

Message #23

Deuteronomy 18:1-22

I have said this many times, you do not ever replace a great man or woman of God. When they are gone, the work may still go on but it is not the same. They are gone and it is a big loss.

You do not replace a John Miles. You do not replace a Lewis Sperry Chafer. The work may go on but it is not the same. I am convinced more than ever that this is true. In the case of John Miles, when he was gone eventually the school was gone. In the case of Dallas Seminary, it is a great school, but it is not the same as it was with Dr. Chafer there. He was the man God used to start that school. It was his calling, his doctrine, his focus that God blessed. He had been personally taught by C. I. Scofield, and no one else who has ever been connected to that school can say that.

Dr. John Walvoord, who replaced Dr. Chafer, was a tremendous man of God. But he was not Dr. Chafer. He became the second President of Dallas Seminary and he was a great theologian. But when I read his books or I read the works of Charles Ryrie or J. Dwight Pentecost or Floyd Barackman or Chuck Swindoll, it is very clear to me that the one God truly raised up to influence all of them was Lewis Sperry Chafer. Did the work of Dallas Seminary go on? Yes, still is to this day. Is it the same? No. You simply don't replace a Lewis Sperry Chafer.

Now why am I bringing this up? Because Moses was about to die and you are not going to replace him. Joshua was a great leader, but he was not Moses. Moses literally saw God and God used him to write the first five books of His inspired word.

Moses knew the work could go on. He wanted God's people to realize it. What Moses says here is this:

GOD'S WORK WILL CONTINUE TO GO ON TO GOD'S BLESSINGS AS GOD'S PEOPLE FOLLOW AND OBEY GOD'S INSPIRED WORD, WHEN IT COMES TO SUPPORTING TRUE MINISTERS AND ELIMINATING FALSE MINISTERS.

There are four very important realizations that God's people need to have if they are to continue on the path of God's blessings after a great leader like Moses is gone:

REALIZATION #1 – God's people are to provide for God-ordained leaders. **18:1-8**

In the things that pertain to God, in any dispensation, God has specific men that He calls to do His work. Those men are gifted by Him and enabled by Him to carry out His ministry. Those men are to be supported.

Back in the days of Moses, the entire tribe of Levi was set apart by God to be Levitical priests. In Deuteronomy 10:8 we read, "At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to serve Him and to bless in His name until this day."

God made the determination that these would be His religious leaders and He wanted them to have a good life and good provisions. There were certain stipulations that He set forth:

Stipulation #1 - Leaders were to live off of the offerings made to the LORD by fire. **18:1**

There were many different kinds of offerings made and the priests were to have those offerings for their support. There were grain offerings, sin offerings, wine offerings, guilt offerings, wave offerings. All of these offerings were to go to the support of the leaders and their families (Numbers 18:8-14).

God did not want His ministers working secular jobs. He wanted them focused on His work and ministry.

Stipulation #2 - Leaders did not receive a specific land inheritance like the other tribes. **18:2**

In the Promised Land, the people received land grants and houses and barns and were able to settle down and grow their crops and harvest their crops and have a good living. God never wanted His people to forget about the fact that His ministers were not the same. They did not get a land grant even though they were putting many hours into the work of God.

Stipulation #3 - Leaders were owed offerings from the people. **18:3-5**

In God's mind, the people of God owe God-appointed minister/leaders their support. This included a generous support and portion of all the sacrifices. It included first fruits of grain, new wine, oil and material from sheep shearing.

Verse 5 gives the reason; God had chosen him and his sons from all the tribes to serve him in the name of the LORD.

Stipulation #4 - Leaders who are led to new places are to have provisions to minister. **18:6-8**

Sometimes a leader would relocate. If a priest decided to make a move to another location, because God has called him to another place, he was to be cared for in the same manner. God's people were to take care of him

Now this principle does have N.T. ramifications. Paul told Timothy that a minister who worked hard at preaching and teaching was to receive a non-muzzling level of wages (I Tim. 5:17-18). Paul also taught that the hard working minister should receive his share of the crops first (II Tim. 2:6).

It is sad that in many places the thought about offerings is other things first and the minister last. Many think about the building first, or some missionary program first or some project first. It is the rare group who actually thinks of the minister first. But that is what God's word says.

So the principle is the same. If God's people want God's blessings, they must take good care of those who have been called and gifted by God. God will bless His people who do this.

REALIZATION #2 – God's people are to protect themselves from demonic religion. **18:9-14**

God's people who have entered into the blessings of God must be very careful to keep themselves away from any detestable and abominable practice and any demonic religion.

Guideline #1 - Do not implement or imitate any detestable thing. **18:9**

This includes implementing any detestable thing into one's life or into one's worship. God does not want His people implementing or imitating anything that He deems detestable.

The word "detestable" is one often used in Deuteronomy and it often refers to false religion and cult or occult activity (7:25-26; 12:31; 13:14; 14:3; 17:1, 4).

Guideline #2 - Do not let your family participate in any false religious practice. **18:10a**

There were child sacrifices that people made to their false deities. Three times in the Bible this activity was associated with Molech, an Ammonite deity (Lev.18:21; II Kings 23:10; Jer.32:35). It is also closely associated with divination and sorcery (II Kings 17:17; 21:6). It must have been some demonic seduction that would prompt God's own people to even think about doing this.

Guideline #3 - Do not associate with anyone who practices divination. **18:10b**

The specific word used here in Hebrew indicates that this is a false religious man who is able to contact the satanic or demonic world to receive some sort of vision he claims he gets (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 736). Divination refers to any who are able to contact any false thing in the spirit world.

Guideline #4 - Do not associate with anyone who practices witchcraft. **18:10c**

The word refers to one who offers prayers and worship to Satan and his demons and actually practices sorcery and magic. Biblically speaking, people tend to pursue this kind of thing because they want power and knowledge beyond that which God gives (I Sam. 28:7; Is. 8:19). Any believer who would consult a witch or medium risks physical execution by God (I Chron. 10:13-14).

Guideline #5 - Do not associate with anyone who interprets omens. **18:10d**

This refers to the kind of person who claims they can gain information by using revelatory objects like a cup (Gen. 44:5). This kind of person boasts of being able to interpret mysterious things, by reading tea leaves in a cup or gazing into a crystal ball or by looking at one's palms.

Guideline #6 - Do not associate with anyone who is a sorcerer. **18:10e**

A sorcerer is one who contacts the unseen Satanic and demonic world to receive special powers and answers from them (Ex. 7:11; Dan. 2:2). This kind of person is highly committed to the occult.

Guideline #7 - Do not associate with anyone who casts a spell. **18:11a**

This refers to some spell caster who was thought to be able to target a specific object or person and pronounce some powerful curse against him concerning his destiny.

Guideline #8 - Do not associate with anyone who is a medium. **18:11b**

The word literally refers to one who asks spirits in the pit. A medium is one who can contact the spirit world, specifically the dead. According to Mr. Gesenius, a medium uses various incantations and songs to contact the spirit world (*Ibid.*, p. 31). Several passages mention a medium: Lev. 19:31; 20:6; Deut. 18:11; II Kings 21:6; Is. 8:19.

Guideline #9 - Do not associate with anyone who is a spiritist. **18:11c**

A spiritist is one who can gain information from the spirit world, which often includes revealing something before it happens or seeing something.

One of the most famous spiritists of our day, who came from a family of spiritists, is Dan Aykroyd. He had the idea and actually wrote the movie "Ghostbusters" based on the fact that he was a spiritist who went to séances.

Guideline #10 - Do not associate with anyone who contacts the dead. **18:11d**

There have been some famous people who tried to contact the dead. Mary Todd Lincoln, the wife of Abraham Lincoln, got involved in this three years before his assassination. She went to séances and tried to contact their son Willie, who died at age 11.

Arthur Conan Doyle was a physician and writer, who is best known for writing Sherlock Holmes. He was a highly educated man and he went to séances to try to contact his dead son.

In **verse 12**, God says whoever does any of these things is detestable in the sight of God, and God will drive them out.

Guideline #11 - God's people are to be blameless before God. **18:13**

Notice that God does not say that His people are to be sinless. But blameless. They are to stay clear of any of these detestable kinds of things. The actual Greek word in the Septuagint is teleios (teleioç), which speaks of being complete and whole before God.

In **verse 14**, God says the nations that practice these evil things are being disposed for that very reason. The people have become so demonic and satanic that God is dispossessing them and destroying them.

God's people never want to start doing things that causes God to destroy people.

REALIZATION #3 – God's people are to know God will always raise up a true prophet. **18:15-22**

God says I want you to know that in spite of the religious charlatans and demonic religious ministers, I will always raise up My prophet to communicate My word.

God says I will always put My hand on My man and will raise him up and you are to listen to him.

In fact, in **verse 16**, God reminds His people that when they were at Mt. Sinai, they were so afraid of the voice of God that they asked God to allow them to have a human spokesman, which God says in **verse 17** was a good idea.

So God says, I want you to know that from among your own countryman, I will raise up a prophet and I will allow him to hear My word and speak it to you, My people. He will declare everything I want him to declare and if someone will not listen to him as he is declaring My word, they will answer to Me (**v. 19**).

Notice carefully a true man of God will carefully communicate all the words of God. In other words, it is not religious concepts and ideas that are communicated; it is the actual words of God. This is a key to determining a true man of God.

Now God knew in the world of demonic religion that there were many false prophets, so He gave His people key data about false prophets:

REALIZATION #4 – God's people are to know there will always be false prophets. **18:20-22**

In the world of religion there will always be false ministers.

False Prophet Data #1 - There are false prophets who presumptuously speak. **18:20a**

In the world of ministry, there are arrogant religious men who think more highly of themselves than they ought and they proudly speak to people week after week. They actually tell people they are speaking as a man of God, when they aren't. Notice what gives them away; they speak things "not commanded." They make up religious stuff but it is not the truth of God.

False Prophet Data #2 - The false prophet needs to be put to death. **18:20b**

You do not chat with the false prophet, you kill him. It amazes me how many of God's people want to get into a discussion with people of false religions.

False Prophet Data #3 - The false prophet will make predictions that don't come true. **18:22a**

False ministers are always predicting and preaching things that are not real. They speak in the name of the Lord and the Lord isn't in it.

False Prophet Data #4 - The false prophet is not to be feared. **18:22b**

God's people never need fear a false prophet because a false prophet cannot touch the people of God.

God's people don't need to fear the occult or Satan, they need to fear God.