did as they directed them.

"But as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do": Or, "but thou not so" thou shouldest not do so. Not hearken to such persons, but to the Lord thy God, and to his law and testimony. Nor art thou left to the deception of such persons. The Lord thy God hath given thee: his word and statutes, as a rule to go by, which he has not given to other nations. The Targum of Jonathan adds, "the priests shall ask by Urim and Thummim, and a true prophet shall the Lord your God give unto you." So that they had no need to hearken to such impostors and deceivers. Or, "as for thee, not so are they whom the Lord thy God giveth thee". That is, the prophets whom the Lord would give unto them would not be like the diviners of the Heathens, who imposed on the people and deceived them. But would be men sent and inspired by God, and true and faithful in the discharge of their office. And to hearken to these they are encouraged by the promise of a very eminent one, like to Moses, in the next verse.

The nations being driven out, had placed their faith in these abominable things. You can see what happened to them. God has forbidden this. He requires our total loyalty to Him.

Verses 15-18: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet ... like unto me" speaks of the coming of the Lord (Matt. 21:11; Luke 1:76; Acts 3:22). There are three standard prophetic offices of the Coming One, Prophet, Priest, and King, along with two more expectations: the Sage and the Suffering Servant. Each of these five ideals was a subject of intense interest in the century before the coming of Christ, texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls show how lively the issues were.

Verses 15-19: By contrast, Yahweh would raise up a line of prophets. The will of God was to be discovered through a prophet and not through a diviner, a magic worker, or a spiritualist. He was to be "from the midst of thee, of thy brethren" and "like unto me".

Rev. 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

"A Prophet ... like unto me": The singular pronoun emphasizes the ultimate Prophet who was to come. Both the Old Testament (34:10), and the New Testament (Acts 3:22-23; 7:37), interpret this passage as a reference to the coming Messiah, who like Moses would receive and preach divine revelation and lead His people (compare John 1:21, 25, 43-45; 6:14; 7:40). In fact, Jesus was like Moses in several other ways:

- (1) He was spared death as a baby (Exodus chapter 2; Matt. 2:13-23);
- (2) He renounced a royal court (Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 11:24-27);
- (3) He had compassion on His people (Num. 27:17; Matt. 9:36);
- (4) He made intercession for the people (Deut. 9:18; Heb., 7:25);
- (5) He spoke with God face to face (Exodus 34:29-30; 2 Cor. 3:7); and
- (6) He was the mediator of a covenant (Deut. 29:1; Heb. 8:6-7).

Deuteronomy 18:15 "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;"

A single person only is spoken of. And there is a dissimilitude between Moses and anyone of the prophets, and all of them in succession (Deut. 34:10). But the Messiah, with whom the whole agrees; and upon this the expectation of a prophet among the Jews was raised (John 6:14). And is applied to him, and referred to as belonging to him in (Acts 3:22). Who was a prophet, mighty in word and deed. And not only foretold future events, as his own sufferings, death and resurrection from the dead. But the destruction of Jerusalem, and other things. He taught and instructed men in the knowledge of divine things, spake as never man did, and preached the Gospel fully and faithfully, so that as the law came by Moses. The doctrine of grace and truth came by him; and he was raised up of God. Called, sent, commissioned and qualified by him for the office of a

prophet, as well as was raised from the dead as a confirmation of his being that extraordinary person.

"From the midst of thee": He was of Israel, according to the flesh, of the tribe of Judah, and of the house of David. Born of a virgin in Bethlehem, preached only in Judea, and was raised from the dead in the midst of them, and of which they were witnesses.

"Of thy brethren": The Israelites, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, and to whom he was sent as a prophet, and among whom he only preached.

"Like unto me": The Targum of Jonathan adds, "in the Holy Spirit;" which he received without measure, and in respect of which was superior to Moses, or any of the prophets. He was like to Moses in the faithful discharge of his office, in his familiar converse with God, and in the miracles which he wrought. As well as in his being a Mediator, and the Redeemer of his people, as Moses was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, and the deliverer of them out of Egypt. And it is a saying of the Jews themselves, "as was the first redeemer, so is the second."

"Unto him ye shall hearken": Externally attend on his ministry. Internally receive his doctrine, embrace and profess it. Do what is heard from him, hear him, and not another, always and in all things (see Matt. 17:5).

All of the abominations mentioned are pertaining to the spiritual side of mankind. They are not civil matters. The spiritual side will be taken care of by a prophet, whom God will raise up to train them.

Verses 16-18 indicate he was to be a mediator between God and man, like Moses. The use of the singular noun led some Jewish expositors to seek to identify the prophet with some individual, such as Joshua or Jeremiah (but verses 21-22 exclude such an interpretation). He was to be like Jesus in that He was faithful (Heb. 3:2), full of compassion and love (Num. 27:17; Matt. 9:36), a powerful intercessor for his people (9:18; Heb. 7:25), speaking with God face-to-face and reflecting the divine glory (2 Cor. 3:7). Like Christ, he was to be a mighty prophet in word and deed (Luke 24:19), a revealer of God's will and purpose (compare 6:1; Rev. 1:1); a mediator of the covenant (29:1; Heb. 8:6-7), and a leader of the people (Isa. 55:4).

Deuteronomy 18:16 "According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not."

This was promised them, in answer to their request at Horeb or Mount Sinai, when the law was delivered to them in the terrible manner it was. In the day of the assembly; in which the tribes were gathered together to receive the law. When they were assembled at the foot of the mount for that purpose.

"Saying, let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God": Which was such a voice of words, attended with so much terror, that they that heard entreated the word might not be spoken to them any more, as the apostle says in (Heb. 12:19).

"Neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not": Out of which the Lord spoke; the congregation of Israel is here represented speaking as if a single person.

It was by their own choice that God not speak directly to them any more. They wanted a prophet, who would tell them God's will for their lives. In Horeb, God had spoken to them the Ten Commandments from the fire. They were so frightened, they asked Moses to talk to God for them. They were afraid of the presence of God in the fire.

Deuteronomy 18:17 "And the LORD said unto me, They have well [spoken that] which they have spoken."

Unto Moses, who carried the above request to the Lord.

"They have well spoken that which they have spoken" (see Deut. 5:28).

The LORD was pleased with their decision. He could not look upon sin, and they were a sinful nation. He possibly, would have destroyed them.

Deuteronomy 18:18 "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

So that it seems this promise or prophecy was first made at Mount Sinai. But now renewed and repeated, and which is nowhere else recorded (see Deut. 18:15). When they were not only made easy for the present by appointing Moses to receive from the Lord all further notices of his mind and will. But were assured that when it was his pleasure to make a new revelation, or a further discovery of his mind and will. In future times, he would not do it in that terrible way he had delivered the law to them. But would raise up a person of their own flesh and blood, by whom it should be delivered. Which was sufficient to prevent their fears for the future.

"And will put my word in his mouth": The doctrines of the Gospel, which come from God, and are the words of truth, faith, righteousness, peace, pardon, life and salvation. And which Christ says were not his own, as man and Mediator, but his Father's. Which he gave unto him, and put into his mouth, as what he should say, teach, and deliver to others (see John 7:16).

"And he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him": Nor did he keep back, but faithfully declared the whole counsel of God. And as he gave him a commandment what he should say, and what he should speak, he was entirely obedient to it (see John 12:49).

Prophets are like ambassadors. They do not speak their own words, but the Words God places in their mouth. They are in a sense, a mouthpiece for God. Moses had been a mouthpiece for God to them for over 40 years. Now God will raise another to take Moses' place.

Deuteronomy 18:19 "And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require [it] of him."

To the doctrines of the Gospel, but slight and despise them.

"Which he shall speak in my name": In whose name he came, and whose words or doctrines he declared them to be. Not as his own, but his Father's (John 5:43).

"I will require it of him": Or, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, "my Word shall require it of him, or take vengeance on him." As Christ the Word of God did in the destruction of the Jewish nation, city, and temple (see Luke 19:27).

The Words that come from the prophet's mouth are not to be taken lightly. They are Words of God. To not listen to the prophet, would be to refuse to hear from God. The people would be guilty in this case.

Verses 20-22: False prophets had to die (13:1-11). "How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken"? They would be exposed if their prophecies failed to come to pass (verse 22). However, the fulfillment of a prophet's prediction did not prove he was necessarily of God (compare 13:2-3 notes). True prophets will honor the written Word of God (Isa. 8:20) and will not lead anyone to follow false gods (13:2).

"Shall speak in the name of other gods": In contrast to the true prophet, Moses predicted there would be false prophets who would come to Israel, speaking not in the name of the Lord, but in the name of false gods. How could the people tell if a prophet was authentically speaking for God? Moses said, "if the thing does not come about", it was not from God. The characteristic of false prophets is the failure of their predictions to always come true. Sometimes false prophets speak and it happens as they said, but they are representing false gods and trying to turn people from the true God, they must be rejected and executed (13:1-5). Other times, false prophets are more subtle and identify with the true God but speak lies. If ever a prophecy of such a prophet fails, he is shown to be false (compare Jer. 28:15-17; 29:30-32).

Deuteronomy 18:20 "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die."

When a "prophet" made a prediction in the name of the Lord that did not come true, the prophet was stoned to death. The failure of the prophecy demonstrated the vacuous nature of the "prophet's" credentials (Jer. 2:8; 14:14-15; 29:9). Even today, Christians should avoid making predictions about the future because the Bible says, "No man knows" (Matt. 24:34-44). If God's people focus on mysteries they were never intended to unravel, they will neglect the Master's ongoing work in this day and time. Those Satan cannot dissuade, he will distract.

A prophet who speaks on his own, his own message, and not God's message, is guilty of sin and God will kill him. Anyone who is a false prophet, will be killed of God as well. A true prophet speaks the Words God has placed in his or her mouth, and nothing else.

Deuteronomy 18:21 "And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?"

Such a thought arises in the mind, and it appears to be a difficulty, and a query is made upon it.

"How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?" What marks, signs, and criterions are those by which it may be known that it is not a word that comes from the Lord?

The people are going to say, "How do we know the message is from God"? This is a legitimate question to ask. There are so many false prophets today, we must be careful. The best way to tell today, is if it lines up with the Word of God or not.

Deuteronomy 18:22 "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that [is] the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, [but] the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."

Says he comes from God, is sent by him, and has a commission from him to say so.

"If the thing follow not, nor come to pass": As the prophecy of Hananiah (Jer. 28:3). That is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken. Or otherwise it would have come to pass, unless when a condition is either expressed or implied, as the repentance or disobedience of a people (see Jer. 18:7).

"But the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously": In a bold and daring manner, with great impiety and impudence, out of his own head and heart. Being a mere device and imagination of his own. Which, not having the fear of God, he delivered as coming from the Lord.

"Thou shalt not be afraid of him": Not only to reprove him for his wickedness, but also to punish him for it. Showing no regard to the high character he assumes, nor to the great pretensions he makes to sanctity, knowledge, and familiarity with God.

Really, the only way to know if a prophet is a true prophet or not is to see if his prophecies come true or not. Those who prophesy things that never happen, are not to be listened to?

Deuteronomy Chapter 18 Questions

1. What Israelites have no part, or inheritance, with Israel?
2. What do they eat of?

3. The Levitical tribe belongs to God, in place of whom?
4. What offerings do the offerings in verse 1 speak of?
5. Their livelihood comes from _____.
6. What parts of the animals sacrificed belong to the priests?
7. In the 18th chapter of Numbers, we read of the firstfruits that was offered, what did Moses add to that here?
8. What had God chosen the Levites out to do?
9. The priest represented the _____ to _____, and _____ to the _____.
10. By what authority was the priest speaking, when he was in his priestly garment?
11. What did the other Levites, besides the priests, live of?
12. What does "patrimony" mean?
13. What are they warned not to learn, when they come into the land?
14. Why had God had them kill or run out the people?
15. What were these people doing, that was an abomination to God?
16. The worship of what false god caused children to walk through fire?
17. "Divination" is the same as _____.
18. What, in our day, is the same as "observers of times"?
19. Who are meant by "enchanters"?
20. Where does this evil power come from?
21. What are modern versions of those mentioned in verse 11?
22. What is a "necromancer"?
23. People who are involved in these evils are an _____ unto the LORD.
24. What is an "abomination"?
25. Does being perfect with God mean you are perfect with the world?
26. All of the sins mentioned, in this lesson, are of a _____ nature.
27. What does a prophet do?

28. Who will take Moses' place as prophet?
29. Why did God not speak directly to the people?
30. A prophet is like an _____.
31. What does a true prophet speak?
32. How long had Moses been a prophet?
33. What happens to false prophets, or prophets who bring their own message, and not God's?
34. What question will the people ask?
35. How can they know a true prophet from a false prophet?