

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
8-17-22

Deuteronomy 18

The Inheritance Of The Levites – Verses 1-2

¹ The Levitical priests—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. ² They shall have no inheritance among their fellow Israelites; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them.

18:1-2 The priests, the Levites; all the tribe of Levi; shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: The Levites - those of the tribe of Levi, who were the paid ministers for the nation of Israel - shall have no inheritance among their brethren. In other words, they were not to have allotted portions of land for their own possession.

18:1-2 They shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and His portion: Instead, the Levites were to be supported by the gifts and offerings of God's people. The Levites were permitted to receive at least of portion of most animals sacrificed to the LORD, and thus were provided with meat for food.

The Specific Portions Of The Sacrificial Animal Set Apart To The Levites – Verses 3-5

³ 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. ⁴ 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, ⁵ for the LORD your God has chosen them and their descendants out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the LORD's name always.

18:3 And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice: 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.

18:3-4 Your grain and your new wine and your oil and the first of the fleece of your sheep: The priests also received these offerings of firstfruits from the people.

All The Levites Had Equal Rights To The Offerings – Verses 6-8

⁶ If a Levite moves from one of your towns anywhere in Israel where he is living, and comes in all earnestness to the place the LORD will choose, ⁷ he may minister in the name of the LORD his God like all his fellow Levites who serve there in the presence of the LORD. ⁸ He is to share equally in their benefits, even though he has received money from the sale of family possessions.

18:1-8 The priests and Levites served much the same function as our ministers today. Their duties included (1) teaching the people about God, (2) setting an example of godly living, (3) caring for the sanctuary and its workers, and (4) distributing the offerings. Because priests and Levites could not own property or pursue outside business interests, God made special arrangements so that people would not take advantage of them. Often churches take advantage of the men and women God has brought to lead them. For example, ministers may not be paid in accordance with their skills or the time they put in. Or pastors may be expected to attend every evening meeting, even if this continual absence is harmful to their families. As you look at your own church in light of God's Word, what ways do you see to honor the leaders God has given you?

The Command To Reject All The Occultic Practices Of The Canaanites – Verses 9-11

⁹When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. ¹⁰Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, ¹¹or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

18:10 Child sacrifice and occult practices were strictly forbidden by God. These practices were common among pagan religions. Israel's own neighbors actually sacrificed their children to the god Molek (Leviticus 20:2-5). Other neighboring religions used supernatural means, such as contacting the spirit world, to foretell the future and gain guidance. Because of these wicked practices, God would drive out the pagan nations (Deuteronomy 18:12). The Israelites were to replace their evil practices with the worship of the one true God.

Why Rejection Of All These Occultic Actions Is Commanded – Verses 12-14

¹²Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD; because of these same detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. ¹³You must be blameless before the LORD your God. ¹⁴The 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.

18:12-14 The Israelites were naturally curious about the occult practices of the Canaanite religions. But Satan is behind the occult, and God flatly forbade Israel to have anything to do with it. Today people are still fascinated by horoscopes, fortune-telling, witchcraft, and bizarre cults. Often their interest comes from a desire to know and control the future. But Satan is no less dangerous today than he was in Moses' time. In the Bible, God tells us all we need to know about what is going to happen. The information Satan offers is likely to be distorted or completely false. With the trustworthy guidance of the Holy Spirit through the Bible and the church, we don't need to turn to occult sources for faulty information.

The Promise Of A True Prophet To Come – Verses 15-19

¹⁵The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. ¹⁶For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die." ¹⁷The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. ¹⁹I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.

18:15 Who is this prophet? Moses, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, promised a prophet to come; a prophet that would first be like me - that is, like Moses. Like Moses, this Prophet would be from the midst of Israel. This not only meant that He would be an Israelite, but that He would be a "man of the people" - He would be one of them. This Prophet would command the attention of the nation. This means both that Israel should listen to this Prophet, and that they would listen to this Prophet.

18:18 I will 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).

The Penalty For A False Prophet – Verses 20-22

²⁰ But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death. ²¹ You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" ²² If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.

18:21-22 As in the days of ancient Israel, some people today claim to have messages from God. God still speaks to his people, but we must be cautious before saying that the Lord has spoken through someone. How can we tell when people are speaking for the Lord? (1) We can see whether or not their prophecies come true—the ancient test for judging prophets. (2) We can check their words against the Bible. God never contradicts himself, so if someone says something contrary to the Bible, we can know that this is not God's word. (See 13:1-11.)