Deuteronomy 18 Commentary

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Moses on Mt Nebo (Deuteronomy 34:1+)
Listen to Mt Nebo as you Ponder How Moses' May Have Felt

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deut
Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Deuteronomy

Dt 1:1-4:43	Dt 4:44-26:19	Dt 27:1-34:12	
Moses' First Discourse	**Moses' Second Discourse**	**Moses' Third Discourse**	
Historical Review	**Legal Exposition**	**Prophetical Promises**	
Looking Back 40 Years	**Looking Up** What God Expected of Israel	**Looking Ahead** What God Will Do for Israel	
Recapitulation of Wanderings	Rehearsal of Israel's Law	Ratification of Israel's Covenant	Historical Appendices
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Take Heed Don't forget	Ten Commands	Related Commands			Two Choices Affecting the Future		Moses' Parting Words
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ca. 2 Months **Moses: Author** (Except Dt 34)							

Deuteronomy 18:1 "The Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the LORD'S offerings by fire and His portion.

- **shall have**: De 10:9 Dt 12:19 Nu 18:20 26:62 Jos 13:33 18:7 1Pe 5:2-4
- **they shall**: Nu 18:8-9 Jos 13:14 1Co 9:13,14
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Outline:

- The Portion of the Priests and Levites Dt 18:1-8
- Warning Against Pagan Practices Dt 18:9-14
- New Prophet Like Moses Dt 18:15-22

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 10:9+ Therefore, Levi does not have a portion or inheritance with his brothers;**the LORD is his inheritance**, just as the LORD your God spoke to him.)

Deuteronomy 12:19+ "Be careful that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.

Numbers 18:8-9+ Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, "Now behold, I Myself have given you charge of My offerings, even all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual allotment. 9"This shall be yours from the most holy gifts reserved from the fire; every offering of theirs, even every grain offering and every sin offering and every guilt offering, which they shall render to Me, shall be most holy for you and for your sons.

Numbers 18:20+ Then the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; **I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel**.

PROVISION FOR THE LEVITICAL PRIESTS

Maxwell introduces chapter 18 - From the offices of judge and king, Deuteronomy now turns to a discussion of the office of priest. Unlike Deuteronomy 16 and 17 which emphasized the necessary qualities for those holding the position of judge or king, Deuteronomy 18 says nothing about the quality of the life of a priest or Levite. The emphasis of this section is on providing for these religious workers. (Preacher's Commentary)

Currid - The priests and the Levites had been set apart by God to serve in leading the worship of Israel, a responsibility which included the task of teaching the people. Leviticus 10:10–11+ says that they are to 'distinguish between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean; and you must teach the sons of Israel all the statutes that Yahweh spoke to them by Moses'. In order for them to perform these important tasks, Israel needs to support the priests and the Levites so that they can function properly in providing spiritual leadership to the community. (EPSC-Deuteronomy)

Deere adds that "The tribe of Levi was divided into three families (Gershonites, Kohathites, and Merarites). Each division originally had different responsibilities regarding the tabernacle (Num. 3–4). The Kohathites were further divided into those who were

descendants of Aaron and those who were not (Josh. 21:4–5). Only the descendants of Aaron were permitted to serve as priests (Num. 3:10). They are generally referred to as “the priests” or “the sons of Aaron” (Num. 10:8). The rest of the tribe, those not serving as priests, were designated as Levites. Thus priests were a minority in the tribe of Levi. The Levites served as ministers to the priests (Num. 18:1–7; 1 Chron. 23:28–32), and in general as teachers of the Law in Israel (Deut. 33:10a; 2 Chron. 17:8–9). The priests officiated at the tabernacle and also had other duties. They served as judges (Deut. 17:8–9), guardians of the scroll of the Law (17:18; 31:9), teachers of regulations concerning skin diseases (24:8), and assistants to Moses in the covenant renewal ceremony (27:9). (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Wiersbe - The church of Jesus Christ **is** a priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9), but the nation of Israel **had** a priesthood. All the priests and Levites were descendants of Levi, Jacob’s third son by Leah. Levi had three sons—Gershon, Kohath, and Merari—and Aaron and Moses were from the family of Kohath (Ex. 6:16–25). Only the descendants of Aaron were called “priests” and were allowed to serve at the altar and in the sanctuary proper. The Levites, who were descendants of Gershon and Merari, assisted the priests in the many ministries connected with the altar and the sanctuary. Neither the priests nor the Levites were given any inheritance in the land of Israel (Deut. 10:8–9; 12:12, 18–19) but lived from the tithes, offerings, and sacrifices that were brought to the sanctuary. (Be Equipped)

The Levitical priests (Dt. 17:18; Dt. 18:1; Dt. 24:8; Dt. 27:9), **the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel** - **NET** - "The Levitical priests– indeed, the entire tribe of Levi– will have no allotment or inheritance with Israel; they may eat the burnt offerings of the LORD and of his inheritance." In other words, they were not to have allotted portions of land for their own possession. Recall that only the descendants of Aaron were called “**priests**” (**The Levitical priests**) and were allowed to serve at the altar and in the sanctuary proper. The Levites (**the whole tribe of Levi**), who were descendants of Gershon and Merari, assisted the priests in the many ministries connected with the altar and the sanctuary

Deere - The **priests** (and the Levites who assisted them at the central sanctuary) were to be sustained by the people’s offerings made to the LORD. (**ED**: NOTE THE FOLLOWING DISTINTION) The Levites who did not assist at the central sanctuary were to be sustained by gifts from the people (Deut. 14:28–29; 16:10–11). (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Meredith Kline distinguishes between priests and Levites - Deuteronomy itself conveys a distinctly different image of each group: the priests are the altar ministers of the central sanctuary, who enjoy a position of supreme honor and authority; the Levites are everywhere functional subordinates and social dependents. Priests and Levites did share the commission of instructing Israel in the Law (33:10a; Lev 10:11; 2 Chr 15:3; 17:8, 9; 30:22; 35:3). (Wycliffe Bible Commentary on Deuteronomy)

MacArthur - The Levites lived in the cities assigned to them throughout the Land (Nu 35:1–8; Jos 21:1-42) while the priests lived near the central sanctuary, where they went to officiate in their appropriate course (cf. 1Ch 6:57–60). Levites assisted the priests (Nu 3, 4, 8). (MacArthur Study Bible)

Currid - The Levites have been set apart as the firstborn in Israel, and their duty is primarily the service of the central sanctuary (Num. 3:1–4:49) (EPSC-Deuteronomy)

In Nu 18:20 "the LORD said to Aaron (AND BY EXTENSION TO THE LEVITICAL PRIESTS), “You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel."

NET NOTE - The MT places the terms “priests” and “Levites” in apposition, thus creating an epexegetical construction in which the second term qualifies the first, i.e., “Levitical priests.” This is a way of asserting their legitimacy as true priests. The Syriac renders “to the priest and to the Levite,” making a distinction between the two, but one that is out of place here. **Of his inheritance**. This is a figurative way of speaking of the produce of the land the LORD will give to his people. It is the LORD’s inheritance, but the Levites are allowed to eat it since they themselves have no inheritance among the other tribes of Israel.

Utley - shall have no portion or inheritance” The inheritance of the Levites was God Himself (cf. 10:9; 12:12; 14:27, 29; Ps. 16:5; 73:23–26; Lam. 3:24; Ezek. 28). In Joshua 20–21 the Levites are given portions of 48 cities and the surrounding land as a possession. Among these 48 cities there were also six Cities of Refuge, three on each side of the Jordan, where a person could flee if he accidentally killed a covenant partner in order to escape the “blood avenger” (cf. 19:1–13; Num. 35:9–15).

Ryrie - The Levitical priests were the special class of qualified ministering priests chosen from among the whole tribe of Levi. no portion or inheritance. I.e., no allotment of land as other tribes had, though 48 cities were designated for the Levites. See notes on Nu 35:2 and Nu 35:4-5. Their portion of the offerings is assigned in verses 3-5. (Ryrie Study Bible)

They shall eat the LORD'S offerings by fire and His portion - **NET** - "they may eat the burnt offerings of the LORD and of his inheritance." So since the Levitical priests have no land, they will need to be sustained by the gifts and offerings of the Israelites. In fact, Levites were permitted to receive at least of portion of most animal sacrifices and thus were provided with steaks.

"Originally all Levites participated in a portion of the sacrifices of Israel (cf. vv. 6–8). Later the priests were supported by food from the altar and small pieces of private land surrounding the Levitical cities. Also Levites were supported by a third-year local tithe (cf. Dt 14:27; Num. 18:25–29; Neh. 10:37, 38).There are some variations in how the whole tribe of Levi was supported. These are not contradictions, but developments related to the central sanctuary." (**Utley**)

Grant - It is useful at this point to list the responsibilities of the Levites:
1. They were servants of the Tabernacle. "But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony … and they shall minister unto it" (Num 1:50). They were to be servants in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple in any way that was required.
2. They were bearers. They carried the Tabernacle through the wilderness, and in the land, until it came to rest in Shiloh. The tribe was divided into three families each with its own responsibilities. The family of Kohath carried the Ark, the vail, the altars, and the holy vessels; the family of Gershon were responsible for the curtains, coverings, hangings, and the chords; the family of Merari looked after the boards, bars, pins, pillars, and sockets (Num 3:14–37).
3. They were builders (Num 1:51). When the camp moved it was their responsibility to take down the Tabernacle and to erect it when they came to their destination. The cloud and the pillar of fire that guided them came to a halt at the appointed camping place. The order of the march was set by the Lord to ensure that the Tabernacle was ready to receive the Ark when it arrived at the place of encampment (Num 10:21).
4. They were guardians of the Tabernacle. "But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony" (Num 1:53). Their responsibility was to preserve the holiness of the Tabernacle and ensure that nothing, and no one, unworthy approached it.
5. They were teachers of the Law. "And of Levi he (Moses) said … They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law" (Deut 33:8, 10; see 2 Chr 17:7–9). (What the Bible Teaches)

QUESTION - What is the difference between priests and Levites?

ANSWER - The Levites were the tribe of Israelites descended from Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The priests of Israel were a group of qualified men from within the tribe of the Levites who had responsibility over aspects of tabernacle or temple worship. All priests were to be Levites, according to the Law, but not all Levites were priests.

Priests existed prior to the Levites in a general sense. For example, we first see the role of a priest in Genesis 14:18 during Abraham's time, long before Levi was born. Melchizedek was the king of the town of Salem, which later became Jerusalem. Melchizedek was also said to be "a priest forever" (Psalm 110:4; cf. Hebrews 6:20; 7:17). Pagan nations also had priests for their religious activities. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was the priest of Midian (Exodus 3:1;18:1).

When the Jews received the Law of Moses at Sinai, the Lord gave commands regarding a formal priesthood for Israel. The priests would be males from the tribe of Levi and must meet certain physical and age qualifications in order to serve. In addition, they had to remain ceremonially clean to perform their duties before a holy God. The priests served as mediators between the Israelites and God. They were the ones who performed animal sacrifices on behalf of the people. It was only the priests who were permitted to enter the Holy Place in the tabernacle and, later, the temple. A more detailed description of the Levitical priesthood can be found in our article "What was the Levitical priesthood?"

Among these Levitical priests was the high priest. The first high priest was Aaron, the brother of Moses. His sons and their descendants were to serve as the future high priests of the nation of Israel (Exodus 29). Only the high priest was permitted to enter the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle and temple, and that only once per year on the Day of Atonement. A more detailed description of the work of the high priest can be found in our article "What was the biblical role of the high priest?"

Ezra, one of the leaders of the Jews who returned from Babylon, was a Levitical priest (Nehemiah 12:1). Zechariah and Elizabeth, John the Baptist's parents, were both Levites descended from Aaron (see Luke 1:5). Zechariah was a priest, but his son, John, also a Levite, was a prophet, not a priest.

By the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, the Jewish priesthood held much spiritual and political power. In fact, the Jewish chief priests were involved in sentencing Jesus to death.

Following the resurrection of Jesus, believers now live under a new covenant in which all Christians are priests: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9). We no longer need an earthly mediator between us and God because Jesus has made the final sacrifice on our behalf and acts as our Mediator (Hebrews 10:19–23; 1 Timothy 2:5).

The Jewish role of high priest is now fulfilled by Jesus, who serves as our high priest. Jesus' sacrifice ended our need for continued

sacrifices. The Holy Spirit guides and counsels us.

The Levitical priesthood was part of the old covenant system of sacrifices. It has been fulfilled in Jesus, and we are now under the new covenant. There is no longer a biblical mandate for priests. Every follower of Christ has access to God, regardless of gender, race, or tribe (Hebrews 7:11–28; Ephesians 3:11–12; Colossians 3:11). | GotQuestions.org

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Related Resources:

- What is a burnt offering? | GotQuestions.org
- What were the various sacrifices in the Old Testament? | GotQuestions.org
- What was the Levitical priesthood?
- What should we learn from the tribe of Levi / the Levites?
- What was the biblical role of the high priest?

Deuteronomy 18:2 "They shall have no inheritance among their countrymen; the LORD is their inheritance, as He promised them.

- **the LORD**: Ge 15:1 Ps 16:5 Ps 73:24-26 Ps 84:11 Ps 119:57 Isa 61:6 La 3:24 1Pe 2:5,9 Rev 1:5,6
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

> Psalm 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.
>
> Psalm 119:57 Heth. The LORD **is my portion**; I have promised to keep Your words.
>
> Psalm 142:5 I cried out to You, O LORD; I said, "You are my refuge, **my portion** in the land of the living.
>
> Lam 3:24 "The LORD **is my portion**," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him."

YAHWEH IS THE INHERITANCE OF THE PRIESTS

They shall have no inheritance (Lxx - kleros) **among their countrymen; the LORD** (Heb - Jehovah; Lxx - kurios) **is their inheritance** (Lxx - kleros)**, as He promised them** - The glorious truths o Ps 73:25-26 is applicable to the priests and to believers today (for we are priests - 1 Pe 2:9+, Rev 1:5-6+) -

> "Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and **my portion** forever."For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. But as for me, **the nearness of God is my good**; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works."

God was the unique **inheritance** to the Levites. He was the focus of their service, the source of their sustenance, and the significance of their calling. Their inheritance included cities, daily food, and a constant vocation, but it did not include the same type of land inheritance given to the other tribes of Israel. GotQuestions.org

Maxwell - It is significant that early in the history of God's people, provision was made for the support of His ministers. The apostle Paul appealed to the law to sustain his rights in this connection, even though he declined to exercise them (1 Cor. 9:1, 6–15). (Preacher's Commentary)

> **Inheritance** (possession, heritage) (05159) **nachalah** from **nāḥal** = signifies giving or receiving property which is part of a permanent possession and as a result of succession) means Inheritance, heritage, possession. A possession is any piece of property that passes by law to an heir on the death of the owner. It also speaks of God's promises to His people, such as the promise of the land to national (redeemed remnant) Israel. In Dt 4:20 we read "But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as today."
>
> > **Nachalah** in Deut - Deut. 3:28; Deut. 4:20; Deut. 4:21; Deut. 4:38; Deut. 9:26; Deut. 9:29; Deut. 10:9; Deut. 12:9; Deut. 12:12; Deut. 14:27; Deut. 14:29; Deut. 15:4; Deut. 18:1; Deut. 18:2; Deut. 19:10; Deut.

19:14; Deut. 20:16; Deut. 21:23; Deut. 24:4; Deut. 25:19; Deut. 26:1; Deut. 29:8; Deut. 32:9;

QUESTION: How was God Himself the inheritance of the Levites?

ANSWER: Deuteronomy 18:1–2 says that the Levites had a very special inheritance from God: "The Levitical priests (seeWhat is the difference between priests and Levites?) —indeed, the whole tribe of Levi—are to have no allotment or inheritance with Israel. They shall live on the food offerings presented to the Lord, for that is their inheritance. They shall have no inheritance among their fellow Israelites; the Lord is their inheritance, as he promised them." The other tribes of Israel received a land inheritance in Canaan, but the Levites received no land. Instead, the Levites were given certain cities within the other tribes' territories.

The Levites' inheritance was God Himself in the sense that they were the ones chosen to oversee the worship of the entire nation of Israel. The Levites were responsible for the tabernacle and its implements as well as overseeing the sacrifices and offerings of the people.

The priests were provided for through their service. Deuteronomy 18:3–4 offers a summary of the Law's provisions:

> "This is the share due the priests from the people who sacrifice a bull or a sheep: the shoulder, the internal organs and the meat from the head. You are to give them the firstfruits of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the first wool from the shearing of your sheep."

The fuller explanation of this teaching is found in Numbers 18.

> "I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the tent of meeting. . . . They will receive no inheritance among the Israelites. Instead, I give to the Levites as their inheritance the tithes that the Israelites present as an offering to the Lord. That is why I said concerning them: 'They will have no inheritance among the Israelites'" (Nu 18:21, 23–24).

God was the unique inheritance to the Levites. He was the focus of their service, the source of their sustenance, and the significance of their calling. Their inheritance included cities, daily food, and a constant vocation, but it did not include the same type of land inheritance given to the other tribes of Israel. GotQuestions.org

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Related Resource:

- What does it mean to say that God is my portion? | GotQuestions.org

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Deuteronomy 18:3 "Now this shall be the priests' due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, either an ox or a sheep, of which they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach.

- **offer a sacrifice**: De 12:27 Lev 7:30-34
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

> Leviticus 7:30-34+ 'His own hands are to bring offerings by fire to the LORD. He shall bring the fat with the breast, that the breast may be presented as a wave offering before the LORD. 31 'The priest shall offer up the fat in smoke on the altar, but the breast shall belong to Aaron and his sons. 32'You shall give the right thigh to the priest as a contribution from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. 33'The one among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood of the peace offerings and the fat, the right thigh shall be his as his portion. 34 'For I have taken the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as their due forever from the sons of Israel.

FOOD FOR THE PRIESTS

Now this shall be the priests' due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, either an ox or a sheep, of which they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks (jowls, jawbones and meat hanging down, forming the cheeks) **and the stomach** - This section specifically addresses the priests of the tribe of Levi only. Lev. 7:28–36; Nu. 18:8–19 describe the different

portions of the sacrifices which are given to the priests. The priests were to receive specified parts from the sacrifices, except for the burnt offering, which was totally consumed on the altar. The **stomach** was part of certain sacrifices which the priest's share and was needed to make cheese, the lining of the fourth stomach of cattle being used for curdling milk. The mucous membrane was processed until it became a yellowish powder which was used for making cheese.

HCSB - Their office was considered so holy that they could partake of the parts of the sacrifices that otherwise belonged to the Lord but that could not be consumed by the laity.

Guzik - From a typical sacrifice, the priests received the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach. The rest of the animal would either be burnt before the LORD, or returned to the one bringing the sacrifice so he could enjoy his own fellowship meal with the LORD.

Utley points out that "Those who ministered at YHWH's altar received YHWH's share. Moderns need to be reminded that: the Sabbath, the first fruits, the firstborn, the tithe, are all Hebraic ways of asserting YHWH's ownership. It does not mean that humans get six days, all the remaining crops, or nine tenths of their income! Humans are owners of nothing and stewards of everything! The planet and the gift of life belong to its Creator and Sustainer. (Deuteronomy 18 Commentary)

Deuteronomy 18:4 "You shall give him the first fruits of your grain, your new wine, and your oil, and the first shearing of your sheep.

- **first fruits:** De 26:9-10 Ex 22:29 Ex 23:19 Lev 23:10,17 Nu 18:12-24 2Ch 31:4-10 Ne 12:44-47
- **shearing**: Job 21:20
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

> Numbers 18:20+ Then the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel. 21 "**To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting**. 22 "The sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, or they will bear sin and die. 23 "Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance. 24 "**For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, 'They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.'"**

GIVE PRIESTS THE BEST

The previous passages deal primarily with protein provision from meat, and now God makes sure they also have "fiber" in their diet with the best produce of the land.

Wiersbe - The priests were to receive specified parts from the sacrifices, except for the burnt offering, which was totally consumed on the altar. They would burn a handful of the meal offering on the altar and keep the rest for themselves, and various parts of the animal sacrifices were given to them as their due (Lev. 6:8–7:38). They were also given the firstfruits of the grain, oil, wine, and wool. This Old Testament practice carries over into the New Testament ministry. (1 Cor 9:13-14, Lk 10:7, 1 Ti 5:18). (Be Equipped)

You shall give him the first fruits of your grain, your new wine, and your oil, and the first shearing of your sheep- This command would certainly test the hearts of the people, for fallen flesh wants to keep the best for itself! Apply this principle to the believer's time, talents and money. The sheep shearing command is mentioned only here.

Utley - the first fruits of your oil" This first press of the first ripe olives was a gift of the people to YHWH and from Him to the Levites/priests (cf. Num. 18:12; Deut. 12:17; 14:23; 18:4).(Deuteronomy 18 Commentary)

> **First fruits** (07225) **reshith** = beginning, what comes first; starting point; first and best; first-fruit, choicest portion (6x) Deut 18:4; 2 Chron 31:5; Neh 12:44; Ps 105:36; Prov 3:9; Jer 2:3 . It can have one of two meanings (The primary meaning of this root is "head.") - (1) The beginning or the first step in a course of action (as in Ps 111:10, Pr 17:14, Mic 1:13) or (2) The chief thing as the principal aspect or component of something (Pr 4:7). רֵאשִׁית (rē(')·šîṯ): n.fem.; ≡ 1. what is first, the beginning, i.e., the initiation of an action,

process, or state of being (Ps 111:10); 2. LN 67.65–67.72 the beginning, first of time, i.e., a point of time which is the beginning (non prior) in a duration (Ge 1:1); 3. LN 65.20–65.29 best, choice, i.e., that which is superior in value to all others in the same class or kind (Nu 24:20; Dt 33:21); 4. LN 53.16–53.27 firstfruit, i.e., the first portion of something which has been set aside in dedication and offering to God (Ne 12:44; Pr 3:9)

49v - Gen. 1:1; Gen. 10:10; Gen. 49:3; Exod. 23:19; Exod. 34:26; Lev. 2:12; Lev. 23:10; Num. 15:20; Num. 15:21; Num. 18:12; Num. 24:20; Deut. 11:12; Deut. 18:4; Deut. 21:17; Deut. 26:2; Deut. 26:10; Deut. 33:21; 1 Sam. 2:29; 1 Sam. 15:21; 2 Chr. 31:5; Neh. 10:37; Neh. 12:44; Job 8:7; Job 40:19; Job 42:12; Ps. 78:51; Ps. 105:36; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; Prov. 3:9; Prov. 4:7; Prov. 8:22; Prov. 17:14; Eccl. 7:8; Isa. 46:10; Jer. 2:3; Jer. 26:1; Jer. 27:1; Jer. 28:1; Jer. 49:34; Jer. 49:35; Ezek. 20:40; Ezek. 44:30; Ezek. 48:14; Dan. 11:41; Hos. 9:10; Amos 6:1; Amos 6:6; Mic. 1:13

Deuteronomy 18:5 "For the LORD your God has chosen him and his sons from all your tribes, to stand and serve in the name of the LORD forever.

- De 10:8 Dt 17:12 Ex 28:1-14 Nu 3:10 16:5,9,10 17:5-9 25:13
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 10:8 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.

THE LORD'S CHOICE OF THE PRIESTS

For - Term of explanation. Explaining why priests are to receive the best, the first, not the last, not the left overs! In short, they have been chosen and set apart by Yahweh.

The LORD (Heb - Jehovah; Lxx - kurios) **your God has chosen him** (set apart [badal] in Dt 10:8) **and his sons from all your tribes, to stand and serve in the name of the LORD forever** - Chosen conveys the thought of selecting for one's own reasons or purposes from a number of alternatives. Priests cannot volunteer for the job, but are chosen, elected so to speak by God, even as believer-priests have been chosen by God. As Peter writes "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;." (1 Peter 2:9+)

Stand and serve - Those two verbs are used elsewhere specifically of the duty of the priests, and not of the tribe of Levi in general (Ex 28:43; Dt. 17:12). Because the priests care for Israel's system of worship, Israel is to care for the priests' sustenance. (EPSC-Deuteronomy)

LORD your God - 7x in Deut 18 (Deu 18:5 Deu 18:9 Deu 18:12 Deu 18:13 Deu 18:14 Deu 18:15 Deu 18:16) **Your** is significant because it means belonging to or associated with the people that the speaker is addressing. Moses is saying that the Almighty Everlasting Holy God in a sense "belongs" to Israel. He is their God! This thought is profound. And what is just as profound is that this same phrase is mentioned 279x in this one book, Deuteronomy (out of 447x in entire Bible)! Do you think the Spirit want Israel to "get it"?

Chosen (choose)(0977) **bahar/bachar** in most contexts means to choose or to select. A verb whose meaning is to take a keen look at, to prove, to choose. It denotes a choice, which is based on a thorough examination of the situation and not an arbitrary whim. Lot choose Sodom (Ge 13:11). Moses chose able men (Ex 18:25). "Theologically, bāchar asserts the sovereignty of God in all of life. It affirms divine omnipotence and capacity for choice and in so doing declares that purpose and personality, expressing itself in agape love, lie at the heart of reality." (Gilbrant) TWOT adds that bahar/bachar is often "used to express that choosing which has ultimate and eternal significance." "Bāḥar is used 30 times in Deuteronomy, all but twice referring to God's "choice" of Israel or something in Israel's life." (Vine)

Deut. 4:37; Deut. 7:6; Deut. 7:7; Deut. 10:15; Deut. 12:5; Deut. 12:11; Deut. 12:14; Deut. 12:18; Deut. 12:21; Deut. 12:26; Deut. 14:2; Deut. 14:23; Deut. 14:24; Deut. 14:25; Deut. 15:20; Deut. 16:2; Deut. 16:6; Deut. 16:7; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 16:15; Deut. 16:16; Deut. 17:8; Deut. 17:10; Deut. 17:15; Deut. 18:5;

Deut. 18:6; Deut. 21:5; Deut. 23:16; Deut. 26:2; Deut. 30:19; Deut. 31:11

COMMENT - **Bahar/bachar** is translated in the **Septuagint** in Dt 18:5 with the verb eklego/eklegomai. This verb is used in Ephesians 1:4+ Paul writing that God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." The use of this same verb here in Dt 18:5 indicates God chose Levi but did not reject the other 11 tribes. **Harold Hoehner** points out in regard to in the doctrine of election "there is no indication of any dislike towards those not chosen. It is not a rejection with disdain. The choice of Levi for the priesthood does not imply anything negative about the other tribes. (**ED**: cf Dt 18:5) Furthermore, nowhere is election contrasted with reprobation. It speaks only of those who are chosen and nothing of those not chosen." (Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary)

Deuteronomy 18:6 "Now if a Levite comes from any of your towns throughout Israel where he resides, and comes whenever he desires to the place which the LORD chooses,

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- **comes**: Nu 35:2,3
- **and comes**: Ps 26:8 Ps 27:4 Ps 63:1,2 Ps 84:5,10 1Ti 3:1 1Pe 5:2
- **the place**: De 12:5 16:2
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Psalm 26:8 O LORD, I love the habitation of Your house And the place where Your glory dwells.

Psalm 27:4 One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.

Psalm 63:1; 2 A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.

Psalm 84:5; 10 How blessed is the man whose strength is in You, In whose heart are the highways to Zion! 10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Numbers 35:1-7+ Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, 2 “Command the sons of Israel that they give to the Levites from the inheritance of their possession cities to live in; and you shall give to the Levites pasture lands around the cities. 3 “The cities shall be theirs to live in; and their pasture lands shall be for their cattle and for their herds and for all their beasts. 4 “The pasture lands of the cities which you shall give to the Levites shall extend from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits around. 5 “You shall also measure outside the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits, with the city in the center. This shall become theirs as pasture lands for the cities. 6 “The cities which you shall give to the Levites shall be the six cities of refuge, which you shall give for the manslayer to flee to; and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities. 7 **“All the cities which you shall give to the Levites shall be forty-eight cities, together with their pasture lands**.

WHEN A LEVITE COMES
TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY

Now if a Levite comes from any of your towns throughout Israel where he resides, and comes whenever he desires (Heb “according to all the desire of his soul”) **to the place which the LORD chooses**- **NET** - "Suppose a Levite comes by his own free will from one of your villages, from any part of Israel where he is living, to the place the LORD chooses" **NLT** - "Suppose a Levite chooses to move from his town in Israel, wherever he is living, to the place the LORD chooses for worship." **Resides** refers to living temporarily in a place, not settling down, which is an apt description for the Levites lived in forty-eight cities (Nu 35:1-7) scattered throughout the nation of Israel.

Currid - These verses probably apply to non-priestly Levites who live throughout the land of Israel and do not serve daily at the central sanctuary. These Levites have been ‘residing’ in all parts of the land: that term is normally used of an alien or a sojourner in a foreign land, but here it signifies that, like them, the Levite has no land possession of his own. Non-priestly Levites may travel to the central sanctuary whenever they please, and when they do they have equal rights to engage in temple service and an equal

share of the endowments of the temple (EPSC-Deuteronomy)

HCSB - Should a Levite decide to leave his own town, one of 48 set aside for Levites (cp.Dt 18:1), he could go to the place the LORD chooses—the central sanctuary (Dt 12:5). This actually happened on a wide scale in late Israelite history but only because many of the Levitical towns had been destroyed in the reformation of King Josiah because of their idolatry (2Ki 23:4-20).

Utley - This allowed Levites/priests to live outside of Jerusalem and to be available to teach and judge in every town. But they had access and the right to function at the central sanctuary also.

Ryrie - 18:6-8 If a Levite decided to serve at the central sanctuary, he had a right to his share of work and remuneration. He could also keep anything received from the sale of property at home (see also Lev. 25:33).

Wiersbe - In the time of Nehemiah, the people didn't faithfully bring their tithes and offerings to the temple, and some of the Levites had to return to their lands in order to live (Neh. 13:10–14). Nehemiah urged the people to obey the Word and support their spiritual leaders, and they brought their tithes and offerings to be distributed to the Levites. It's tragic the way professed Christians fail to support their churches by faithfully bringing their tithes and offerings, yet expect their churches to help them when they have needs. (Be Equipped)

IVP Bible Background Commentary - function of the Levites in the towns. During the early settlement period, Levites officiated at local shrines and altars. It would have been their role to serve as religious professionals, performing sacrifices and instructing the people on the law. While some Levites may have been tied to these places for generations (1 Sam 1:3), there is also evidence of itinerant Levites, who traveled about the country and were hired to serve for a time at a local shrine or high place (Jdg 17:7–13). Without an inheritance of their own (Josh 14:3–4), the Levites stood out within a society that was territorial. The Levites were supposed to instruct the people in proper worship, though the book of Judges makes it clear that sometimes they were a major part of the problem rather than the solution. They were supposed to be preservers of tradition and law and would have often served as judges.

> **Gates** (08179)(shaar) Basically, this word represents a structure closing and enclosing a large opening through a wall, or a barrier through which people and things pass to an enclosed area. The "gate" of a city often was a fortified structure deeper than the wall. This is especially true of strong, well-fortified cities, as in the case of the first biblical appearance of the word: "And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom…" (Gen. 19:1). Within major cities there were usually strongly fortified citadels with "gates" (Neh. 2:8). Certain "gates" were only the thickness of a curtain: "And for the gate of the court [of the tabernacle] shall be a hanging of twenty cubits …" (Exod. 27:16). Later, the temple had large openings between its various courts: "Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord" (Jer. 7:2).
>
> Exod. 32:26 speaks of an opening ("gate") in the barrier surrounding Israel's temporary camp at the foot of Sinai. Such camps often were enclosed with barriers of earth and/or rock. Ancient fortified cities had to find a source of water for periods of siege, and sometimes dams were built. Nah. 2:6 apparently refers to such a dam when it says: "The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved" (i.e., swept away). Both the underworld (Job 38:17) and heaven, the domain of God (Gen. 28:17), are pictured as cities with "gates."
>
> The "gates" of ancient cities sometimes enclosed city squares or were immediately in front of squares (2 Chron. 32:6). The entry way (2 Chron. 23:15) could be secured with heavy doors that were attached to firmly embedded pillars and reinforced by bars (Judg. 16:3; cf. Psa. 147:13; Neh. 3:3). Palaces could be citadels with strongly fortified "gates" large enough to have rooms over them. During siege, such rooms housed warriors. It was such a room into which David climbed and wept over the death of his son Absalom (2 Sam. 18:33). "Gates" had rooms to house guards (Ezek. 40:7). The rooms bordering the "gates" could also be used to store siege supplies (Neh. 12:25).
>
> The "gates" were the place where local courts convened: "And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth …" (Deut. 25:7). The sentence sometimes was executed at the city "gates": "And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children, I will destroy my people …" (Jer. 15:7). In this passage, all of the land of Israel is envisioned as a city at whose "gates" God gathers the offenders for trial, judgment, sentence, and punishment. The phrase, "within the gates," means "within the area enclosed." Thus the sojourner who is "in your gates" is the foreigner who permanently lives in one of Israel's towns (Exod. 20:10). In passages such as Deut. 12:15, this phrase means "wherever you live": "Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates…." (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words)

Shaar in Deut - Deut. 6:9; Deut. 11:20; Deut. 12:12; Deut. 12:15; Deut. 12:17; Deut. 12:18; Deut. 12:21; Deut. 14:21; Deut. 14:27; Deut. 14:28; Deut. 14:29; Deut. 15:7; Deut. 15:22; Deut. 16:5; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 16:14; Deut. 16:18; Deut. 17:2; Deut. 17:5; Deut. 17:8; Deut. 18:6; Deut. 21:19; Deut. 22:15; Deut. 22:24; Deut. 23:16; Deut. 24:14; Deut. 25:7; Deut. 26:12; Deut. 28:52; Deut. 28:55; Deut. 28:57; Deut. 31:12;

F B Meyer - Deuteronomy 18:6 With all the desire of his soul. (R.V.)

Here is the inspiration of a noble purpose taking a man out from his quiet life in some distant village, far removed from the great sacred city, and plunging him suddenly into the very midst of its holy engagements and services. Other men were happy there. What more did they want than the quiet routine of buying and selling cattle, tending vines, and cultivating their fields? But for this man these could not suffice. There was a light that excelled beckoning him on; a voice, which only he could hear, calling to him. He was not asked to come; his name did not appear on the rota of the Temple servitors; the great Temple might seem perfectly able to dispense with him; yet because with all the desire of his soul he longed to be one of the Temple Levites, he might minister in the name of the Lord, as the others did; and be supported, as they, from the Temple funds.

It is a blessed thing to feel an impulse like this. It may prompt to home or foreign missions, to some enterprise of self-denying ministry to the helpless and sad, to service for God or man. It may come on you like a strong current, fresh from the ocean, sweeping up into some quiet river or harbor basin, and lifting the ponderous barges. But when it comes, be true to it, nurse it, reverence it, thank God for it, trust and follow it where it leads. You will find a niche awaiting you, and the portions by which life will be nourished and maintained; and the Holy Spirit will not fail to be your Guide and Teacher, leading you into all the truth. Until it come, wait upon God in prayer; commune with Him in the Holy of Holies; and spend much time in reading and meditating upon his Holy Word.

Deuteronomy 18:7 then he shall serve in the name of the LORD his God, like all his fellow Levites who stand there before the LORD.

- **like all his fellow Levites** : 2Ch 31:2-4
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Then he shall serve in the name of the LORD(Heb - Jehovah; Lxx - kurios) **his God, like all his fellow Levites who stand there before the LORD** - **NLT** - He may minister there in the name of the LORD his God, just like all his fellow Levites who are serving the LORD there."

Deuteronomy 18:8 "They shall eat equal portions, except what they receive from the sale of their fathers' estates.

- **portions**: Lev 7:8,9,14 Ne 12:44,47 Lu 10:7 1Co 9:7-14 1Ti 5:17,18
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

They shall eat equal portions, except what they receive from the sale of their fathers' estates- **NET** - He must eat the same share they do, despite any profits he may gain from the sale of his family's inheritance. (Deu 18:8 NET)" NLT - He may eat his share of the sacrifices and offerings, even if he also receives support from his family.

NET NOTE - It refers to the sale of family possessions (but not land). So this would not refer to a land inheritance, since that was forbidden to the descendants of Levi (Dt 18:1). It seems to refer to some family possessions (cf. NIV, NCV, NRSV, CEV) or other private property (cf. NLT “a private source of income”), or even support sent by relatives (cf. TEV “whatever his family sends him”). (

HCSB - This passage is somewhat obscure but seems to suggest that Levites did own private properties handed down from father to son. These could be sold, but these added assets should not be used against a Levite to deny him his fair share of the benefits of his office (Num 5:9-10). One important principle that emerges is that persons in ministry must not be saddled by material things but, at the same time, must be provided for out of the generosity of God's people.

Deuteronomy 18:9 "When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the

detestable things of those nations.

- De 12:29-31 Lev 18:26,27,30
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

NO IMITATING INIQUITY

They (and we) need to remember the old saying **curiosity killed the cat**. Fallen human flesh gravitates toward curiosity about the supernatural, but in this case it is forbidden supernatural.

John Maxwell introduces this occult section - A crucial question throughout the religious history has been, how may the will of God be known? Each summer I used to preach a series of sermons entitled "You Asked for It." The topics for these sermons were the ones most frequently requested by the congregation. Each year the question of God's will for our lives ranked high on the list. This also was uppermost in the minds of the people in Moses' day. It was particularly important that it be answered for the Israelites before they entered Canaan, because after they arrived they would be exposed to the many evil methods that the Canaanite people used in attempting to discern the future. This passage lists various techniques the pagans employed to obtain these answers. (Preacher's Commentary)

When you enter the land which the LORD (Heb - Jehovah; Lxx - kurios) **your God gives you** - The land is a gracious gift. They did not earn it or merit it.

you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations-This requirement is not a condition for their receipt of the land, but it would affect their continued possession of the land for if they imitated the abominable practices of the idolatrous pagans, God would remove them from the land (which happened in 722 BC Northern 10 tribes taken to Assyria, the "**lost tribes**," and 586 BC, 2 tribes in Judah taken to Babylon).

Believer's Study Bible - (vv. 9-11) Verses 9-13 tell the people that they were not to try to discern God's will as the pagans did. Rather (vv. 14-22), they would be given prophets of the Lord. The sacrificing of children (such as to Molech, cf. Lev. 20:2-5; Acts 7:43) was particularly detestable to the Lord. Perhaps equally detestable to Him is the modern practice of abortion -- sacrificing children on the altar of convenience, materialism, and self-indulgence. The other practices mentioned involved using means such as observing natural phenomena, using drugs or incantations, or calling upon the dead to determine or control the future.

> **Detestable** (abomination, loathsome) (08441) see note below on **toebah**

Deuteronomy 18:10 "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,

- **makes**: De 12:31 Lev 18:21-30 20:2-5 2Ki 16:3 2Ki 17:17 2Ki 21:6 2Ch 28:3 Ps 106:37,38 Jer 19:4-6 32:35
- **divination**: Ex 22:18 Lev 19:26,31 20:26,27 1Sa 28:3,7,9 1Ch 10:13 2Ch 33:6 Isa 8:19,20 47:13 Ac 19:19 Ga 5:20
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

> Deuteronomy 12:31+ "You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.
>
> Psalm 106:37; 38 They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, 38 And shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and their daughters, Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with the blood.

Sacrificing Infants to Molech!

NO ABOMINABLE PRACTICES

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire - "Heb "who passes his son or his daughter through the fire." The worship of **Moloch/Molech/Molek** sometimes involved human sacrifice in the fire. **Maxwell** explains that "Children were sometimes made to "pass through the fire" in an attempt to determine the course of events. The use of children in this way is "an abomination to the LORD which He hates" (Deut. 12:31)." (Preacher's Commentary)

NET NOTE - The expression "pass … through the fire" is probably a euphemism for human sacrifice (cf. NAB, NIV, TEV, NLT). See also Deut 12:31+."

Utley - "who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire" This is a reference to the worship of the fertility god, Molech. In Israel the firstborn (cf. Exodus 13) was to be given to YHWH to serve Him. In Canaan the firstborn was to be sacrifice by fire to **Molech** in order to insure fertility, (cf. Deut. 12:31; Lev. 18:21). There is even one account in 2 Kgs. 21:6 where God's people worshiped this false god! It also possibly somehow relates to knowing the future (cf. 2 Kgs. 3:26, 27)

> In Stephen's sermon in Acts 7:43+ he declares "'YOU ALSO TOOK ALONG THE TABERNACLE OF **MOLOCH** (aka **Molech**) AND THE STAR OF THE GOD ROMPHA, THE IMAGES WHICH YOU MADE TO WORSHIP. I ALSO WILL REMOVE YOU BEYOND BABYLON.'
>
> **Molech** was a title for various Canaanite deities to whom human sacrifices were offered. The highlight of King Josiah's reforms was his elimination of child sacrifice by defiling the valley of Hinnom where children had regularly been forced to pass through the fire burning in the outstretched arms of the "god" Molech. The valley was made the garbage dump of the city and kept continually burning, giving it the perpetual appearance of an eternal lake of fire. The valley's name finally became the name gehenna meaning "hell," the lake of fire "prepared for the devil" and all those who reject God's salvation through Jesus Christ (Mt 25:41; Rev 20:15). It appears this same perversion of worship was carried out at the Mayan and Aztec temples where human sacrifice and blood were offered to their so-called gods. They understood that the life was in the blood, but they did not understand only the Giver of life was to be approached with blood as an atoning sacrifice and only at the place He had authorized. In that way, the Mayan and Aztec sacrifices on the apices of their temples remind one of the perverted practice of the Israelites to sacrifice on the "high places."
>
> **Boa** - I think it safe to assume we all know this (child sacrifice) is an offense to God; if we have any doubts, such an act is said here to "profane the name of your God." This is the one sin condemned in Leviticus 18 that is not overtly sexual in nature, though evidently child sacrifice to Molech was part of pagan rituals that included sexual immorality (cf. Lev. 20:4–5). This is also the one prohibition dealing with acts that clearly did take place in a pagan context—but presumably no one is prepared to say that child sacrifice was condemned only when the children were sacrificed to the wrong god! Surely the horrific abuse of the children is itself being condemned. Would it be permissible to kill innocent children today, as long as it was not in a pagan ritual? (Come to think of it, that is happening now—it's called abortion.) (Unchanging Faith in a Changing World - Understanding and Responding to Critical Issues that Christians Face Today).

One who uses divination - A general term covering the types of magic that follow. Attempts to determine future through signs, omens or supernatural powers. "Heb "a diviner of divination" (קֹסֵם קְסָמִים, qosem qésamim). This was a means employed to determine the future or the outcome of events by observation of various omens and signs (cf. Num 22:7; 23:23; Josh 13:22; 1 Sam 6:2; 15:23; 28:8; etc.)." (NET) NLT = "practices fortune telling."

Septuagint = **manteúomai** - used of demonic divination in the NT tell fortunes, predict future events (Acts 16.16+) to practice divination, prophesy, divine, give an oracle (used in Septuagint of Deut. 18:10; 1 Sam. 28:8; 2 Ki. 17:17; Jer. 27:9; Ezek. 12:24; Ezek. 13:6; Ezek. 13:23; Ezek. 21:21; Ezek. 21:23; Ezek. 21:29; Ezek. 22:28; Mic. 3:11)

Utley - "divination" This is from the Hebrew root for "divine" (BDB 890, cf. Num. 22:7; 23:23; Ezek. 21:21; 2 Kgs. 17:17). It is the general term describing several different methods, but all intent on determining the will of a deity by mechanical or natural means, such as examining the livers of sheep or casting arrows. It is based on the pagan worldview that there is information about the future hidden in natural events and that gifted humans (i.e., false prophets, e.g., Jer. 27:9; 29:8; Ezek. 13:9; 22:28) know it and influence this future.

Divine (07080) **קָסַם qasam :** A verb meaning to practice divination. It occurs most frequently in the prophetic books as God's prophets proclaimed the judgment this practice brings (Isa. 3:2; Mic. 3:6, 7). God had earlier established that He would guide His people through true prophets, not through diviners (Deut. 18:10, 14). Thus, the falsity of divination is repeatedly pointed out by the prophets (Jer. 29:8; Ezek. 13:9; 22:28; Zech. 10:2). Nevertheless, divination was a problem for Israel as well as for other nations (1 Sam. 6:2; 28:8; 2 Kgs. 17:17). This Hebrew term is broad enough to encompass necromancy, augury, and visions (1 Sam. 28:8; Ezek. 21:21–29; Mic. 3:6, 7). Divination was quite profitable for some even in New Testament times (cf. Acts 16:16–18). (Word Study OT)

Qasam - conjure(1), divination(2), divine(2), diviner(2), diviners(7), divining(1), practice(1), practiced(1), use(1), uses(1), utter...divinations(1). Deut. 18:10; Deut. 18:14; Jos. 13:22; 1 Sam. 6:2; 1 Sam. 28:8; 2 Ki. 17:17; Isa. 3:2; Isa. 44:25; Jer. 27:9; Jer. 29:8; Ezek. 13:9; Ezek. 13:23; Ezek. 21:21; Ezek. 21:23; Ezek. 21:29; Ezek. 22:28; Mic. 3:6; Mic. 3:7; Mic. 3:11; Zech. 10:2

Divination (07081) **קֶסֶם qesem**: A masculine noun meaning divination. This word described the cultic practice of foreign nations that was prohibited in Israel (Deut. 18:10); and considered a great sin (1 Sam. 15:23; 2 Kgs. 17:17). False prophets used divination to prophesy in God's name, but God identified them as false (Jer. 14:14; Ezek. 13:6); and pledged to remove such practices from Israel (Ezek. 13:23). Several verses give some insight into what this actual practice looked like: it was compared to a kingly sentence (Prov. 16:10); and was used to discern between two choices (Ezek. 21:21[26], 22[27]).(Word Study OT)

Derived from qāsam, **qesem** refers to "**divination**." Cognates are widely attested in Semitic languages. Divination, which was outlawed by God in Israel, involved using illegitimate means to attempt to gain knowledge of such things as the future. Ezekiel 21:21 includes using arrows, consulting teraphim and examining livers as methods of divination (see HED #7364 for other methods used). In Num. 22:7, qesem refers to the "fee" for divination. In Proverbs, qesem seems to mean the "oracles" or "decisions" of Yahweh (Prov. 16:10). (Complete Biblical Library)

James Swanson on **qesem -** 1. divination, i.e., the pagan state or process of stating or determining the future (or hidden knowledge) through signs, omens, and supernatural powers (Nu 22:7; 23:23; Dt 18:10; 1Sa 15:23; 2Ki 17:17; Pr 16:10; Jer 14:14; Eze 13:6, 23; 21:26), note: four broad classes of divination is 1. the position of stars 2. speaking with dead spirits 3. examining animal parts or potsherds 4. cast lots for a yes or no answer, see also domain LN 53.96–53.101; 2. decision, conclusion, i.e., the result of a process and so make up one's mind about a subject (Pr 16:10+), note: this decision is likely made by casting lots or other oracle-type processes; 3. lot i.e., a specially marked small stick, pebble, or shard thrown down for making decisions based on pagan views of chance, or believers using the lot perceived as quasi-chance, but believed to be guided by God (Eze 21:27) (DBL with Semantic Domains - Hebrew)

Qesem - 11v - divination(10), divine decision(1). Num. 22:7; Num. 23:23; Deut. 18:10; 1 Sam. 15:23; 2 Ki. 17:17; Prov. 16:10; Jer. 14:14; Ezek. 13:6; Ezek. 13:23; Ezek. 21:21; Ezek. 21:22

Guzik - This has reference to astrological-type divination, predicting the future or seeking guidance through the stars, planets, clouds, or weather. Even though Astrology is unscientific—it is based on the supposition that the sun circles the earth, and the positions of the planets and stars have shifted, and are never consistently uniform; therefore, the houses of the Zodiac have shifted—despite all that, **thirty-two million Americans believe in Astrology! There are 10,000 full time and 200,000 part time astrologers in America. Three out of four American newspapers carry a horoscope column**. So where does the real "power" of astrology come from? From what most astrologers call "intuition"—but is really psychic knowledge and ability. Astrology is idolatry, and stems from the demonic. It leads people away from trusting in God, and encourages them to put trust in what God created. And isn't that Satan's goal: To replace confidence in God with a dependence on anything else? Therefore, the Bible clearly forbids us to participate in astrology, which

includes reading your horoscope, studying your sign, and computing a natal chart. It is an occult art, meaning that it involves "knowledge of hidden things", seeking spiritual knowledge apart from God's revelation. It is a foundational art, which means it is the building block for all occultists. It is studied by witches and magicians alike. Every Christian should renounce any involvement they have ever had with astrology!

One who practices witchcraft - KJV = "an observer of times" NIV - "practices...sorcery" NET = "omen reader" ESV = "tells fortunes" "Heb "one who causes to appear" (מְעוֹנֵן, mé'onen). Such a practitioner was thought to be able to conjure up spirits or apparitions (cf. Lev 19:26; Jdg 9:37; 2 Kgs 21:6; Isa 2:6; 57:3; Jer 27:9; Mic 5:11)." (**NET NOTE**)

Thompson on **practices witchcraft**: "A variety of devices were in use in various lands but all were designed to discern the will of the gods. The same word in Ezekiel 21:21 refers to the practice of whirling arrows in a quiver and deciding the answer to the question by the first arrow thrown out."

Utley - "one who practices witchcraft" This term (BDB 778 II, KB 857) is related to the term "cloud" (BDB 777). Linguists think the term is related to sound:

1. the hum of insects
2. sound of wind in the trees
3. unknown etymology (if cloud, then related to sight)

The parallel passage in Moses' writings which prohibits these same pagan practices is in Lev. 19:26–20:8 (see esp. Lev 19:26). This same term is also found in Jdg 9:37; 2 Kgs. 21:6; 2 Chr. 33:6; Isa. 2:6; 57:3; Jer. 27:9; Micah 5:12.

Practices witchcraft (06049) **עָנַן** **ʻānan**: A verb meaning to practice soothsaying, fortune-telling, divining, magic. While it is clear from the contexts and the versions that this term is used for some type of magic or witchcraft, its etymology is unclear. Therefore, the specifics of the practice it connotes are equally unclear. However, it is clear that it was strictly forbidden, and the one who practiced this act was detestable to God (Deut. 18:10, 12). Isaiah appears to use the term figuratively to demean the idolatrous Israelites (Isa. 57:3). (Word Study OT)

Swanson adds "practice sorcery, practice divination, i.e., the foretelling of future events by means of magic or casting spells, with possibly a focus of conjuring dead human or supernatural spirits to appear before the living."

The remaining nine occurrences describe an act of magic or the performers of the act. They are found in passages of warning (Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10) and judgment (Isa. 2:6; 57:3). Yahweh warned his people to separate themselves from the practices of the nations around them because sorcerers and sorcery would lead his people to disobey Him (Jer. 27:9). Indeed, Manasseh is described as doing "much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger" (2 Ki. 21:6, NRSV) because of his reliance on soothsaying. Micah prophecied about a day when no more sorcerers could trouble God's people. On that day, God will destroy the heathen and the heathen practices (Mic. 5:11-15). (Complete Biblical Library)

'**Anan** - 9v - diviners'(1), fortune-tellers(1), practice witchcraft(1), practiced witchcraft(2), practices witchcraft(1), soothsayers(2), soothsaying(1), sorceress(1). Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10; Deut. 18:14; Jdg. 9:37; 2 Ki. 21:6; 2 Chr. 33:6; Isa. 2:6; Isa. 57:3; Jer. 27:9

Guzik -- There is a modern revival of witchcraft, or Wicca, and many people claim that "white" witchcraft (as opposed to "black" witchcraft) is a use of spiritual powers for good, as well as being a more feminist, ecology-friendly understanding of god and spirituality. But whether a witch claims to be "white" or "black," they are still using occultic powers.

Some claim that white, or "right hand path" witches are in the majority today. They worship elements and nature deities, the "Mother Goddess," Gaia, Ashtarte, Isis, Osiris, and a host of other names for the Goddess. Characteristically they are active in "Saving the earth" activities, due to the fact that they are pantheists (those who believe the divine life force is in everything: ever see the bumper sticker picturing a globe bearing the legend "Love Your Mother"?). They deny the existence of Satan, calling him an invention of the Christian Church. They claim to use their powers (and they do have powers) for good: sending healing energies to the sick, affirmations which bring prosperity, and loudly proclaiming their creed, "As it harm none, do as thou wilt." It's ironic how their creed sounds so similar to that of a man who referred to himself as "The Beast, 666"—Satanist Aleister Crowley, who wrote, "Do as thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."

Of course, there are black, or "left hand path," witches. These are witches who originally were into white

witchcraft, and got hungry for more power. As their teachers noticed this power lust, they were taken aside and told, "You are now ready to go after the higher power, and there is only one way to achieve this power. Satan is its source." Thus comes the white witch's abrupt surprise: either give up your witchly ambitions, or go for the higher power. The bottom line is that the power behind all kinds of witchcraft is Satan. He is the author of all deception, and all rebellion. To practice or approve of witchcraft is to serve Satan.

And this Satanic power kills. Ronald Baker was a 21 year old student at UCLA, and was found stabbed to death at the mouth of a railroad tunnel in the rocky hills above Chatsworth Park. Police first thought the mangled body was of a transient hit by a train; but they then found an occult connection in Baker's death. The killing took place on the night of the summer solstice, and the tunnel near the park is known to police as a gathering place for devotees of the occult. Baker was involved with Wicca (described as "benevolent witchcraft"), often wore a pentagram pendant, and belonged to a UCLA metaphysical group known as Mystic Circle (from a July 1990 news article).

Some who call themselves Christians are buying into this deception. Take the case of a woman who calls herself Starhawk, who is a practitioner of Wicca—a witch. She first learned about Wicca at an anthropology course at UCLA when she was 17, and she took the name Starhawk in 1975 when it came to her in a dream. After a master's degree in psychology, she began teaching at universities. She is a licensed minister of the Covenant of the Goddess and performs marriages and other ceremonies. She views the earth as a sensitive, living organism which she calls "the Goddess." Mary Elizabeth Moore of the Claremont School of Theology said of Starhawk: "Many Christians, especially women and others who are trying to reclaim creation-centered theology, find her work to be compatible with, or at least adaptable to, Christian teaching." Starhawk was scheduled to speak at the First Christian Church in Santa Monica on a Friday evening (from a June, 1993 news article). (Enduring Word Commentary)

or one who interprets omens - NET = "soothsayer." NLT = "interpret omens. "Heb "a seeker of omens" (מְנַחֵשׁ, ménakhesh). This is a subset of divination, one illustrated by the use of a "divining cup" in the story of Joseph (Gen 44:5)." (NET)

Interprets omens (05172) **nachash** practice divination, i.e., interpret omens and signs, as a way to learn the will of God, or the gods, known for future contingencies

Nachash - 9v - divination(1), divined(1), enchantments(1), indeed practice divination(1), indeed uses(1), interprets omens(1), practice divination(1), took as an omen(1), used divination(2). Gen. 30:27; Gen. 44:5; Gen. 44:15; Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10; 1 Ki. 20:33; 2 Ki. 17:17; 2 Ki. 21:6; 2 Chr. 33:6

Utley - "one who interprets omens" The meaning of this term (BDB 638 II, KB 690) is uncertain. In Syrian it means "to murmur an obscure incantation"

נָחַשׁ naḥaš: A verb meaning to practice divination, to observe omens. This verb described the pagan practice of seeking knowledge through divination, which was expressly forbidden in the Law of Moses (Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10); and was used as an indication that the kings of Israel and Judah were wicked (2 Kgs. 17:17; 21:6; 2 Chr. 33:6). In its other usages, Laban used divination to confirm that Jacob was a blessing to him (Gen. 30:27); Joseph claimed that a cup helped him practice divination (Gen. 44:5, 15); and the Arameans took Ahab's words as an omen (1 Kgs. 20:33). (Word Study OT)

Complete Biblical Library Eleven times in the Bible this verb occurs, always in the Piel stem, meaning "to practice divination." Nāchash appears in Middle Hebrew, Jewish Aramaic, Syriac, Mandaean and Arabic. The **practice of divination** was widespread throughout the ancient Near East. **Omens** were taken before attempting a wide variety of significant events, such as engaging in warfare or building projects. Further, omens were used at Mari as a check against individuals who made claims that a god was communicating through them. **Omens** stem from observation of the natural world with the assumption that anything which deviates from the natural order does so under the influence of the divine realm as a means of communication. Unusual events in the political order could be tied to unusual events in the natural order, the subject of omens. An unusual sheep liver, discovered in the course of ritual sacrifice, was understood by the peoples surrounding the Israelites as the announcement of a coming event. There existed long lists of the significance of particular omens in Akkadian literature, and a number of liver models (for learning divination) have been discovered throughout Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine. Though an integral part of other ancient societies, the practice was banned among the ancient Israelites, who were to communicate legitimately with God through prayer and prophetic utterances (Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10). One of the causes for the captivity of the northern tribes was the practice of divination (2 Ki. 17:17). Among his many other occultic practices, King Manasseh likewise was

guilty of practicing divination (2 Ki. 21:6; 2 Chr. 33:6).

Laban divined that the Lord had blessed him because of Jacob (Gen. 30:27). Joseph gave the impression that he practiced divination with the cup he had hid in Benjamin's saddlebag (Gen. 44:5, 15). When king Ahab defeated the Syrian army, the officers of Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, carefully watched Ahab for an omen of mercy (1 Ki. 20:33) and interpreted Ahab's use of the term "brother" as a good sign; on the basis of this sign, they negotiated a favorable peace treaty with Ahab. (Complete Biblical Library)

Guzik -- Today, these people are the tarot card readers, crystal ball seers, tea-leaf readers, palm readers, Ouija board users, and the like. A Christian has no business participating or approving of any of these practices, because either they are money-grubbing frauds (at best!), or worse, they gain their knowledge from satanic, demonic, spiritual sources.

ii. This is why it is dangerous for people—especially kids—to break out the Ouija board, or do a little seance, or little "dark" magic tricks. They are tapping into a source of spiritual power that is real—yet evil, and unspeakably dangerous. Many, many people have been ruined on the rocks of "innocent" occultic or fortune telling games, and the fact that there is a real power behind those things should make us all the more concerned.

iii. There is a demand for this kind of thing; why else would a homeless man in New York be arrested for stealing skulls from a Brooklyn cemetery and selling them for use in occult ceremonies? A skull can bring as much as $4,000 (from an August, 1991 news article).

iv. It is worth noting that Satan or his demons cannot absolutely know the future; but they can reasonably predict the future based on their superior knowledge of people and circumstances, or predict events that they can have a hand in shaping through their own demonic influence.

Or a sorcerer - KJV = witch, NIV = "engages in witchcraft" NLT = "engage in witchcraft" - "Heb "a doer of sorcery" (מְכַשֵּׁף, mikhashef). This has to do with magic or the casting of spells in order to manipulate the gods or the powers of nature (cf. Lev 19:26–31; 2 Kgs 17:15b–17; 21:1–7; Isa 57:3, 5; etc.). " (**NET NOTE**)

Utley - "a sorcerer" This term basically means "to cut up" (1) as in the shredding of ingredients for a magical potion or (2) cutting oneself as a way of getting the deity's attention (i.e., Syrian usage, cf. 1 Kgs. 18:28). This term was used to describe Pharaoh's wise men in Exod. 7:11 and Nebuchadnezzar's wise men in Dan. 2:2.

Guzik - - **sorcerer**: This has reference to those who use drugs or potions to cast spells, gain spiritual knowledge, or enter into altered states of consciousness. Modern drug abuse easily falls into this category, and the use of drugs has a definite occult connection that the drug taker may not want, but is exposed to nonetheless.. **Clarke** says of sorcerer: "Those who by means of drugs, herbs, perfumes, and so forth, pretended to bring certain celestial influences to their aid." **Thompson** adds, "derived from the root … 'to cut up', may denote one who cuts up herbs and brews them for magical purposes (cf. LXX pharmaka, drug). The term is used in Micah 5:12 for some such material as drugs or herbs used superstitiously to produce magical effects."

Sorcerer (03784) **כָּשַׁף kāšap̄** A verb meaning to practice magic, to practice sorcery. It occurs with words of similar meaning in Deuteronomy 18:10 and 2 Chronicles 33:6. While the exact meaning of the word is obscure, it involved the use of supernatural powers that hardened hearts against the truth (Ex. 7:11). Those in Israel who used such powers were to be executed (Ex. 22:18[17]). King Manasseh's involvement in sorcery to the point of making his children pass through fire, helped lead Judah to the breaking point of God's patience (2 Chr. 33:6; cf. 2 Kgs. 24:3, 4). Judgment is promised against sorcerers when the Messiah returns (Mal. 3:5). However, in a pagan country, where sorcery was practiced with greater ignorance, Daniel acted to save magicians from death while demonstrating that God's power exceeded that of the sorcerers (Dan. 2:2). (Word Study OT)

Kasap - 6v - practiced sorcery(1), sorcerer(1), sorcerers(3), sorceress(1). Exod. 7:11; Exod. 22:18; Deut. 18:10; 2 Chr. 33:6; Dan. 2:2; Mal. 3:5

Kāshaph is a verb, occurring six times in the OT, meaning "to practice sorcery" or "to use witchcraft." This verb is attested in Akkadian, Middle Hebrew and Mandaean with this same meaning. A cognate in Syriac means "to pray." An Arabic cognate means "to cut," while Ethiopic and Tigre have a verb which means "to circumcise." The latter nuances are related to the concept of committing sorcery. Sorcery is a religious act, as

communication from the gods is sought. Further, sorcery is often associated with divination and with extispicy (reading various entrails of animals), a prime mode of divination. Extispicy requires cutting open the animal. Kāshaph occurs only in the Piel form, and five of its occurrences are substantive participles. The only finite verb form occurs in 2 Chr. 33:6, where Manasseh is accused of committing numerous sins, one of which is practicing sorcery. Otherwise, kāshaph occurs as a participle meaning "one who practices sorcery" or "sorcerer."

The men or advisers that Pharaoh summoned to compete against Aaron were called sorcerers (Exo. 7:11). A similar arrangement is found later in Babylon when king Nebuchadnezzar summoned sorcerers along with magicians to interpret his dream (Dan. 2:2). In the end, only God's servant, Daniel (like Joseph), was able to provide the king with the proper interpretation (cf. 2:14-45). **Sorcerers** were not to be allowed in Israel, and God's judgment would be against them. The command in Exo. 22:18 is, "You shall not allow a sorceress to live [in Israel]," is once again delivered to the Israelites in Mal. 3:5 (cf. Deut. 18:10). In fact, many of the commands of Mal. 3:5 reflect the commands of Exo. 22:18-24 (e.g., commands not to oppress the widow, the orphan or the alien). This intertextuality validates the Lord's claim in 3:6, "For I, the Lord, do not change." (Complete Biblical Library)

Henry Morris - witch. The naturalistic assumptions that have prevailed in western nations during the age of science are rapidly being displaced by the revival of occultic practices in **the New Age movement**. All such beliefs and practices, however, are considered demonic when they are based on deception. God classifies such practices as abominations. They are so dangerous that they were actually classified in the Mosaic laws as capital crimes (Exodus 22:18).

Utley - the different English translations show that these words have some overlap. These terms seem to refer to different types of pagan worship practice, but their exact definitions are uncertain to modern Bible students. See a brief discussion in (1) Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, pp. 524–528 and 608–610 and also Synonyms of the Old Testament by Robert B. Girdlestone, pp. 296–302. The general picture is an attempt to know and manipulate the future for personal benefit. YHWH's people are to trust Him and serve Him. The old original sin of "me first" is the root of all of mankind's problems!

TSK - The precise import of the terms here used to express these unhallowed practices cannot be clearly ascertained: he that useth divination, {kosaim, kesamim,} seems a general term for the various species after specified; observer of times, {meonain,} one who pretends to foretell by the clouds, planets, etc.; enchanter {menachesh,} a diviner, either by means of serpents, or by inspecting the entrails of beasts, the flight of birds, etc.; a witch, {mecashsheph,} one who used magical fumigations, etc.; a charmer, {chover chaver,} one who uses spells, or a peculiar conjunction of words, or tying knots, etc.; a consulter with familiar spirits, {shoel ov,} a pythoness; a wizard, {yidoni,} a cunning man; necromancer, {doresh el hammaithim} one who seeks enquiries of the dead.

Ryrie - **one who practices witchcraft.** The idea is that of practicing hidden arts. one who interprets omens. Balaam did this (cf. Nu 24:1+). sorcerer. A practitioner of spells and occult magic. a spiritist. One who pretends to know about the unseen world.

Related Resources:

- What does the Bible say about divination? | GotQuestions.org
- What does the Bible say about necromancy? | GotQuestions.org
- What does the Bible say about witchcraft / witches? Should a Christian fear witchcraft? | GotQuestions.org
- What does the Bible say about praying to / speaking to the dead?
- What kind of divination did Joseph do in Genesis 44:5, 15? | GotQuestions.org
- What does the Bible say about palm reading? | GotQuestions.org
- What are tarot cards? Are tarot cards evil? | GotQuestions.org
- What does the Bible say about sorcery? | GotQuestions.org
- What does the Bible say about dowsing? | GotQuestions.org
- Should a Christian read fortune cookies? | GotQuestions.org
- What is a druid? | GotQuestions.org
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- What is a python spirit? | GotQuestions.org
- What is an omen? | GotQuestions.org
- What does the Bible say about superstitions? | GotQuestions.org
- What are Ouija boards? Should a Christian play with Ouija boards? | GotQuestions.org
- What does the Bible say about Voodoo? How should a Christian view Voodoo? | GotQuestions.org
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- What is spiritualism? | GotQuestions.org

- What is a séance?
- What does the Bible say about an out of body experience / astral projection?
- What does the Bible say about channeling?
- Should a Christian consult horoscopes?

William MacDonald -Truths to Live By Deuteronomy 18:10-11

"There shall not be found among you…any one that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer." (Deut. 18:10, 11)

God warned His people Israel against any dabbling in the world of the occult. All the activities listed in today's verses are connected with demonism and must therefore be avoided. The warning is just as applicable to believers today as it was in the Old Testament.

Divination is fortune-telling. It includes the use of the crystal ball, clairvoyance, palm reading, phrenology, reading tea cups, and every other similar effort to foretell the future.

An observer of times is an astrologer, one who uses the position of the stars and planets to project their influence on human affairs. The daily horoscope in the newspaper is connected with astrology, as is the use of the signs of the zodiac.

An enchanter is one who influences others by charms and incantations.

A witch is a woman who exercises supernatural power through contact with demons. The contacts are ultimately evil and injurious.

A charmer is one who pronounces bans or curses on others and who has demonic power to make them come to pass. (Such curses are ineffective on believers).

Consulters with familiar spirits are mediums who are able to contact the world of evil spirits. These spirits often impersonate dead relatives of those who consult the mediums.

A wizard is one who uses magical arts in the realm of spiritism. Sometimes "wizard" is the male form of the word "witch".

A necromancer is a person who professes to conjure the spirits of the dead in order to reveal the future or influence events.

Christians should avoid all these and also such modem manifestations of spiritism as yoga, transcendental meditation, Hare Krishna, seances, black magic, white magic, hypnotism, water-divining, spiritistic healing, numerology, and praying to the dead. They should also know that the following items are stock-in-trade for spiritists: mind expanding drugs, the ouija board, playing cards, Tarot cards, dice, pendants, medallions, amulets, dominos, sticks and bones (when used for mystical purposes).

Deuteronomy 18:11 or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

- 1Sa 28:11-14
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

> 1 Samuel 28:11-14 Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me." 12 When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul." 13 The king said to her, "Do not be afraid; but what do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a divine being coming up out of the earth." 14 He said to her, "What is his form?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped with a robe." And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and did homage.

MORE ABOMINABLE PRACTICES TO AVOID

or one who casts a spell - Heb "a binder of binding" (חֹבֵר חָבָר, khover khaver). The connotation is that of immobilizing ("binding") someone or something by the use of magical words (cf. Ps 58:6; Isa 47:9, 12).

> **Utley** - "one who casts a spell" This literally is "to tie knots," "to be allied with," or "Join together" (BDB 287, KB 287). In Psalm 58:5 and Eccl. 10:11 it refers to snake charming. A slightly different vocalization describes a

Babylonian false wise man in Isa. 47:8–11

2266. חָבַר ḥāḇar: I. A verb meaning to join together, to unite; to conjure, to charm; to heap up (words). It refers to simple physical proximity or touching of objects (Ex. 26:3, 6, 9, 11) or to the mental, emotional, and physical joining of forces or armies (Gen. 14:3; 2 Chr. 20:35, 36; Dan. 11:6). It is used figuratively of joining one's self in a deep religious sense to something, such as idols (Ps. 94:20; Hos. 4:17). Closely allied to this is its use to indicate the process of charming, conjuring, or casting a spell (Deut. 18:11; Ps. 58:5[6]). It is used of composing or joining words to attack someone (Job 16:4). (Word Study OT)

25v - Gen. 14:3; Exod. 26:3; Exod. 26:6; Exod. 26:9; Exod. 26:11; Exod. 28:7; Exod. 36:10; Exod. 36:13; Exod. 36:16; Exod. 36:18; Exod. 39:4; Deut. 18:11; 2 Chr. 20:35; 2 Chr. 20:36; 2 Chr. 20:37; Job 16:4; Ps. 58:5; Ps. 94:20; Ps. 122:3; Eccl. 9:4; Ezek. 1:9; Ezek. 1:11; Dan. 11:6; Dan. 11:23; Hos. 4:17

2267. חֶבֶר ḥeḇer: A masculine noun meaning a company, an association, a spell. It is used to refer to a band of bad priests (Hos. 6:9); a house of association, namely, a house shared with an antagonistic woman (Prov. 21:9; 25:24); or a magical spell or incantation (Deut. 18:11; Ps. 58:5[6]; Isa. 47:9, 12). (Word Study OT)

7v - Deut. 18:11; Ps. 58:5; Prov. 21:9; Prov. 25:24; Isa. 47:9; Isa. 47:12; Hos. 6:9

(Complete Biblical Library) The second nuance of the noun **ḥeḇer** is "spell," "incantation." This meaning is found in Deut. 18:11; Ps. 58:5; and Isa. 47:9, 12. The context of each of these verses involves references to forbidden pagan magical rites. In Deut. 18:11 and Ps. 58:5, chever is found linked with the participial form of the verb chāvar, "to bind," "to unite," and in Deut. 18:11, it immediately follows "sorcerer" or "charmer." The nominal form of this word appears in direct parallel with chever in both of the Isaiah passages. The exact nature of the magical practice referred to is difficult to determine, and different explanations have been given. The use of the verb chāvar to express the meaning "to charm" is found in Jewish Aramaic. In Ps. 58:5, the subject is that of a serpent that responds to neither "charmers" nor the "cunning enchanter" (RSV).

or a medium - NET - "one who conjures up spirits." KJV = a consulter with familiar spirits" Heb "asker of a [dead] spirit" (שֹׁאֵל אוֹב, sho'el 'ov). This is a form of necromancy (cf. Lev 19:31; 20:6; 1 Sam 28:8, 9; Isa 8:19; 19:3; 29:4).

Utley - "mediums" The PARTICIPLE's basic meaning is to "ask" or "inquire." Here to inquire of the spirit realm (e.g., YHWH, Josh. 9:14 or idols, Hosea 4:12). The first NOUN, "**medium**"is a difficult term to define. Some see the term as it is used in Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27 as (1) a pit or grave where spirits are lured, (2) form of "father" which refers to ancestor worship. It is translated in the LXX in Isa. 8:19 as "ventriloquist." Because of this and Isa. 29:4 some think it means "to chirp" or "to mutter." This would imply to "talk with a different voice." However, from 1 Sam. 28:7–9, it is related to the ability to call or talk to someone in the ground or to communicate with the dead or spirits of the underworld, i.e., necromancy.

7592. שָׁאַל šāʾal: A verb meaning to ask. One could ask another person or even God for something (1 Sam. 23:2; Ps. 122:6; 137:3; Eccl. 7:10). People sometimes sought information by asking Urim and Thummim (Num. 27:21), or an occult wooden object (Ezek. 21:21[26]; Hos. 4:12). Asking could be done as a begging request or a stern demand (1 Kgs. 2:16; Job 38:3; Ps. 109:10; Mic. 7:3). The Hebrew expression of asking about someone's peace is similar to the English expression, "How are you?" (Gen. 43:27; Judg. 18:15; Jer. 15:5). Very rarely, the term could refer to borrowing or lending. But this is certainly not the meaning when the people of Israel asked goods from the Egyptians they plundered (Ex. 3:22; 22:14[13]; 1 Sam. 1:28; 2:20; 2 Kgs. 4:3; 6:5). (Word Study OT)

(Complete Biblical Library) Occurring over 170 times in the OT, **shāʾal** means "to ask," "to inquire," "to request." Semitic cognates to shāʾal are attested in Akkadian, Ugaritic, Aramaic and Arabic. Shāʾal generally expresses the idea of someone asking for something from someone else. The preposition min (HED #4623) occurs thirty-five times in association with shāʾal to express from where or from whom a request might be fulfilled. Items requested by one from another include water (Judg. 5:25), a share of war plunder (8:24), gold rings (v. 26), a king (1 Sam. 8:10), a son (1:20), a city (Josh. 19:50) or a military escort (Ezra 8:22). Also, in its OT usage, shāʾal can denote nonphysical entities such as asking for a favor (Exo. 22:14), information (Gen. 32:17), humility (1 Ki. 2:16, 20, 22), wisdom (3:5, 11), a spiritual anointing (2 Ki. 2:9) and for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 122:6). Often, shāʾal is used of a person asking or not asking through the medium of prayer something from God. For example, Solomon asked for wisdom (1 Ki. 3:5, 11), David frequently inquired of the Lord (1 Sam. 23:2; 30:8; 2 Sam. 2:1; 5:19, 23; 1 Chr. 14:10, 14), but the leaders of Israel "asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord" and were thus deceived by the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:14). Shāʾal is also used to express the asking of instructions from a wooden idol (Hos. 4:12), the dead (1 Chr. 10:13) or a pagan deity (Ezek. 21:21). Finally, the name "Saul" is a passive participle form of this verb, making it clear that Saul was

"the asked for one" to reign as king over Israel (see HED #8062).

Guzik -- **medium**: The idea is of someone who "stands between" the physical world and the psychic world; they channel knowledge from the psychic world into the physical world.

> Thompson notes that the medium: "Spoke from within a person (Leviticus 20:27) with a twittering voice (Isaiah 29:4). Those who practiced this art called up the departed from the realm of the dead, or rather, professed to do so."
>
> Those who practice such powers are really among us. In May of 1990, after a man died in the City of Industry, his corpse remained at the home of a spirit medium that had convinced his family that he could revive them man. Friday, LA County coroner's investigators picked up the decomposing body at the home of the family. The unidentified medium apparently gave the corpse back after being unable to revive the deceased.

or a spiritist - NET = "practitioner of the occult" NLT = "psychics" Heb "a knowing [or "familiar"] [spirit]" (יִדְּעֹנִי, yiddé'oniy), i.e., one who is expert in mantic arts (cf. Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; 1 Sam 28:3, 9; 2 Kgs 21:6; Isa 8:19; 19:3).

Utley - "**spiritist**" was a form of the Hebrew word "to know" (BDB 395). It refers to one who has knowledge of the spiritual realm or has contact with those in the spiritual realm who have knowledge (cf. Isa. 8:19; 19:3).

Guzik -- **spiritist:** Literally, this word refers to the "knowing ones"—those who claim unique occultic or psychic knowledge and powers—such as those on the many psychic hotlines that one can pay to call. Again, a Christian has no business participating or approving of any of these practices, because either they are money-grubbing frauds (at best!), or worse, they gain their knowledge from satanic, demonic, spiritual sources.

Spiritist (03049) **יִדְּעֹנִי yiddeōniy/yiddeoni**: A masculine noun meaning a familiar spirit, a conjurer, and a wizard. In Levitical Law, this type of person was considered an abomination to the Lord (Deut. 18:11). King Saul consulted such a medium when he desired to know the outcome of his war against the Philistines (1 Sam. 28:9). King Manasseh's evil deeds included the practice of consulting mediums and wizards (2 Kgs. 21:6). Isaiah condemned the people of Israel for turning to the way of the Canaanites, who sought out mediums and wizards in order to hear from their dead (Isa. 8:19). (Word Study OT)

> **11 v** - Lev. 19:31; Lev. 20:6; Lev. 20:27; Deut. 18:11; 1 Sam. 28:3; 1 Sam. 28:9; 2 Ki. 21:6; 2 Ki. 23:24; 2 Chr. 33:6; Isa. 8:19; Isa. 19:3

(Complete Biblical Library) This masculine noun is translated "wizard" (KJV) and "spiritist" (NIV and NASB). It refers to one who knows and communicates with the unseen world. The word always occurs with 'ôv (HED #177), which is translated "those who have familiar spirits" (KJV) or "medium" (NIV and NASB). This noun refers to those who seek direction from the dead. The two terms may simply refer to the male and female persons who perform the same kinds of acts. This distinction is also found in English in reference to witches and warlocks. Yidde'ōnî is derived from the verb yādha' (HED #3156), meaning "to know," in the same way the English word "wizard" is related to the word "wisdom."

The Lord forbade Israel to inquire of spiritists. To do so was to commit spiritual prostitution, and the Lord would cut that inquirer off from Israel, meaning they would no longer be a part of God's people (Lev. 20:6). Those who actually practiced spiritism were to be stoned to death (Lev. 20:27). Spiritism occurs in a forbidden list, along with child sacrifice, divination, sorcery, interpretation of omens, witchcraft, casting of spells, mediums and consultation with the dead. So that they would not seek direction for life through these means, the Lord promised He would send the nation prophets who would bring them the word of direction. The people were to listen to the prophets of the Lord and were not to inquire of the dead (Deut. 18:11).

At least three kings of Israel had dealings with spiritists. King Manasseh of Judah did all of the wicked things prohibited in Deut. 18 and provoked the Lord to anger, but his grandson, King Josiah, expelled the mediums and spiritists according to the Law of Moses and turned toward the Lord (2 Ki. 21:6; 23:24). King Saul also expelled all the mediums and spiritists from Israel and threatened to carry out the death penalty against all who were found. At the end of his reign, however, he sought the witch of Endor to bring up the spirit of Samuel that he might inquire of him (1 Sam. 28:3, 9).

Part of the practice of spiritists included whispering and muttering as they spoke in behalf of the dead. The prophet Isaiah asked the people, "Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?" He argued that the spiritists have no light and provide no satisfaction, but they only bring hunger, emptiness and darkness (Isa. 8:19). The people should inquire of the living Lord rather than of the dead.

The prohibition in the Law of Moses against spiritists indicates that there was a belief in life after death in early Israelite theology. They did not believe that life ended at the grave. This is also true of the Egyptians and other ancient Near Eastern cultures. The Egyptians believed that the dead were omniscient, making them masters of all kinds of mysteries.

Various types of ceremonies developed around the practice of contacting the world of the dead. In some cultures, the people dug a pit and called upon the spirits. Other cultures included sacrifices as part of the ceremony. In some cases, silver images of an ear or a ladder were placed in the pit, symbolizing the desire to hear and learn from the spirit world. The ladder was to provide the means for the spirit to ascend from the lower world. The ceremonies were generally conducted at night.

or one who calls up the dead - KJV and NET = "necromancer" NLT = call forth the spirits of the dead". Heb "a seeker of the dead." This is much the same as "one who conjures up spirits" (cf. 1 Sam 28:6–7). (**NET NOTE**)

Guzik -- calls up the dead: This refers to the practice of necromancy, which is the conjuring up or the contacting of the dead. This refers to "One who investigates, looks into, and seeks information from the dead." (Kalland) This is much on the increase in our culture; "The proportion of adults who say they have been in touch with the dead has risen from 27% to 42% during the past 11 years. Close to 20 million Americans now report mystical experiences." (McDowell, 1989)

Utley - "one who calls up the dead" This phrase is a combination of two Qal PARTICIPLES (BDB 205, KB 233, "to ask" and BDB 559, KB 562, "the dead ones"). In context it refers to mediums and "spiritists." These elite, supposedly gifted, people contact the dead for information about the future and the power to affect it. All ancient cultures believed in an afterlife. For many in the ancient Near East this had two possibilities: (1) ancestor worship where the spirits of family members could affect the present and future (2) the power of physical (stars, forces of nature) or spiritual (demons, demi-gods) could be utilized to know and affect personal destinies

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Deuteronomy 18:12 "For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you.

- De 9:4 Lev 18:24,27
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Leviticus 18:24-28+ 'Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for **by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled**. 25 'For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so **the land has spewed out its inhabitants.** 26 'But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and shall not do any of these **abominations**, neither the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you 27 (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these **abominations**, and the land has become defiled); 28 so that **the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you.**

ABOMINABLE ABOMINATIONS
DRIVEN OUT

For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you - **Drive out** is the verb yarash which literally means God will dispossess them of the Promised Land which He is giving Israel to possess.The Septuagint translates drive out with exolethreuo which means to utterly destroy, root out, completely cut off.

Guzik -- God did not take these occultic actions lightly then, nor does He now. It is consorting with the power of darkness, and always to be rejected by Christians. Our culture is becoming more and more accepting of these occultic themes and practices, while it is becoming more and more intolerant of Biblical Christianity. In 1991, a ninth grade Junior High Student in Dickson, Tennessee, sued the school board because his teacher wouldn't accept a research paper written on the life of Jesus. Students were allowed to write on topics such as the occult, reincarnation and spiritualism, and the teacher originally only said that the topics must be "decent." The student was given a zero on her paper when the topic was declared unacceptable (from an August, 1991 news report). "It may be pertinent to comment that in our own day, when spiritualism, astrology, teacup reading and the like are widely practiced, these injunctions given to ancient Israel have a particular relevance. Not only is it impossible to discover the future by such practices, but

the practices themselves are forbidden by God to men who call themselves members of the covenant family." (Thompson)

Guzik -- Because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you: God's judgment was upon the Canaanites because of these occultic practices, and if Israel took up the same occultic practices, they could expect the judgment of God to also.. Yes, the Canaanites were sex-worshippers (in their service of the goddess Ashtaroth); and yes, they were money and success worshippers (in their service of the god Baal). But other peoples given over to sex and greed haven't been judged as severely. What made the Canaanites particularly ripe for judgment was their occultic practices, practices the people of God were strictly forbidden to imitate

Utley - "the LORD your God will drive them out before you" This is an aspect of "holy war." This was revealed to Abraham as a promise in Gen. 15:16 and their sins are described in Lev. 18:24–28.

The Septuagint translates **detestable** with bdelugma which describes divination, casting spells, etc, which are abominable, extremely hated, detestable and abhorred by God. It also describes "Babylon...the mother of harlots" (Rev 17.4+) as well as the "abomination of desolation" the Antichrist's desecration of God's sanctuary (Mt 24.15+), which is the "marker" of the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's Distress/Trouble (Jer 30:7+) which will be brought to a crashing end with the Second Coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:11-16+).

> **Detestable** (abomination, loathsome) (08441) **toebah** refers to an abominable custom or thing and is primarily used of things, persons or practices that are either ritually or morally offensive to the Lord. Toebah is an important word in Deuteronomy (Dt 12:31; 13:14; 14:3; 17:1, 4; 18:9, 12; 20:18; 22:5; 23:18; 24:4; 25:16; 27:15; 32:16). Abomination. Loathsome. Detestable thing. Something or someone who is loathsome and abhorrent. **Toebah** "is primarily understood in the context of the Law. It identifies unclean food (Dt. 14:3); the activity of the idolater (Isa. 41:24); the practice of child sacrifice (Dt. 12:31); intermarriage by the Israelites (Mal. 2:11); the religious activities of the wicked (Pr 21:27); and homosexual behavior (Lev. 18:22). In a broader sense, the word is used to identify anything offensive (Pr 8:7)." The term is used most often in Deuteronomy, Proverbs, and Ezekiel
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> > **Tobebah in Deuteronomy** - Deut. 7:25; Deut. 7:26; Deut. 12:31; Deut. 13:14; Deut. 14:3; Deut. 17:1; Deut. 17:4; Deut. 18:9; Deut. 18:12; Deut. 20:18; Deut. 22:5; Deut. 23:18; Deut. 24:4; Deut. 25:16; Deut. 27:15; Deut. 32:16
>
> Note that the Lxx translates **toebah** with **bdelugma** (from **bdelusso** = emit foul odor, turn away from something or someone on account of the "stench". A loathing or disgust, abhor in turn derived from **bdeo** = to stink;cf bdekluktos) which describes something foul, that which is extremely hated, disgusted, detested or abhorred. The first NT use of bdelugma is in Mt 24:15+ which is fitting as it describes the "**Abomination** (bdelugma) of desolation" (the Antichrist) (cp Mk 13:14+). The other 4 uses of **bdelugma** are - Lk 16:15+, Rev 17:4, 5+, Rev 21:27+.
>
> **Related Resource** -
>
> - Discussion of Abomination

Deuteronomy 18:13 "You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.

- **You shall**: Ge 6:9 17:1 Job 1:1,8 Ps 37:37 Mt 5:48 Php 3:12,15 Rev 3:2
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages: NT Parallels

> Matthew 5:48+ "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
>
> Philippians 3:12-15+ Not that I have already obtained it or have already become**perfect**, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as are **perfect**, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

You shall be blameless before the LORD your God- KJV = "perfect" which does pick up the sense of the Septuagint which uses

teleios to translate blameless (tamim) for teleios means complete, perfect (as in Mt 5:48+), having attained the end or purpose, fully developed. **Blameless** makes a striking contrast with the previous passages describing the antithesis, the blameworthy detestable and abominable pagans and their practices. God is giving a solemn warning to keep from any involvement with these detestable practices of the occult.

Utley - "blameless" This is a sacrificial term (BDB 1071) for a clean animal which is "perfect," without blemish, and therefore, acceptable for sacrifice (cf. Exod. 12:5; 29:1; Lev. 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6, 9; 4:3, 23, 28, 32; 5:15, 18; 6:6; etc.). It becomes a metaphor for those who are acceptable by God based on conformity to the covenant stipulations (cf. Gen. 6:9; 17:1; 2 Sam. 22:24, 26; Job 1:1, 8; 2:3; 12:4; Ps. 15:2; 18:23, 25; Ezek. 28:15).

Guzik -- We are to be blameless in regard to such things, even as the Ephesian Christians, who destroyed all things that marked the occult in their lives (Acts 19:19–20). This is why it is dangerous for people to seek or approve of the occult, even if they don't really believe it—even if they just kind of think it is "cool.". For example, rock singer Ozzy Osbourne says that his satanic image is all an act. "We wrote a couple of songs about black magic, so what? I hammed it up, but I'm not the devil. I don't put curses on people." But in the same interview, Osbourne refers to "the him," who is a "malevolent voice in his head that transmits destructive and self-loathing messages." Osbourne said of this voice inside him, "He's there all the time … I've always had a haunted head." "Innocent" involvement with the occult didn't protect him. Satan doesn't really care if you are a true believer in him or not; just as long as he has you.

> **Blameless** (without defect or blemish, perfect, integrity) (08549) **tamim** from the verb **tamam** = to be complete, entire or whole (literal sense in Lev 3:9, Ezek 15:5, refers to a action which is completed) refers to aspects either **physical** (animals without defect) and **spiritual** (people who are blameless, devout, upright). **Tamim** has the fundamental idea of completeness or wholeness. **Tamim** deals primarily with a state of moral or ceremonial purity (e.g., animal sacrifices - 51x tamim refers to unblemished animals - Passover lamb in Ex 12:5 picturing of course Christ sinless perfection - 1Cor 5:7, "knew no sin" = 2Cor 5:21+). **Tamim** can mean blameless, complete, whole, full, perfect. Tamim can refer to the "entirety" of a period of time (7 complete Sabbaths = Lev 23:15; full year = Lev 25:30). Joshua 10:13 records the miracle of the sun standing still for a "whole (tamim) day," allowing Joshua to extract vengeance on the Amorite coalition that had attacked him. Pr 1:12 refers metaphorically to the fate of the innocent being swallowed "whole" by the wicked, even as happens to those who go to the grave.

Utley's Topic - SPECIAL TOPIC: Blameless, Innocent, Guiltless, Without Reproach

A. Opening Statements
1. This concept theologically describes mankind's original state (i.e., Gen. 1, the Garden of Eden).
2. Sin and rebellion have decimated this condition of perfect fellowship (i.e., Gen. 3).
3. Humans (male and female) long for the restoration of fellowship with God because they are made in His image and likeness (i.e., Gen. 1:26–27).
4. God has dealt with sinful mankind in several ways
   a. godly leaders (i.e., Abraham, Moses, Isaiah)
   b. sacrificial system (i.e., Lev. 1–7)
   c. godly examples (i.e., Noah, Job)
5. Ultimately God provided the Messiah
   a. as full revelation of Himself
   b. as the perfect sacrifice for sin
6. Christians are made blameless
   a. legally through Christ's imputed righteousness
   b. progressively through the work of the Spirit
   c. the goal of Christianity is Christlikeness (cf. Rom. 8:28–29; Eph. 1:4), which in reality, is the restoration of the image of God lost in the fall of Adam and Eve
7. Heaven is a restoration of the perfect fellowship of the Garden of Eden. Heaven is the New Jerusalem coming down out of God's presence (cf. Rev. 21:2) to a purified earth (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10). The Bible begins and ends on the same themes.
   a. intimate, personal fellowship with God
   b. in a garden setting (Gen. 1–2 and Rev. 21–22)
   c. by prophetic statement, the presence and companionship of animals (cf. Isa. 11:6–9)

B. Old Testament
1. There are so many different Hebrew words that carry the concept of perfection, blamelessness, innocence that it would be hard to name and show all the intricate relationships.

2. The main terms carrying the concept of perfection, guiltlessness, or innocence (according to Robert B. Girdlestone, Synonyms of the Old Testament, pp. 94–99) are:
   a. shalom
   b. thamam
   c. calah
3. The Septuagint (i.e., the Bible of the early church) translates many of these concepts into Koine Greek terms used in the NT.
4. The key concept is connected to the sacrificial system.
   a. amōmos (cf. Exod. 29:1; Lev. 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6, 9; Num. 6:14; Ps. 26:1, 11)
   b. amiantos and aspilus also have cultic connotations

C. New Testament
1. the legal concept
   a. Hebrew legal cultic connotation is translated by amōmos (cf. Eph. 5:27; Phil. 2:15; 1 Pet. 1:19)
   b. Greek legal connotation (cf. 1 Cor. 1:8; Col. 1:22)
2. Christ is the sinless, blameless, innocent One (amōmos) (cf. Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19)
3. Christ's followers must emulate Him (amōmos) (cf. Eph. 1:4; 5:27; Phil. 2:15; Col. 1:22; 2 Pet. 3:14; Jude 24; Rev. 14:5)
4. This concept is also used of church leaders
   a. anegklētos, "without accusation" (cf. 1 Tim. 3:10; Titus 1:6–7)
   b. anepileptos, "above criticism" or "no handle for reproach" (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:7; 6:14; Titus 2:8)
5. The concept of "undefiled" (amiantos) is used of
   a. Christ Himself (cf. Heb. 7:26)
   b. the Christian's inheritance (cf. 1 Pet. 1:4)
6. The concept of "wholeness" or "soundness" (holoklēria) (cf. Acts 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:23; James 1:4)
7. The concept of "without fault," guiltless innocence is conveyed by amemptos (cf. Luke 1:6; Phil. 2:15; 3:6; 1 Thess. 2:10; 3:13; 5:23)
8. The concept of "not subject to blame" is conveyed by amōmētos (cf. 1 Pet. 3:14)
9. The concept of "spotless," "unblemished" is often used in passages that have one of the above terms also (cf. 1 Tim. 6:14; James 1:27; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2 Pet. 3:14)

D. The number of words in Hebrew and Greek which convey this concept shows its importance. God has provided our need through Christ and now calls on us to be like Him.

Believers are positionally, forensically declared "right," "just," "blameless" by the work of Christ. Now believers are to possess their position. "Walk in the light as He is in the light" (cf. 1 John 1:7). "Walk worthy of the calling" (cf. Eph. 4:1, 17; 5:2, 15). Jesus has restored the image of God. Intimate fellowship is now possible, but remember God wants a people who reflect His character, as His Son did. We are called to nothing less than holiness (cf. Matt. 5:20, 48; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:13–16). God's holiness, not only legally, but existentially!

Deuteronomy 18:14 "For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so.

- hath not suffered: De 18:10 Ge 20:6 Ps 147:19,20 Ac 14:16
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For - Term of explanation. Explaining why Israel was to be blameless.

Those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners - The pagans practice occultism.

but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so - Occult practices are strictly off limits for all who would be blameless before Jehovah. No Ouija Boards. No horoscopes. No fortune tellers, etc. These are occult practices are to be assiduously avoided by holy people.

Frances Ridley Havergal - What a stepping-stone! We give thanks, often with a tearful, doubtful voice, for our spiritual mercies positive; but what an almost infinite field there is for mercies negative! We cannot even imagine all that God has suffered us not to do, not to be

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Before the Face of God - Witchcraft and Prophecy

> The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so. [Deut. 18:14]

Having given rules for magistrates and the king, Moses turned his attention to the priests and Levites (Deut. 18:1–8) and prophets (18:9–22). In ancient Israel the priests served God in connection with the sacrifices, and the people were to support this ministry with firstfruit offerings. In the Mosaic period, some Levites assisted the priests, but others lived in the towns as pastors of local worship assemblies (vv. 6–7). They too were to be supported by tithes and offerings. While Christ has become our only Priest, some priestly sacramental duties and the Levitical teaching ministries remain. These rest in the pastoral office, supported by tithes and gifts.

Rules governing the prophets began with certain condemnation of witchcraft in all its forms and manifestations. The purpose of witchcraft was to acquire knowledge, especially about the future. Believers in the true God were to look to the available Scriptures (for Moses' hearers the Pentateuch) alone as a source of information about the present and future.

I once visited a church where the people held seances to talk with departed relatives. When I pointed out that the Bible forbids this, they replied, "Oh, that was just for the Old Testament." Not so. God destroyed other nations for doing such things. The law against witchcraft was not peculiar to Israel. Moreover, the New Testament condemns any attempt to add to the Word of God (Gal. 1:8; Rev. 22:18). Anything God "detested" in the Old Testament (Deut. 18:12) and punished with death (Exod. 22:18) surely remains an evil in all times and places.

God promised to provide prophets for Israel. The prophet would speak God's word and would be a reliable source of information. There were two tests to determine if a someone were a true prophet. First, a true prophet would never contradict the written Word of God as it had been delivered. Second, God would give the prophet the ability to predict specific things that would come to pass, and these events would confirm his ministry. If even one prediction failed to happen the people knew that the prophet was false and was to be executed.

Coram Deo As we approach the year 2000, false prophets are especially numerous. Some claim messages from the Virgin Mary. Others predict the specific time of the second coming of Christ. Others prophesy specific events. Is it possible that Christians are far too tolerant of this kind of activity? Pray that your church may be discerning and reject ungodly practices that masquerade as new prophecy from God.

Deuteronomy 18:15 "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

- **Prophet**: De 18:18-19 Joh 1:45 Ac 3:22,23 7:37
- **like me:** De 5:5 34:10 Lu 24:19 1Ti 2:5 Heb 1:1,2 2:1-3 3:2-6
- **him**: Mt 17:5 Lu 9:35 10:16 Joh 6:29 Heb 1:2 1Jn 3:23
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PROPHECY OF A PROPHET

Utley - Deuteronomy 18:9–14 shows the improper way to seek God's will for one's life. Dt 18:15–22 describe the proper way to ascertain knowledge about God and His purposes.

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him - This is a prophecy of the greatest of all prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ. The NET, NIV and NLT translate "you shall listen to Him" as "you MUST listen to Him," a rendering I prefer because the Words of this Prophet are the words which give life to dead souls.

> Philip (RECOGNIZING JESUS THE PROPHET PROPHESIED BY MOSES) found Nathanael and *said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote–Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."(Jn 1:45+)

Utley - a prophet like me" This became a title for the Messiah (cf. John 1:21, 25, 45; 5:46; 6:14; 7:40; Acts 3:22; 7:37). Jesus acted like the "new" Moses:

1. gave the law of the new covenant (cf. Matthew 5–7)
2. fed the people as they expected (cf. John 6)

3. met God on a mountain (cf. Matthew 17)
4. interceded for the covenant people (cf. John 17)

NET NOTE - The MT expands here on the usual formula by adding "from among you" (cf. Deut 17:15; 18:18; Smr; a number of Greek texts). The expansion seems to be for the purpose of emphasis, i.e., the prophet to come must be not just from Israel but an Israelite by blood. **from your brothers,**" but not referring to actual siblings. Cf. NAB "from among your own kinsmen";

MacArthur - Both the OT (34:10) and the NT (Ac 3:22, 23; 7:37) interpret this passage as a reference to the coming Messiah, who like Moses would receive and preach divine revelation and lead His people (cf. Jn 1:21, 25, 43–45; 6:14; 7:40). In fact, Jesus was like Moses in several other ways: 1) He was spared death as a baby (Ex 2; Mt 2:13–23); 2) He renounced a royal court (Php 2:5–8; Heb 11:24–27); 3) He had compassion on His people (Nu 27:17; Mt 9:36); 4) He made intercession for the people (Dt 9:18; Heb 7:25); 5) He spoke with God face to face (Ex 34:29, 30; 2Co 3:7); and 6) He was the mediator of a covenant (Dt 29:1; Heb 8:6, 7). (MacArthur Study Bible)

Deuteronomy 18:15 - H A Ironside

Christ Jesus is the prophet who, like unto Moses, is the deliverer and leader of His people, freeing from Satan's bondage and leading in triumph to the rest that remains for the people of God. He who was with the Father from all eternity, became man that He might qualify as the Mediator of our redemption. It was necessary that He partake of our nature apart from sin, that He might represent us before God and pay the penalty that we deserved. Now He is exalted as Prince and Savior, and we are to heed His voice, following Him as we journey on to the land of promise—to the inheritance laid up for us in Heaven.

Great Prophet of our God,
Our tongues shall bless Thy name,
Through whom the joyful news
Of free salvation came,
The joyful news of sins forgiven,
Of fears removed and peace with heaven.
—Isaac Watts

G Campbell Morgan - Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible -

> The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.—Deut. 18.15

In this chapter priest and prophet are dealt with. The priest was already among the people by the appointment of God. The provisions that he was to have no inheritance in the land, and that his material needs must be supplied by the people, were restated. Special provision was now made for any priest whose heart prompted him to special service. In dealing with the prophet, Moses enjoined the people to beware of the false, and to know the true. He described the methods of false prophets. They are those of the dark arts, of dealing with the spiritual forces of evil, in a professed attempt to discover the will of God. The true prophet was then described briefly, but graphically. It is impossible to read this description without realizing that it was a prophecy which only found its fulfilment in One, and that the One Who was Himself the Word of God. All the true prophets approximated to the ideal; but in Him it was filled to the full. This section in our readings is of special interest as we realize how perfectly Moses was guided to set forth the true ideals of king, priest, and prophet; and how completely they were realized in our Lord! He was the true King; of His brethren, appointed by God, knowing, doing, and administering the law. He was the. true Priest; of His brethren, without inheritance in His own land, abiding in the service of God, ministered to by the people of God. He was the true Prophet; of His brethren, uttering the Word of God in purity and in fulness.

Norman Geisler - DEUTERONOMY 18:15–18—Is this a prophecy about the prophet Mohammed?

PROBLEM: God promised Moses here, "I will raise up for them [Israel] a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him" (v. 18). Muslims believe this prophecy is fulfilled in Mohammed, as the Koran claims when it refers to "The unlettered Prophet [Mohammed], Whom they find mentioned in their own [scriptures], in the Law and the Gospels" (Surah 7:157).

SOLUTION: This prophecy could not be a reference to Mohammed for several reasons.

First, the term "brethren" refers to Israel, not to their Arabian antagonists. Why would God raise up for Israel a prophet from their enemies.

Second, in this very context, the term “brethren” means fellow Israelites. For the Levites were told “they shall have no inheritance among their brethren” (v. 2).

Third, elsewhere in this book the term “brethren” also means fellow Israelites, not a foreigner. God told them to choose a king “from among your brethren,” not a “foreigner.” Israel has never chosen a non-Jewish king.

Fourth, Mohammed came from Ishmael, as even Muslims admit, and heirs to the Jewish throne came from Isaac. When Abraham prayed, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You!” God answered emphatically: “My covenant I will establish with Isaac …” (Gen. 17:21). Later God repeated: “In Isaac your seed shall be called” (Gen. 21:12).

Fifth, the Koran itself states that the prophetic line came through Isaac, not Ishmael: “And We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and We established the Prophethood and the Scripture among his seed” (Surah 29:27). The Muslim scholar Yusuf Ali adds the word “Abraham” and changes the meaning as follows, “We gave (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob, and ordained Among his progeny Prophethood and Revelation.” By adding Abraham, the father of Ishmael, he can include Mohammed, a descendent of Ishmael, in the prophetic line! But Abraham’s name is not found in the original Arabic text.

Sixth, Jesus perfectly fulfilled this verse, since 1) He was from among His Jewish brethren (cf. Gal. 4:4). 2) He fulfilled Deuteronomy 18:18 perfectly: “He shall speak to them all that I [God] command Him.” Jesus said, “I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things” (John 8:28). And, “I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak” (John 12:49). 3) He called Himself a “prophet” (Luke 13:33), and the people considered Him a prophet (Matt. 21:11; Luke 7:16; 24:19; John 4:19; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17). As the Son of God, Jesus was prophet (speaking to men for God), priest (Heb. 7:10, speaking to God for men), and king (reigning over men for God, Rev. 19–20).

Finally, there are other characteristics of the “Prophet” to come that fit only Jesus, not Mohammed, such as, He spoke with God “face to face” and He performed “signs and wonders” (see comments on Deut. 34:10). (from When Critics Ask)

Excerpt from How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth - Gordon Fee and Stuart Douglass

The Function of Prophecy in Israel

To understand what God would say to us through these inspired books, we must first have a clear understanding as to the role and function of the prophet in Israel. Four things must be emphasized:

1. The prophets were covenant enforcement mediators.

We explained in the preceding chapter (pp. 165–67) how Israel’s law constituted a covenant between God and his people, modeled after the ancient suzerainty treaties and thus containing both stipulations and sanctions. God’s covenant with Israel, therefore, contains not only regulations and statutes for them to keep but describes the sorts of sanctions that accompany the Law: the sorts of blessings his people will receive if they keep the Law, and the sorts of punishments (“curses”) that God will necessarily mete out if they do not. Thus God does not merely give Israel his law, but he enforces it. This is where the prophets come in. God announced the enforcement (positive or negative) of his law through them, so that the events of blessing or cursing would be clearly understood by his people. Moses was the mediator for God’s law when God first announced it and thus is a paradigm (model) for the prophets. They are God’s mediators, or spokespersons, for the covenant. Through them God reminds people in the generations after Moses that if his law is kept, blessing will result; but if not, punishment will ensue.

The kinds of blessings that will come to Israel for faithfulness to the covenant are found especially in Leviticus 26:1–13; Deuteronomy 4:32–40; and 28:1–14. But these blessings are announced with a warning: if Israel does not obey God’s law, the blessings will cease. The sorts of curses (punishments) that Israel may expect if it violates the Law are found especially in Leviticus 26:14–39; Deuteronomy 4:15–28; and throughout Deuteronomy 28:15–32:42.

Therefore, one must always bear in mind that the prophets did not invent the blessings or curses they announced. They may have worded these blessings and curses in novel, captivating ways, as they were inspired to do so. But they reproduced God’s Word, not their own. Through them God announced his intention to enforce the covenant, for benefit or for harm—depending on the faithfulness of Israel—but always on the basis of and in accordance with the categories of blessing and cursing already contained in Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 4; and Deuteronomy 28–32. If you will take the trouble to learn those chapters from the Pentateuch, you will be rewarded with a much better understanding of why the prophets said the things that they did.

Briefly, what one finds is this. The Law contains certain categories of corporate blessings for covenant faithfulness: life, health, prosperity, agricultural abundance, respect, and safety. Most of the specific blessings mentioned will fall under one of these six general groupings. As regards curses, the Law describes corporate punishments, which we happen to find convenient (and memorizable) to group under ten headings that begin with the letter “d”: death, disease, drought, dearth, danger, destruction, defeat,

deportation, destitution, and disgrace. Most of the curses will fit under one of these categories.

These same categories apply in what God communicates through the prophets. For example, when God wishes to predict future blessing for the nation (not any given individual) through the prophet Amos, he does so in terms of metaphors of agricultural abundance, life, health, prosperity, respect, and safety (Amos 9:11–15). When God announces doom for the disobedient nation of Hosea's day, he does so according to one or more of the ten "d's" listed above (e.g., destruction in Hos 8:14, or deportation in Hos 9:3). These curses are often metaphorical, though they can be literal as well. They are always corporate, referring to the nation as a whole.

Blessings or curses, it should be noted, do not guarantee prosperity or dearth to any specific individual. Statistically, a majority of what the prophets announce in the eighth, seventh, and early sixth centuries B.C. is curse, because the major defeat and destruction of the northern kingdom did not occur until 722 B.C.; that of the southern kingdom (Judah) did not occur until 587 B.C. The Israelites, north and south, were heading for punishment during that era, so naturally warnings of curse rather than blessing predominated as God sought to get his people to repent. After the destruction of both north and south, that is, after 587 B.C., the prophets were moved more often to speak blessings than curses. This is because once the punishment of the nation is complete, God resumes his basic plan, which is to show mercy (see Deut 4:25–31 for a condensed description of this sequence).

As you read the prophetic books, look for this simple pattern: (1) an identification of Israel's sin or of God's love for his people; (2) a prediction of curse or blessing, depending on the circumstance. Most of the time, this is what the prophets are conveying, according to God's inspiration of them.

2. The prophets' message was not their own, but God's.

As you read the prophetic books with some care, you will easily pick up that each prophet has his own unique style, vocabulary, emphases, idioms, and concerns. The unique features of each of their books is highlighted in How to 2, pages 171–265. Here we want to highlight that, in keeping with what has just been said, we need also to emphasize that God is the one who raised up the prophets to speak his Word to Israel (cf. Exod 3–4; Isa 6; Jer 1; Ezek 1–3; Hos 1:2; Amos 7:14–15; Jonah 1:1; et al.). If a prophet presumed to take the office of prophet upon himself or herself, this would be good cause to consider such a one a false prophet (cf. Jer 14:14; 23:21). The prophets responded to a divine call. The Hebrew word for prophet (nābīʾ) comes in fact from the Semitic verb "to call" (nabū). You will note as you read the prophetic books that they preface, or conclude, or regularly punctuate their oracles with reminders like "This is what the LORD says" or "declares the LORD." A majority of the time, in fact, the prophetic message is relayed directly as received from the Lord, in the first person, so that God speaks of himself as "I" or "me."

Read, for example, Jeremiah 27 and 28. Consider Jeremiah's difficult task in relaying to the people of Judah that it would be necessary for them to submit to the imperial armies of their enemy, Babylon, if they wished to please God. His hearers (most of them, at least) considered this message to be the equivalent of treason. When he delivers the message, however, he makes it abundantly clear that they are not hearing his views on the matter, but God's. He begins by reminding them, "This is what the LORD said to me …" (Jer 27:2), and then quotes God's command, "Then send word …" (Jer 27:3); "Give them a message …" (Jer 27:4), and adds "declares the LORD" (Jer 27:11). His word is God's Word. It is delivered on God's authority (Jer 28:15–16), not his own.

3. The prophets were God's direct representatives.

As vehicles through whom God delivered his Word both to Israel and other nations, the prophets held a kind of societal office. They were like ambassadors from the heavenly court who relayed the divine sovereign's will to the people. The prophets were, on their own, neither radical social reformers nor innovative religious thinkers. The social reforms and the religious thought that God wished to impart to the people had already been revealed in the covenantal law. No matter which group broke those laws, God's Word through the prophet held punishment. Whether the guilt for covenant violations lay with the royalty (e.g., 2 Sam 12:1–14; 24:11–17; Hos 1:4) or with the clergy (Hos 4:4–11; Amos 7:17; Mal 2:1–9), or any other group, the prophet conveyed God's message of national curse faithfully. Indeed, at God's bidding prophets even installed or deposed kings (1 Kgs 19:16; 21:17–22) and declared war (2 Kgs 3:18–19; 2 Chr 20:14–17; Hos 5:5–8) or spoke against war (Jer 27:8–22).

What we read in the prophetic books, then, is not merely God's Word as the prophet saw it but God's Word as God wished the prophet to present it. The prophet does not act or speak independently of God.

4. The prophets' message is unoriginal.

The prophets were inspired by God to present to their generation the essential content of the original Mosaic covenant's warnings and promises (curses and blessings). Therefore, when we read the prophets' words, what we read is not new in concept but a new wording—in each prophet's own style and vocabulary—of the same message in essence delivered by God originally through Moses. The exact wording may be unique, and in that sense "novel," but the concepts expressed restate faithfully what God had already expressed to his people in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The form in which that message is conveyed can, of

course, vary substantially. God raised up the prophets to gain the attention of the people to whom they were sent. Gaining people's attention may involve rephrasing and restructuring something they have already heard many times so that it has a certain kind of newness. But this is not at all the same as actually initiating any new message or altering the old message. The prophets are not inspired to make any points or announce any doctrines that are not already contained in the Pentateuchal covenant. As a first example of this conservation of the message, consider the first half of Hosea 4:2: "There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery."

In this verse, which is part of a long description of Israel's unfaithfulness in Hosea's day (750–722 B.C.), five of the Ten Commandments are summarized, each by a single term. These terms are: "cursing," the third commandment—"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God" (Exod 20:7; Deut 5:11); "lying," the ninth commandment—"You shall not give false testimony" (Ex 20:16; Deut 5:20); "murder," the sixth commandment—"You shall not murder" (Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17); "stealing," the eighth commandment—"You shall not steal" (Ex 20:15; Deut 5:18); "adultery," the seventh commandment—"You shall not commit adultery" (Ex 20:14; Deut 5:18).

It is as interesting to note what the inspired prophet does not do as what he does do. That is, Hosea does not cite the Ten Commandments verbatim. He mentions five of them in a one-word summary fashion much as Jesus does in Mark 10:19 (cf. Matt 18:18–19; Luke 18:20). But mentioning five, even out of their usual order, is a very effective way of communicating to the Israelites that they have broken the Ten Commandments. For upon hearing five of the commandments, the hearer would think, And what of the others? What of the usual order? The original wording is … The audience would begin thinking of all ten, reminding themselves of what the covenant law calls for in terms of basic righteousness. Hosea did not change a thing in the Law, any more than Jesus did, in citing five of the commandments for a similar effect. But he did impress the Law upon his hearers in a way that simply repeating it word for word might never have done.

A second example concerns the messianic prophecies. Are these new? Not at all. Certainly, the kind of detail about the life and role of the Messiah that we find in the Servant Songs of Isaiah 42; 49; 50; and 53 may be considered new. But God did not bring the notion of a Messiah to the people for the first time through the prophets. It had in fact originated with the Law. Otherwise how could Jesus have described his life as fulfilling what was written "in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44)? Among other portions of the Mosaic law that foretell the Messiah's ministry, Deuteronomy 18:18 is prominent: "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their people, and I will put my words in his mouth. My prophet will tell them everything I command him."

As John 1:45 also reminds us, the Law already spoke of Christ. It was hardly a new thing for the prophets to speak of him. The mode, the style, and the specificity with which they made their inspired predictions did not need to be restricted to what the Pentateuch already contained. But the essential fact that there would be a new covenant ushered in by a new "Prophet" (using the language of Deuteronomy 18) was, in fact, an old story.

Deuteronomy 18:16 "This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.'

- **Horeb**: De 9:10
- **Let me not hear**: De 5:24-28 Ex 20:19 Heb 12:19
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

> Deuteronomy 5:24-28+ "You said, 'Behold, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. 25 'Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer, then we will die. 26 'For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 'Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says; then speak to us all that the LORD our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do it.' 28 "The LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken.
>
> Exodus 20:19 Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but **let not God speak to us, or we will die.**"
>
> Hebrews 12:19 and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard **begged that no further word be spoken to them**

This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die = **NLT** - "For this is what you yourselves requested of the LORD your God when you were assembled at Mount Sinai. You said, 'Don't let us hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore or see this blazing fire, for we will die."

Utley - This reflects Israel's encounter with YHWH at Mt. Sinai (cf. Exodus 19–20). Direct revelation from God is an awesome thing (cf. Exod. 20:18–21)! The people wanted an intermediary! This context is, in a sense, a multiple fulfillment prophecy. It obviously refers to the recurrent ministry of the prophet in Israel's national life (cf. TEV). The king and priest were from one family, but the prophets were individually called by God to mediate His covenant to each new generation. However, it also points toward the special spokesman of YHWH (Hebrew SINGULAR, vv. 15, 18 and the comment in 34:10, i.e., the Suffering Servant, the Messiah). This is the one spoken of in Gen. 3:15; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:12–13, 16; Isa. 7:14; 9:1–7; 11:1–5; Dan. 7:13; 9:25; Micah 5:2–5a; Zech. 9:9. Also notice John 1:45 and 5:46.

Deuteronomy 18:17 "The LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well.

- De 5:28
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

> Deuteronomy 5:28+ "The LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken.

The LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well - NLT = "What they have said is right." ESV = "'They are right in what they have spoken." NIV "What they say is good."

Utley - This same idiom, **"they have spoken well,"** is also found in Dt 5:28, but not in Exodus 19–20. **So this is unrecorded revelation**. We must remember that the Bible is only part of the word of God. By faith, believers assert that all that is necessary for life and doctrine has been included, but it is not exhaustive. In this sense, it is analogous to Jesus' words (cf. John 20:30; 21:25).

Deuteronomy 18:18 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

- **raise**: De 18:15 Joh 1:45
- **like**: De 5:5 33:5 Ex 40:26-29 Nu 12:6-8,13 Ps 2:6 110:4 Isa 9:6,7 Zec 6:12,13 Mal 3:1 Lu 24:19 Ga 3:19,20 1Ti 2:5 Heb 3:2-6 Heb 7:22 12:24,25
- **will put:** Isa 50:4 51:16 Joh 17:18
- **he shall:** Joh 4:25 Jn 8:28 12:49,50 15:15
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE LORD'S PROMISED PROPHET

I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you - A prophet like Moses. There is a sense in which this is a prophecy of the resurrection of the Prophet Jesus from the dead, because the Septuagint uses the very anistemi, the same verb Peter used in his sermon in Acts 2:24+ declaring that "God **raised** Him **up** (anistemi) again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power." (cf anistemi in Acts 13:34+)

Guzik -on **raise up for them a Prophet**: People looked for this Prophet in Jesus' day (John 6:14, 7:40) and some thought that John the Baptist might be this Prophet (John 1:19–21). But the New Testament plainly tells us that Jesus is this Prophet (Acts 3:19–26, Acts 7:37).

Utley - "I will raise up a prophet" The VERB (Hiphil IMPERFECT) is used often of YHWH's purposeful, covenantal actions in history (e.g., Gen. 6:18; 9:9, 11, 17; 17:7, 19, 21; Exod. 6:4; Deut. 18:15, 18; 28:9; Jdgs. 2:16, 18; 3:9, 15; 1 Sam. 2:35; 1 Kgs. 9:5; 11:14, 23; 14:14; 2 Chr. 7:18, etc.). YHWH is in control of history, as predictive prophecies like this one referring to Jesus (also notice

Micah 5:2) clearly shows. The Bible is the only "holy book" that contains prophecy!

And I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him- Jesus fulfilled this prophecy declaring " I **speak** these things as the Father taught Me." (Jn 8:28) And later Jesus declared "I did not **speak** on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to **say**, and what to **speak**. "And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I **speak**, I **speak** just as the Father has told Me." (Jn 12:49-50)

Utley - "I will put My words in His mouth" This refers to him speaking the message of YHWH! He will speak only what YHWH tells him (just what Jesus affirmed, cf. John 3:34; 12:49; 14:10; 17:8).

Deuteronomy 18:18; John 8:24 - Good or Bad Information

Around 200 B.C. Eratosthenes measured the circumference of the world to within a 5 percent error. Ptolemy, A.D. 120–150, reduced that measurement by one-third. Columbus appropriated Ptolemy's figures when he studied maps for his voyage. As it turned out, God had placed the American land mass the distance from Europe that Columbus thought Cathay would be. Columbus was fortunate, even though he followed the wrong authority. Not every traveler or pilgrim would be. In 1846, the Donner party accepted the word of Landsford Hastings, who promised a shortcut to California over his Cutoff. Having traveled the Hastings Cutoff himself on his way east, veteran mountain man Jim Clymer urged the Donners to stay on the regular route when they consulted with him at Fort Laramie that summer. Choosing to ignore his advice, they followed Hastings and became casualties of horrendous misdirection in the mountains and massive snows in the Sierra. Half the ninety people in their camp died by following the wrong authority. How this challenges those who seek a way to heaven but accept the promise of someone other than Jesus to get there. Jesus said that he is the only way anyone can get to heaven. By the mere process of elimination, how many of the other purported ways can be true? If you follow the wrong directions on a trip, you may get lost but you will likely be safe. If you take the wrong direction through life, however, you will be lost forever—you will forfeit heaven. -Speaker's sourcebook of new illustrations

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Deuteronomy 18:19 'It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

- Mk 16:16 Ac 3:22,23 Heb 2:3 Heb 3:7 Heb 10:26 Heb 12:25-26
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages: WARNINGS REGARDING NOT LISTENING TO THE PROPHET JESUS

Hebrews 2:3-4+ **how will we escape** if we neglect so great a salvation? After **it was at the first spoken through the Lord,** it was confirmed to us by those who heard, **God also testifying with them**, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Hebrews 3:7-11+ Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "**TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE**, 8 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, 9 WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED Me BY TESTING Me, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS. 10"THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS'; 11 AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.'"

Hebrews 10:26+ For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

Hebrews 12:25-26+ **See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking.** For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. 26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN."

LISTEN TO THE PROPHET!

It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him (Heb "will seek from him") - Like Moses, this Prophet's message would only be rejected at a great penalty. As has been stated elsewhere to **not listen** is tantamount to not obeying! It is one thing to hear the words, but to listen implies acting on the words that

are heard. (cf this principle in James 1:22+) The idea of **will require it of him** is will hold him accountable for not hearing and heeding (obeying) (SEE phrase **shall be utterly destroyed** below)

> Luke gives a NT commentary on this passage writing "Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you. 'And **it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people**." (Acts 3:22-23+)

Utley - We are responsible to act on God's will once we know it. The real question is how do we know who truly speaks for God (cf. v. 21)? Dt 18:20–22 are a partial answer. There are other criteria (cf. Deut. 13:1–2; 18:20–22; Matt. 7; 1 John 4:1–6). This verse is quoted in Acts 3:22–23!

Deuteronomy 18:20 'But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'

- **the prophet:** De 13:1-5 Jer 14:14,15 23:13-15,31 27:15 Eze 13:6 Mt 7:15 2Pe 2:12
- **in the name**: De 13:1,2 1Ki 18:19,27,40 Jer 2:8 28:15-17 Zec 13:3 Rev 19:20
- Deuteronomy 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

> Deuteronomy 13:1-5+ "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. 5 "**But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death**, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

TWO WAYS TO DISCERN A DECEIVER

But - Term of contrast. Contrast is striking for the previous passages describe the Prophet Who is the essence of Truth.

(1) The prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or (2) which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die - Moses has previously decreed the punishment for false prophets in Dt 13:1-5 (see above). The prophet would be exposed by the failure of their prophecies to come to pass (Dt 18:22). However, a prophet's prediction coming to pass did not necessarily prove he was of God. And remember that just because a sign or wonder is performed by a prophet does not signify they are true prophets of God. It is their words which in effect counsel rebellion against the LORD that will condemn them.

Utley - God's speaker will be known by (1) speaking in YHWH's name, not the names of other gods (cf. v. 20); (2) the accuracy of his statements (cf. Dt 18:22); and (3) Deut. 13:1–2 must also be taken into account because God's dealing with Israel was based on their spiritual response.

Thompson - the false prophet spoke **presumptuously**, i.e. he blurted out personal opinions for which there was no backing from Yahweh." (TOTC-Dt)

Guzik -- There are those who would presume to speak a word in God's name. Therefore we must always, always, guard against presumption when we say, "**The LORD told me**."

> **Presumptuously** (act arrogantly or presumptuously)(02102) **zud** means to boil up, seethe, act proudly or presumptuously or rebelliously. Figuratively be insolent. Egyptians's arrogant, proud treatment of the Israelites (Ex. 18:11; Neh 9:10) Israel's disrespect and presumptuous actions toward God's commands as in Deut. 1:43; 17:13; Neh. 9:16. The Septuagint translates **zud** in this verse with the verb asebeo which describes living without regard for religion either in belief or in practice and thus to be ungodly, to live wickedly, and/or to act profanely Nehemiah 9:16 = "But they, our fathers, **acted arrogantly**; (NOTE WHAT A PRESUMPTUOUS

PERSON DOES...) They became stubborn and would not listen to Your commandments

Presumptuous (English) (of a person or their behavior) failing to observe the limits of what is permitted or appropriate. Middle English: from Old French *presumptueux*, from late Latin *praesumptuosus*, variant of *praesumptiosus* 'full of boldness', from *praesumptio* (see presumption).

Deuteronomy 18:20–22: Threefold Test of a Prophet

1. He must speak in the name of the Lord, not some other god.

2. His message must be in accord with God's revealed truth in Scripture.

3. His predictions of future events must come true exactly as predicted

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Deuteronomy 18:21 "You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'

- 1Th 5:24 1Jn 4:1-3 Rev 2:2
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IS IT THE LORD OR NOT?

You may say in your heart - That is, they think it but do not necessarily ask the question out loud.

'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken- **NET** = "'How can we tell that a message is not from the LORD?'" The point is not that they seek to understand the prophet's message, but to discern whether it is truly a word from the Lord Himself.

Geisler - DEUTERONOMY 18:10–22—How can false prophets be distinguished from true prophets?

PROBLEM: The Bible contains many prophecies which it calls upon us to believe because they come from God. However, the Bible also acknowledges the existence of false prophets (Matt. 7:15). Indeed, many religions and cults claim to have prophets. Hence, the Bible exhorts believers to "test" those who claim to be prophets (1 John 4:1–3). But what is the difference between a false prophet and a true prophet of God?

SOLUTION: There are many tests for a false prophet. Several of them are listed in these very passages. Put in question form, the tests are:

1. Do they ever give false prophecies? (Deut. 18:21–22)
2. Do they contact departed spirits? (Deut. 18:11)
3. Do they use means of divination? (Deut. 18:11)
4. Do they involve mediums or witches? (Deut. 18:10)
5. Do they follow false gods or idols? (Ex. 20:3–4; Deut. 13:3)
6. Do they deny the deity of Jesus Christ? (Col. 2:8–9)
7. Do they deny the humanity of Jesus Christ? (1 John 4:1–2)
8. Do their prophecies shift the focus off Jesus Christ? (Rev. 19:10)
9. Do they advocate abstaining from certain foods and meats for spiritual reasons? (1 Tim. 4:3–4)
10. Do they deprecate or deny the need for marriage? (1 Tim. 4:3)
11. Do they promote immorality? (Jude 7)
12. Do they encourage legalistic self-denial? (Col. 2:16–23)

(See Geisler and Nix, A General Introduction to the Bible, Moody Press, 1986, 241–42.)

A positive answer to any of this is an indication that the prophet is not speaking for God. God does not speak or encourage anything that is contrary to His character and commands. And most certainly the God of truth does not give false prophecies. (from When Critics Ask)

Deuteronomy 18:22 "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

- speaks: Isa 41:22 Jer 28:1-14
- if the thing: De 13:2 2Ki 20:1 Jon 3:4 4:2 Zec 1:5,6
- presumptuously: De 18:20 Jer 28:15-17
- shalt not: Pr 26:2
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HOW TO IDENTIFY A FALSE PROPHET

When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true(Heb "does not happen or come to pass"), **that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him** - Prophecies that do not come true identify the man as a false prophet who is not to be feared regardless of what he says or warns about. He is not from God and is speaking **presumptuously**, without God's authority, the Septuagint rendering it with asebes which means impiety, godlessness, disregard for godly practice, lack of reverence for God.

> **Presumptuously** (02087) **zadon** related to **zud** - act in a proud manner) insolence, presumptuousness, pride, primarily used in contexts which describe people whose pride causes them to oppose God and exalt themselves.

Henry Morris - When a prophecy truly comes from God, it will surely come to pass. There are many psychics today who predict many things which never happen. These false prophets can be ignored. There are some, however, who really seem to have supernatural prescience. These also must be rejected unless they are meticulously true to Scripture, giving all honor to Christ as Creator, Savior and Lord (see note on Deuteronomy 13:1-3). In fact, the New Testament teaches "when that which is perfect is come" (probably meaning the completed Word of God in inscripturated form) then prophecies shall cease and "that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Revelation 22:18).

Utley - One wonders how contemporary hearers are to judge a prophet if their prediction is beyond their lifetime. Also, what about conditional prophecy that depends on the repentant faith response of the people of that day to which it is addressed (i.e., Jonah)?
The evaluation of those who claim to speak for God is not easy. Here are some criteria:

1. content of message
2. lifestyle of the messenger
3. correlation of the message with other Bible passages

False prophets, false teachers, are often very dynamic, educated, logical, and winsome people. In our day the marks of a false speaker might be:

1. an emphasis on money
2. a sexual license
3. a claim to exclusive access to God

(see A General Introduction to the Bible by Norman Geisler and William Nix, pp. 241–242)

Guzik -- Not too long ago there was a great emphasis on the "prophets" in some Christian circles, and many would prophesy that something would happen—and it did not. However, those people excused their false prophesies by saying they were "learning" and "experimenting" and "under grace," therefore, we should not regard them as false prophets.

While it is true that one may need to learn how to flow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, no one should say something is from God unless they are assured that it is—and if they are wrong, then their own discernment and ability to hear from God are rightly called into question.

Besides, if prophets were held to this standard under the Old Covenant, are we to have a lesser standard under the New Covenant? Is there more of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit now, or less? Under the New Covenant, are we more intimately guided by God, or less? It is true we are under grace, so we no longer stone false prophets—yet, we shouldn't respect them or give them the title or position of "prophet" if they are false prophets.

Instead, the New Testament says all prophecy—any time someone says, "The LORD told me"—all prophecy should be judged: Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge (1 Corinthians 14:29; see also 1 John 4:1). It is far better to be humble and say, "I think the LORD may have said to me" instead of being too confident in one's ability to hear from the LORD.

Tom Stipe, in the foreword to Counterfeit Revival, speaks powerfully about the problem of false prophets in the church:

> After only a couple of years, the prophets seemed to be speaking to just about everyone on just about

> everything. Hundreds of … members received the ‘gift’ of prophecy and began plying their trade among both leaders and parishioners. People began carrying around little notebooks filled with predictions that had been delivered to them by the prophets and seers. They flocked to the prophecy conferences that had begun to spring up everywhere. The notebook crowd would rush forward in hopes of being selected to receive more prophecies to add to their prophetic diaries.
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> Not long after ‘prophecy du jour’ became the primary source of direction, a trail of devastated believers began to line up outside our pastoral counseling offices. Young people promised teen success and stardom through prophecy were left picking up the pieces of their shattered hopes because God had apparently gone back on His promises. Leaders were deluged by angry church members who had received prophecies about the great ministries they would have but had been frustrated by local church leaders who failed to recognize and ‘facilitate’ their ‘new anointing.’
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> After a steady diet of the prophetic, some people were rapidly becoming biblically illiterate, choosing a ‘dial-a-prophet’ style of Christian living rather than studying God’s Word. Many were left to continually live from one prophetic ‘fix’ to the next, their hope always in danger of failing because God’s voice was so specific in pronouncement, yet so elusive in fulfillment. Possessing a prophet’s phone number was like having a storehouse of treasured guidance. Little clutched notebooks replaced Bibles as the preferred reading material during church services.

We must always guard against letting an emphasis on the “prophetic” overshadow a simple emphasis on God’s Word: The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?” says the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:28)