

Message #18

Deuteronomy 13:1-18

We are living in a day and age in which the cry of the religious world is tolerance. We are told that we need to get along with each other and we need to respect each other especially when it comes to religion. Religious tolerance, we are told, is a great virtue and the mark of real sophistication. It is the politically correct way to think. Problem is, when you stack that up against the word of God, that view is false.

When it comes to the subject of religion, there is a smorgasbord from which you may choose. Out in this world, there are denominations and religions and churches that will scratch any religious itch you may have. You may be involved in abominable sin and you can find a church that will say you can stay in your sin and it is just fine. But the truth is, when it comes to religion, as Doug McIntosh writes, “Falsehood on any level is lethal” (*Deuteronomy*, p. 169).

We saw last time that Moses stressed there were certain kinds of knowledge of which God’s people were to stay clear. There are some things God’s people do not want to study because they can pull you astray and lead you away from God (Deut. 12:30).

Whether it is in the Old Testament or the New Testament, God wants His people spotting phony ministers and he wants them silenced. False ministers are not just confused, they are dangerous. When Paul wrote his letter to Titus, on the island of Crete, he told Titus that there are many empty talkers and deceivers “who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain” (Titus 1:10-11).

That point is clearly seen right here in Deuteronomy. Moses realized the danger of false ministers and he wanted them tested and eliminated.

GOD’S PEOPLE ARE TO TEST AND ELIMINATE FALSE MINISTERS BECAUSE THEY WILL LEAD PEOPLE AWAY FROM GOD AND HIS WORD.

When Paul wrote his great grace epistle to the Galatians, he said I marvel that you are so quickly removed from the truth and are embracing teachers and religious leaders who present things that are contrary to the Grace of God. He said these religious teachers are to be accursed (Gal. 1:6-10).

Now this is a fascinating chapter that really instructs us concerning the value of sticking to the Word of God and spotting and dealing with false ministers who pull people away from God’s word.

We have seen the emphasis God places on the very words in His word (Deut. 12:28). God told His people you need to be focused on My words “as long as you live on the earth (Deut. 12:1). If you do this, “it will be well with you” (Deut. 12:29).

In this chapter there are three main false minister teachings or revelations we want to see:

FALSE MINISTER REVELATION #1 – God’s people need to eliminate false ministers who lead them away from God’s truth. **13:1-5**

Moses lays out some extremely important information here. False religious people use improvable subjective experiences such as dreams, visions and feelings as their authority base. They do not ever promote a serious, systematic study of God’s word. These kinds of people operate by their feelings and their dreams and their visions.

For example, Muhammad and his Islam insanity. He claims some magical winged horse took him from Mecca, to Jerusalem, to heaven and back to Mecca in one night. The horse’s name was “Buraq.” He was in heaven and Allah revealed things to him, like his favorite animal was a cat. In this world right now, 1.8 billion people believe that. Now these people will tell you they love God. But when you square what they believe with the Bible, it is not love, a love for the God of the Bible.

At this time, God’s people did not have God’s written word in its entirety, so if someone came along and made some wild dream or vision prediction and it came true, and yet they were presenting some foreign concept of God, God’s people were not to follow them.

If someone comes to you and says God showed me or this happened to me, or I had this dream or vision, that is very subjective because they are not basing what they are telling you on the written word.

If there is a prophet or dreamer who comes and says he is from God, and he does something that appears to be miraculous, but then tries to lure you away from the truth of God, there are three responses God’s people are to have:

Response #1 - They are not to listen to him. **13:3**

There will be times when God’s people will be approached by someone religious who attempts to pull them away from a focus on God and His word. When that happens, God is sovereign and is testing His people to see if they are serious about Him and His word and if they truly love Him with all their heart and soul.

Do you see this? Do not miss this. God will permit religious people to come into your world to determine whether or not you truly love God. These people will be smooth and they will be persuasive. They typically rely on experiences or misused and misquoted verses of Scripture to try to get you to follow them. God has allowed you to come in contact with them to see if you really love Him.

Many believers claim they love God, but the proof is the dedication to the word of God in the face of religious people not dedicated to truth.

Shortly after I came to faith in Jesus Christ, I had a burning desire to know God's written word. After I left radio, I went to work in what was then the Brown Company, which was a paper mill in Kalamazoo. One night a man at the mill came to me and said so I hear you are a Christian and I said yes. He said well have you had the second blessing? Have you spoken in tongues? I said what are you talking about? Well he said he had really reached a real spiritual level by speaking in tongues. I didn't even know what that was. I said well show me in the Bible. He quoted a couple of verses that ultimately I tracked down and saw they were being butchered. Also my brother Tim helped straighten me out. That charismatic movement does not lead people to a deep focus on God's written word; it leads people away to a focus on feelings and emotions. So before I left the Brown Company, I went back to that guy and said what you are doing is false. It is not of God and unless you get away from that nonsense your spiritual life will be inconsistent.

Now what this text teaches me and you is that God let that happen to see if I truly loved Him and was truly dedicated to His word. Had I listened to that guy, I would not be here today. Don't listen to dreamers and religious con men.

Response #2 - They are to follow the written word of God. **13:4**

Moses drives home the importance of fearing the LORD and being focused on the written word of God or the commandments of God. Notice Moses says listen to the voice of God. Where do we hear the voice of God, listen to the word of God and the commandments of God that are taught, because that is the voice of God. God wants His people clinging to Him and His word.

Response #3 - They are to execute the false minister. **13:5**

God says any religious person who tries to pull you away from Me and My word is to be put to death. Kill the relationship and kill the person.

Moses said it was the LORD your God who redeemed you and saved you and brought you out of Egypt and anyone who tries to seduce you away from a focus on Him and His word is to be put to death.

Now we live in a dispensation in which laws are supposed to be enforced by the government (Romans 13:1-5). So we do not have the right to execute false ministers.

But what God's people need to know is that they need to exterminate them from their lives and exterminate them with their mouths. These false ministers are not just confused. They are evil and they are seductive. We need to stay clear of these kinds of religious charlatans.

It boggles my mind that so many religious charlatans take in millions and millions of dollars from some of God's people who support them. They are not to be supported, they are to be eliminated.

FALSE MINISTER REVELATION #2 – God’s people need to eliminate false relatives who lead them away from God’s truth. **13:6-11**

Don’t kid yourself; family members can and will try to lure you away from a focus on God’s word. You get into a place where God’s word is seriously taught and you will discover that perhaps some from your own family will try to lure you away from that.

In **verse 6** we get a list of some of the family members who can do that:

- 1) Brother.
- 2) Mother’s son.
- 3) Your own son.
- 4) Your own daughter.
- 5) Your own wife.
- 6) Your dear friend.

If any of these try to lure you away from God and His word, and try to get you to go along with the majority of religious people, you are to respond:

Response #1 - You are not to yield or listen to him. **13:8a**

Response #2 - You are not to pity him. **13:8b**

Response #3 - You are not to spare him. **13:8c**

Response #4 - You are not to conceal him. **13:8d**

Response #5 - You are to execute him. **13:9-10**

This is not a confused family member; this is an evil person who needs to be eliminated. God was very serious that no person, even a family member, be permitted to pull His people away from Him and His word. So if some family member tried, he was to be executed.

What that will do is cause other family members in Israel to fear God and not want to do such wicked things.

Again, we do not have the ability to execute people, but you do not want to be playing patty cake or appeasing some wayward relative who is wacked theologically. Get away from them and tell others to stay away. I have known of family members who have another family member in ministry and the ministry is not dedicated to a serious understanding of the word of God. These members should not be esteemed, they should be exposed.

The Apostle Paul said if someone comes preaching another gospel other than the pure grace of God, they are to be accursed. He said that in a context of people who were trying to put people back under the O.T. law.

Now there are family members who go to churches where they try to put people back under the O.T. law and many just think it is no big deal. It is a matter of attacking God's truth and you don't want to support even those of your family who are in that.

FALSE MINISTER REVELATION #3 – God's people need to eliminate false places that lead people away from God's truth. **13:12-18**

Frankly there are cities that should be burned to the ground and one day will be. For example, Salt Lake City is known for its false religion that is leading thousands of people to hell. How about Mecca in Saudi Arabia that is leading millions of people straight into hell?

When God's people were in their land, they were to stay alert to any city that they learned was moving away from God.

Let's say some worthless men went to the city and started promoting their false religion and started getting people to serve some god they had never known or heard about.

Verse 14 says there must be a thorough investigation to determine whether or not this abomination has been done and if it has, according to **verse 15**, everything in the city including the people and animals were to be destroyed.

Look carefully at verse 14, false teaching is an abomination to God. False teaching is in the same category as sexual perversion (Lev. 18:22); child sacrifices to pagan deities (Deut. 12:31); demonism and Satanism (Deut. 18:10-12).

False teaching is no light matter in the sight of God. According to **verse 16**, all the wealth of the city was to be brought and burned before the LORD and God will curse the place and it will never be rebuilt.

God says if My people will do this:

- 1) God's anger will be thwarted. **13:17a**
- 2) God's mercy will be given. **13:17b**
- 3) God's compassion will be given. **13:17c**
- 4) God's numerical increase will be given. **13:17d**

Verse 18 is clear. God wants His people:

- 1) Listening to Him.
- 2) Guarding His word.
- 3) Doing what is right.

God wants His people doing what is right in His sight. He wants His people serious about Him and His word.

People do not realize the danger of false teaching and places that have false teaching. False teaching must be confronted and eliminated. That is what God told His people in Deuteronomy 13.