
DEUTERONOMY 13:1 If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises in your midst you, and he gives you a sign or a wonder,

Of false prophets and their lying signs, Deu 13:1-6. Of those who endeavor to entice and seduce people to idolatry, Deu 13:7-8. The punishment of such, Deu 13:9-11. Of cities perverted from the pure worship of God, Deu 13:12-14. How that city is to be treated, Deu 13:15. All the spoil of it to be destroyed, Deu 13:16. Promises to them who obey these directions, Deu 13:17, Deu 13:18.

Verse 1

If there arise among you a prophet - Any pretending to have a Divine influence, so as to be able perfectly to direct others in the way of salvation; or a dreamer of dreams - one who pretends that some deity has spoken to him in the night-season; and giveth thee a sign, **וַיֹּא** oth, what appears to be a miraculous proof of his mission; or a wonder, **מוֹפֶת** mopheth, some type or representation of what he wishes to bring you over to: as some have pretended to have received a consecrated image from heaven; hence the origin of the Palladium, Numa's Shields, and many of the deities among the Hindoos. But here the word seems to mean some portentous sign, such as an eclipse, which he who knew when it would take place might predict to the people who knew nothing of the matter, and thereby accredit his pretensions.

DEUTERONOMY 13:2 and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, "Let us go after other gods" (which you have not known) "and let us serve them";

DEUTERONOMY 13:3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Verse 3

The Lord your God proveth you - God permits such impostors to arise to try the faith of his followers, and to put their religious experience to the test; for he who experimentally knows God cannot be drawn away after idols. He who has no experimental knowledge of God, may believe any thing. Experience of the truths contained in the word of God can alone preserve any man from Deism, or a false religion. They who have not this are a prey to the pretended prophet, and to the dreamer of dreams.

DEUTERONOMY 13:4 You shall walk after the LORD your God, fear him, keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and you shall serve him, and cling to him.

DEUTERONOMY 13:5 That prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he has spoken rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to draw you aside out of the way which the LORD your God commanded you to walk in. So you shall remove the evil from your midst.

DEUTERONOMY 13:6 If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend, who is as your own soul, entices you secretly, saying, "Let us go and serve other gods," which you have not known, you, nor your fathers;

Verse 6

If thy brother - or thy son - The teacher of idolatry was to be put to death; and so strict was this order that a man must neither spare nor conceal his brother, son, daughter, wife, nor friend, because this was the highest offense that could be committed against God, and the most destructive to society; hence the severest laws were enacted against it.

DEUTERONOMY 13:7 of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near to you, or far off from you, from the one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth;

DEUTERONOMY 13:8 you shall not consent to him, nor listen to him; neither shall your eye pity him, neither shall you spare, neither shall you conceal him;

DEUTERONOMY 13:9 but you shall surely kill him. Your hand shall be first on him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people.

DEUTERONOMY 13:10 You shall stone him to death with stones, because he has sought to draw you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

DEUTERONOMY 13:11 All Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall not do any more wickedness like this in your midst.

DEUTERONOMY 13:12 If you shall hear about one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell there, that

DEUTERONOMY 13:13 certain base fellows have gone out from your midst, and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, "Let us go and serve other gods," which you have not known;

Verse 13

Children of Belial - בליעל, from בל bal, not, and יעל yaal, profit; - Sept. ανδρες παρανομοι, lawless men; - persons good for nothing to themselves or others, and capable of nothing but mischief.

DEUTERONOMY 13:14 then you shall inquire, and make search, and ask diligently. Behold, if it is true, and the thing certain, that such abomination was done in your midst,

DEUTERONOMY 13:15 you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, with all that is therein and its livestock, with the edge of the sword.

Verse 15

Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants - If one city were permitted to practice idolatry, the evil would soon spread, therefore the contagion must be destroyed in its birth.

DEUTERONOMY 13:16 You shall gather all its plunder into the midst of its street, and shall burn with fire the city, and all every bit of its plunder, to the LORD your God. It shall be a heap forever. It shall not be built again.

DEUTERONOMY 13:17 Nothing of the devoted thing shall cling to your hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and show you mercy, and have compassion on you, and multiply you, as he has sworn to your fathers;

Verse 17

And there shall cleave naught of the cursed thing - As God did not permit them to take the spoils of these idolatrous cities, they could be under no temptation to make war upon them. It could only be done through a merely religious motive, in obedience to the command of God, as they could have no profit by the subversion of such places. How few religious wars would there ever have been in the world had they been regulated by this principle: "Thou shalt neither extend thy territory, nor take any spoils!"

DEUTERONOMY 13:18 when you listen to the LORD your God's voice, to keep all his commandments which I command you this day, to do that which is right in the LORD your God's eyes.
