

## False Teachers!

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In Deuteronomy 18:9-22, Moses gives an account of the distinction of a prophet. In the first section (18:9-14), he discusses the false prophets of diviners, observers, enchanters, witches (or sorcerers), charmers, consultants, wizards or necromancers. All of these descriptions modify one who chooses to seek knowledge of the invisible world and the realm of God apart from divine revelation. Without divine revelation, how else could one find knowledge of the invisible world except he try to use practices of the occult? Through Moses, God reminds the Israelites that these “are an abomination unto the Lord.” He wants them to trust him (faith) for their divine revelation.

Then in the latter section (18:15-22), in contrast with the false prophets who claimed knowledge they did not really have, God foretells of Jesus being a prophet as Moses. Moreover, in this discussion, He gives the mark of a true prophet—“he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him...whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him” (18:18-19). “And if thou say in thine heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?’ 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” (18:21-22). This well describes the history of the Jewish nation who later persecuted the prophets because they did not want to listen to the word of God (cf. Matt. 5:12).

Today, we are living in a time of false teachers—those who want to try to persuade people away from the word of God. Since the Old Testament is for our learning today (Rom. 15:4), what can we learn from this passage in view of the false prophecies and false doctrines today inside and outside the church of our Lord?

First, we must be aware of the fact that there are false teachers today. Jesus warned us to look out for “false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matt. 7:15). Paul warned the elders at Ephesus “that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30). The time has already come, and still is, when “they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Thus, the background for false teaching today is in Deuteronomy 18, where false prophets will either speak that which God has not revealed or teach by some other authority.

Second, they fall into the guise of presuming “ to speak a word in my name ,” but rather, it is not according to the name of God at all. We must always be on alert to compare the teachings of teachers and preachers with the word of God (myself included!) to see if they are actually speaking according to the authority of Christ (Matt. 28:18; Col. 3:17).

Third, we learn that there is indeed something in a name. God wanted His prophets to speak by His name, not according to the name of any other god. We should never allow the denominational world to distract us by succumbing to their false doctrine that there is nothing in a name. According to Deuteronomy and the rest of the inspired revelation, there is everything in a name (Acts 4:12)!

Finally, that prophet shall die. Is this a serious thing with God? He says it is a capital offense! Peter says they “ shall receive the reward of unrighteousness ” (2 Pet. 2:13).

Never take for granted what anyone teaches, but always be alert to be sure that the teachers who are teaching in the church of our Lord are doing so according to the word of God!

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