



Deuteronomy & The Beauty of Obedience

Listening to Him

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. (Deuteronomy 18:15)

Does Truth Matter?

The world has never been noisier than it is today. Our devices distract us, our commercials lure us, our entertainment beguiles us, and our officials disinform us. We must learn that the only voice that matters is the voice of God. The truth will set you free. Every false map leads to a _____.

Discerning God's Truth (Deut. 18:8-22)

- **Deut. 18:8-14. Divination:** Having deprived themselves of the one true God, the Canaanites sought guidance from all the wrong sources. Getting your direction from anything inconsistent with God's truth is detestable to Him.
- **18:15-19. The prophet.** God promised a successor to Moses. In one sense, Joshua is that prophet (Numbers 27:18ff). But in a bigger sense, God anticipates someone even greater than Joshua (cf., 34:10-12). As Christians, we know that Jesus, whose name is the same as _____, is "the prophet Moses wrote about" (John 5:46; see also Matt. 21:11; Acts 3:22; 7:37). We listen to Jesus, because He has the words of eternal life (John 6:68).
- **18:20-22. How can we know?** There are many warnings against false prophets in the Bible (Isa. 9:14-15; Jer. 5:31; 6:13; 14:14; 23:25; Ezek. 13:2; Matt. 7:15; 24:11; Acts 13:6; 2 Thess. 2:1-10). 2 Peter says false prophets use "secrecy" (2:1), teach "depraved ways," "corrupt desires," "sexual sin," and "carnal desires" (2:2, 10, 14, 18), make up their doctrines (2:3), are bold and arrogant, thinking they are smarter than angels (2:10-11), are experts in greed (2:14), and fail to produce godly results (2:17).

Sorcery and Deceit

Religion is the ordering of one's life around the *worship* of God. Sorcery is the attempt to *manipulate* God to gain power. The former is commanded. The latter is condemned (2 Chron. 33:6; Mal. 3:5; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8).

In OT cultures, sorcery was practiced in several ways. Specialists looked for patterns in the organs of sacrificed animals, in the flight of birds, in dreams, and in celestial phenomena such as eclipses, comets, and planetary movements. In pagan cultures, one went to these specialists to learn one's future, to cast spells over others, or to make important decisions.

But behind every act of sorcery is a partnership with an evil spirit. Sorcery, then, is a form of idolatry.

North Americans are still attracted to sorcery through such means as fortune telling, Ouija Boards, seances, and the like. Most of our interaction with evil spirits, however, comes more subtly through our embrace of media and ideologies that distort the truth with deceit.



Cuneiform foundation peg from ancient Ur invoking magic, c. 2000 B.C. (dmy)

Why do People Believe False Prophets?

False prophets find success only insofar as we have *already* been compromised by disinformation, propaganda, myths, and indoctrination. False teaching is like _____, which mimics proteins already in our cellular structure, tricking our cells into opening their doors to the parasite. Once inside, the virus eats its host alive. By *imitating* what the cell wants, this parasite gains its destructive access. In the same way, false teaching mimics actual solutions to real problems, tricking our minds into throwing

open the doors of our souls. Once inside, the deceits eat us alive. In short, we believe false teaching because we already have _____ (2 Tim. 4:3).

Four False Prophets of Our Time

1. Your _____. We program this false prophet to flatter us, to congratulate us, to brand ourselves, and to gain the approval of others. This tool is the least authentic thing you own. It mimics meaning, but true meaning is only found from a life in Christ.
2. Your _____. This false prophet creates distorted narratives that we use to interpret the world: “rags to riches,” “rules oppress us,” “fulfilment is found in romance,” etc. These narratives mimic the real story of us, but they are not the one true story—that God in Christ is seeking the redemption of all humanity.
3. Your _____. This false prophet drugs us into thinking that satisfaction can be found in our stuff, mimicking true contentment. But it’s a drug that lasts only a short time. Lasting contentment is found only in Christ.
4. Your _____. This false prophet wants us to believe that we can save the world through tweeting, voting, public policy, ideology, the right candidate, etc. It mimics the Gospel, which is the only real salvation available for humanity. If you want to change the world, set aside your false prophets, get off your behind, walk next door, and _____.



The Apollo Temple in Delphi, Greece. Here Greeks sought oracles from intoxicated prophetesses before making important decisions (dmy)

What is Biblical Prophecy?

The Hebrew and Greek words for “prophecy” mean something like “to speak out.” A prophet was a spokesperson for God, addressing current events as well as future ones.

God uses prophets to communicate His will to humans, and prophets were typically expected to say exactly what God revealed to them (see Jer. 19:14–15, 26:12; Ezek. 3:17, 11:4–12, 20:46–48; Amos 7:14–17). This means that authentic prophets in the Bible had inspired speech—that is, speech guaranteed by God to be right (Deut. 18:18; 1 Kings 22:14; Jer. 1:7–10; Ezek. 3:4, 3:10–11, 3:17; 1 Cor. 12:7–11; cf. 14:1; 1 Thess. 4:19–20; 2 Pet. 1:20–21).

For this reason, the church is built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:19–20).

At the same time, it is possible that the Bible sometimes uses the term “prophet” in a less official sense, referring not to inspired spokespersons, but simply to ordinary people who proclaim God’s Word in forceful or penetrating ways. This may be the meaning of the term in such texts as Numbers 12:6–8 and 1 Corinthians 13–14.

In either case, we must reject any teaching that does not conform to Scripture. For a useful article on the subject, see <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-gift-of-prophecy/>

Answers: Shipwreck, Joshua, guitar, itching ears, cell phone, cable, credit card, politics, make a disciple