

Deuteronomy 18:1-22 Instructions Concerning Spiritual Leadership

Introduction: Moses had given instructions concerning future governmental leaders. He was their governmental head. He had appointed judges to assist him in the work. He instructed them that after they entered Canaan they should continue to appoint judges. Later they would have a king who would have princes who would serve as judges.

In our text today he speaks about future spiritual leadership and spiritual conditions.

I. Instructions about support for the priests and Levites, v. 1-8.

A. God had already chosen the tribe of Levi to provide spiritual leadership, v. 1-2.

1. The descendants of Aaron would be the priests.
2. The rest of the tribe of Levi were to be their assistants. (Simply called “Levites.”)
3. Moses gave instructions about how these spiritual leaders were to be supported.
4. The tribe of Levi was to be given no land as an inheritance from which they could earn a livelihood.
5. Instead the people were to bring offerings to the Lord from which the tribe of Levi was to be supported.
6. They were to be given certain portions of the offerings which were brought to the Lord, v. 3-5.
7. This was to be the means of support for both the priests and the Levites.

B. It should be understood what their tribe would do for a home and Moses had earlier given such instructions.

1. Each tribe was to set aside four cities in which the tribe of Levi would live. (Each city would have a small amount of pasture land around it.)
2. The priests and Levites would go to Jerusalem for a portion of each year and serve in the Temple.

C. Moses gave this additional instruction, v. 6-8:

1. If a Levite out of love and devotion to God chose to sell his home in the Levite city and move to Jerusalem permanently to serve the Lord, he could do so.
2. In that case, he could keep what he got from the sale of his property in the Levite city. (He would probably need it to purchase a home in Jerusalem.)
3. In addition he would still get his portion of the tithes and offerings as the others would receive.

II. Instructions not to allow idolatry or occult activity in the land, v. 9-14.

A. They are not to adopt the sinful ways of the people who had lived in the land before them, v. 9.

B. Specifically they were not to cause their children to pass thru fire to a false god, v. 10a.

1. The heathen before them had caused their children to walk on hot coals of fire in worship to the false god Moloch.
2. The Israelites were not to do this or to allow it to be done in the land, v. 10b — 13.

C. Neither were they to engage in occult activity of any kind, v. 14. (Nor were they to allow it in their land.)

D. The government and spiritual leaders were to see to it that neither of these sins were done in the land.

III. Instructions concerning prophets, v. 15-22.

A. Moses had been both their chief governmental leader and also their chief spiritual leader.

1. But soon he would be gone from among them; they would go into Canaan without him.

2. But God would raise up another prophet like Moses to lead them in the will of God, v. 15.
 3. In fact, He would raise up more than just one prophet; there would be a number of them.
- B. This would be in keeping with the request which the people had made back at Horeb (Mt. Sinai.) v. 16-18.
1. The people had been frightened by the thunderous voice of God and the fire, smoke, lightning, thunder and the earthquake that accompanied God's voice.
 2. The people asked Moses to ask God to not speak directly to them any more, but to speak to them thru Moses,
 3. Which God had done since that time,
 4. And which God would continue to do after Moses was gone and would no longer be with them.
 5. God would raise up other prophets thru whom He would speak to them.
- C. But God wanted them to know that He meant business; He meant for them to obey His words which He would speak for the prophet, v. 19.
- D. Furthermore, knowing that false prophets would arise and pretend to speak for God, God instructed that the false prophet should be killed — that is by the people, v. 20.
- E. Thru Moses God told them how they could distinguish the true prophets from the false, v. 21-22.
1. If all that the prophet predicts comes true, he is of God. (If all the short range prophecies come true, you can know that he is right about the long-range prophecies.)
 2. But if some of his predictions prove to be wrong (short range) then he is a false prophet and is to be put to death.

IV. Some spiritual lessons for us today.

- A. God is still Supreme. (He rules all the universe, all the world and we should obey Him in all things.)
- B. God has called certain men to minister to others in spiritual matters and God wants them to be supported by the people. (Out of their tithes and offerings to the Lord.)
- C. God's people should never, never, never get involved in occult activity.
- D. God's people should never, never, never listen to false teachers, I Timothy 4:1.
- E. God's people should live their lives by a high and holy moral and spiritual standard.
- F. God's people should live in obedience to the word of God as set forth in the Bible.

V. A special prophet of God who is like Moses, v. 15.

- A. There have been many prophets of God who were like Moses in many respects.
- B. But there is one prophet like unto Moses who is most important of all.
 1. That prophet is Jesus Christ.
 2. He is more like Moses than any other.
 3. He is far greater than Moses.
 - a) The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, John 1:17.
 - b) Moses delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, but Jesus delivers the believer from bondage to sin, John 8:3.