

## Bible Study – Deuteronomy Chapter 13 – The Second Law

In the last study, we were introduced to the idea of fidelity and its relationship to the first law of the Mosaic covenant. It was important that the Lord God, Yahweh, be the only object of worship for the Israelites. As the Israelites conquered the inhabitants of the Promised Land, they were to destroy all the foreign objects and places of worship. This was not only meant to show that these were wrong objects of worship, but it was also meant to protect Israel from any temptation to follow these false gods. In today's study, we will see the threats that come from within the nation of Israel that will prevent its people from worshipping the one true God and how apostasy relates to the second commandment (Deuteronomy 5:8-10).

### Read Deuteronomy 12:32 – 13:18

Moses starts off with a reminder to obey everything that has been said, while stating nothing is to be added or taken away from his preaching. He then goes on to warn Israel about individuals who may try to lead Israel astray in their worship of the true Lord God. He warns of the prophet or dreamer of dreams (v.1-5), who will openly entice them; the family member or individuals who are close to the Israelite (v.6-11) who will secretly entice them; and certain individuals from a city who openly incite rebellion against the Lord God (v.12-18). The punishment is death for those who try to lead Israel astray in their worship.

**Q.** Why do you think the penalty for idolatry or apostasy (the abandonment or renunciation of a religious belief) was so severe?

**Q.** In verses 1-5, it talks about the prophet or dreamer of dreams who does miraculous signs and wonders. Why should signs and wonders not be the only evidence of truth or God's hand (2 Thessalonians 2:9)? What else needs to accompany the signs and wonders as evidence they are from God (Isaiah 8:19-20)? The allowance of false prophets was to test Israel (v. 3b-4). What are some practical ways we can pass this test (2 Timothy 2:15)? How do we discern if prophets (or pastors) are from God (1 John 4:1-3; Deuteronomy 18:22; 2 Peter 1:20-21)?

**Q.** In verses 6-11, it talks about those who were part of the Israelite family, those by nature (parents and children) and those who were chosen (spouse and close friend). What are some ways that family and friends can make you worship other gods? For Christians, will you remain loyal to God in spite of how your family and friends may draw you away from God (Luke 14:26; Matthew 10:35-37)?

**Q.** In verses 12-18, it talks about cities who no longer worship the Lord God. Why do you think there was a need to investigate and confirm the idolatry first? What would be the impact to the town if they were to worship other gods? How is the destruction like a burnt offering to God (Leviticus 1)?

**Q.** In each instance of idolatry committed by each party, the punishment is death or utter destruction. Why is death not an option today? How are Christians to deal with those who would lead us astray into worshipping other gods (2 John 7-11; Ephesians 4:15; Romans 16:17; Matthew 15:14)? What would help you to remain loyal to God?

The previous chapters focused on the Canaanites who would turn the hearts of the Israelites when they began to conquer the Promised Land. In this chapter, the focus is on those within the community. Moses warns the Israelites that these threats must be dealt with swiftly and severely, for the sake of their relationship with the Lord God. If allowed to persist and remained unchecked, the Israelites, the chosen people of God for his purposes, would no longer love or serve the Lord God, the who brought them out of Egypt and into the land promised to their forefathers. Therefore, to prevent this from happening, any instances of apostasy would result in death. This was meant to be a warning to others who would willfully try to lead others away from the worship of the Lord God. Today, Christians need to be careful that they do not follow the teachings of just anyone who proclaims to be from God, but rather, to test their words to see if it aligns to what it says in His written word. The devil is a lion on a prowl, waiting to devour us and to lead us away from God. Let us make sure that we are rooted firmly in the word so we can know what is real and what is deception.