

Deuteronomy 13

Verses 1 - 5

“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or the wonder comes *true*, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let’s follow other gods (whom you have not known) and let’s serve them,’ ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. ⁵ But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken falsely against the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to drive you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall eliminate the evil from among you.

“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or the wonder comes *true*, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let’s follow other gods (whom you have not known) and let’s serve them

Deuteronomy is filled with warnings concerning idolatry.

This chapter deals with 3 situations that might occur.

In this 1st case there is a prophet who performs a sign or a wonder, but he is also promoting the worship of false gods.

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

It would have been natural for people to follow someone who gave a sign or wonder that came true. After all, no one can do something like this unless they have the spirit of God in them, isn’t that right.

Well in this case it wasn’t right!

And the people could know this because what he was teaching is contrary to the word of God.

He was teaching people to break the 1st two commandments.

For the Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul

This passage states that God would allow false prophets to display signs in order to "test" the true loyalty of the people.

See Matt 24:24

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

God commanded Israel to kill all the people in Canaan in order to purge the land of idolatry, because it would endanger them.

False religious leaders were supposed to be put to death for the same reason.

Verses 6 – 11

“If your brother, your mother’s son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is like your own soul, entices you secretly, saying, ‘Let’s go and serve other gods’ (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, ⁷ of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you, or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), ⁸ you shall not consent to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him. ⁹ Instead, you shall most certainly kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. ¹⁰ So you shall stone him to death, because he has attempted to drive you away from the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ¹¹ Then all Israel will hear *about it* and be afraid, and will not do such a wicked thing among you again.

If your brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is like your own soul, entices you secretly, saying, ‘Let’s go and serve other gods’ you shall not consent to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him.

This list of close family members reveals the hard truth that those we love the most may in fact turn out to be the enemy.

Even these close family members should not be spared if they promote idolatry.

⁹ Instead, you shall most certainly kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. ¹⁰ So you shall stone him to death, because he has attempted to drive you away from the Lord your God

There was to be a formal trial and if he/she was found to be guilty, the penalty was death by stoning.

The person who brought the charge against the idolater was to throw the first stone but then the rest of the community was to assist in the execution.

See Deuteronomy 17:1-7

If Israel had been inclined to obey this law, they could have avoided untold suffering and deportation.

¹¹ Then all Israel will hear *about it* and be afraid, and will not do such a wicked thing among you again.

Is the death penalty a deterrent?

Yes, if it is enforced.

Verses 12 – 20

¹² “If you hear in one of your cities, which the Lord your God is giving you to live in, *anyone saying that* ¹³ some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, ‘Let’s go and serve other gods’ (whom you have not known), ¹⁴ then you shall investigate, search out, and inquire thoroughly. And if it is true *and* the matter is certain that this abomination has been committed among you, ¹⁵ you shall most certainly strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword. Utterly destroy it and all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword. ¹⁶ Then you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of its public square, and burn the city and all its plunder with fire as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God; and it shall be a ruin forever. It shall never be rebuilt. ¹⁷ Nothing at all from what is designated for destruction is to cling to your hand, in order that the Lord may turn from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion on you and make you increase, just as He has sworn to your fathers, ¹⁸ if you will listen to the voice of the Lord your God, keeping all His commandments which I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the Lord your God.

¹² **“If you hear in one of your cities that ¹³ some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, ‘Let’s go and serve other gods, ¹⁴ then you shall investigate, search out, and inquire thoroughly.**

God sees people who promote idolatry as “worthless men”.

If it was heard that a city had fallen into the sin of Idolatry the accusation was to be carefully investigated.

People are innocent until proven guilty by a court.

And if it is true *and* the matter is certain that this abomination has been committed among you, ¹⁵ you shall most certainly strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword. Utterly destroy it and all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword.

God is not a respecter of persons.

The people of this Israelite city should be treated like the former occupants of Canaan.

They were to be killed by the sword

Then you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of its public square, and burn the city and all its plunder with fire as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God; and it shall be a ruin forever. It shall never be rebuilt.

God had told the Israelites to kill all of people of Canaan but the army was allowed to keep the cattle and other possessions as plunder of war.

But this was not the case after the land had been settled by the Jewish people.

If they committed this sin then everything was to be burned and the city was not to be rebuilt.

To those that have been given much, more will be demanded.