119 MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Shoftim – Don't Listen to False Prophets

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week's Parashah Point comes from Shoftim, which is Hebrew for "Judges," and it goes from Deuteronomy 16:18 to Deuteronomy 21:9.

This Torah portion is primarily focused on giving a basic societal framework for ancient Israel. Moses lists laws concerning judges, kings, Levites, prophets, cities of refuge, trial witnesses, warfare, and unsolved murders.

There's a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we're going to talk about how we respond to false prophets according to Scripture. How do we know if someone if a false prophet? The Torah gives us the answer:

Deuteronomy 18:22

> When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord [YHWH], if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord [YHWH] has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.

So, if what the prophet declared in the name of YHWH failed to come true, we do not fear that prophet—that is, we do not regard his message as given by God. The Torah goes further to say that the false prophet is to be put to death (Deuteronomy 18:20).

Why does God take false prophecy so seriously—enough to demand the death penalty for it? Because God is ultimately the source of prophecy. He puts his own words in the mouth of the prophet (Deuteronomy 18:18). That is why God holds his people morally responsible for disregarding "his words" that the prophet speaks (Deuteronomy 18:19). Since the words of the prophet are God's own words, they carry divine authority.

So, the prophet ultimately represents YHWH's divine, authoritative message. If a prophet speaks presumptuously in the name of YHWH, they are abusing that authority, which profanes YHWH's name

and makes him out to be untrustworthy.

Sadly, there are a great number of false prophets leading many astray even today. How many times in just the last decade have false predictions about the Messiah's second coming been broadcast all over the Internet, on Christian television, and in books? You probably can't even count the ones you personally remember on both hands! And of course, when their predictions fail, those same false prophets continue doing their thing—making more predictions and setting more dates and claiming a divine authority that doesn't belong to them. They continue to profane God's name and make believers look foolish.

If we lived in a nation governed by Torah, this wouldn't be tolerated. False prophets would be subject to the death penalty. But even though we don't live in a Torah-based theocratic nation, we can still apply one aspect of God's law pertaining to false prophets: don't be afraid of them. They don't speak for YHWH. They are frauds. Dismiss their message and warn others to stay away.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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