

Introduction: The Threat of the Pagan Alternative

Moses is giving his last words to the people here. These are the words of a preacher with an impassioned plea, warning Israel of the dangers that lie before them in Canaan. As we study the officers of the Hebrew Republic, we turn to the prophets, but before Moses explains the office of the prophet, he gives us the pagan alternative. He is warning them against the demonic substitute for God's revelation.

In God's order, in God's way, His people are to look exclusively to Him and His infallible Word. Over the next five days, we will prepare our hearts and homes to reject the superstitions of the culture and rest entirely in the sure providence of God.

Day 1: The Danger of Assimilation

Scripture Reading

"When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations." (Deuteronomy 18:9, NKJV)

Teaching

The great danger for the people of God is assimilation. Moses understood that the Israelites were about to step into a culture entirely given over to darkness. It is natural to learn from your environment, but our environment is a dangerous one. The Canaanites sought answers for their future through occult means, and Israel would be tempted to do the exact same thing. We must understand that this is not just ancient history. Divination and the occult are all around us today. From horoscopes and astrology to New Age practices, fortune tellers, and the casual treatment of witchcraft in fiction and fantasy, the modern culture aggressively promotes the pagan alternative. We must guard our homes. We cannot afford to put our guard down and assume that what the culture calls harmless entertainment is safe for our families.

Reflection

Take a close look at the media, books, and entertainment currently allowed in your home. Are there areas where the occult, witchcraft, or magic are presented in a glamorous or harmless light? Discuss with your family why God warns us not to learn the ways of the nations around us.

Prayer

Lord, we ask that You would protect our minds and our homes. Forgive us for the times we have carelessly consumed the things You call an abomination. Give us the discernment to

recognize the subtle traps of our culture, and grant us the courage to remove anything from our homes that does not honor You. Amen.

Day 2: The Demonic Substitute

Scripture Reading

"There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord."

(Deuteronomy 18:10-12a, NKJV)

Teaching

Divination is the practice of trying to foretell the future or the unknown by occult means. It is seeking answers to life's anxieties apart from submission to God. *Why is this happening to us? What should we do? What does the future hold?* The nations around Israel sought their answers through witches, sorcerers, mediums, and the observing of omens. But God calls these practices an abomination. What do we mean by this? They are hateful to Him because they are demonic to the core. To practice them is a direct rejection of God's sovereignty. It is a refusal to trust His providence. When we look to superstitious signs or rely on human feelings rather than the objective truth of Scripture, we step out of God's order and into the territory of the enemy.

Reflection

In what subtle ways do you find yourself looking for "signs" or relying on superstitions rather than trusting God? Repent of any tendency to look outside of God's Word for guidance or comfort regarding the unknown.

Prayer

Father, we confess that our hearts easily become anxious about the future. Keep us from the temptation to seek hidden knowledge or to rely on worldly signs. Teach us to rest entirely in Your sovereign care, knowing that You hold all of our tomorrows in Your hands. Amen.

Day 3: The Call to Covenant Faithfulness

Scripture Reading

"You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you." (Deuteronomy 18:13-14, NKJV)

Teaching

Moses calls the people of Israel to wholehearted covenant faithfulness. He tells them, "You shall be blameless." This requires spiritual maturity and a total submission to the law of God. God drew a hard line between His people and the nations they were driving out. The heathen listened to soothsayers and diviners because they had no true God to listen to. But as for you, God has not appointed such things for you. He has given you something far superior. True peace comes when we rest entirely in God's providence rather than grasping for control over our circumstances. To be blameless here means that our allegiance is undivided. We do not mix the worship of Jehovah with the superstitions of Canaan.

Reflection

Children are naturally curious about the future and the unseen world. Take time today to teach them that God alone holds the future. Ask them: When we are scared about what will happen tomorrow, who is the only One we should trust to take care of us?

Prayer

Lord God, make us perfect and complete in our covenant faithfulness to You. Free us from the grips of a heathen culture and its anxious grasping for control. We thank You that You have not appointed us to wander in the dark, but You have brought us into the light of Your truth. Amen.

Day 4: The Doctrine of Vanities

Scripture Reading

"And when they say to you, 'Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,' should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:19-20, NKJV)

Teaching

When the pressures of life mount, when we are terrified about the future like King Saul facing the Philistines, what do we do? We must not seek out the diviners. The prophet Isaiah mocks the foolishness of seeking answers from mediums who "whisper and mutter." It is a doctrine of vanities. Why would the living seek the dead? Why would the children of God seek the counselors of the devil? We are commanded to turn back to the law and to

the testimony. If a message does not line up with the written Word of God, there is no light in it whatsoever. We must not be tempted to give ourselves to any false views that would make light of these things. God has given us all we need in His Word.

Reflection

How does relying on internal "feelings" for revelation instead of the Scriptures leave us vulnerable to deception? Commit today to seek answers for life's difficult questions exclusively through the study of God's Word and prayer.

Prayer

O Lord, to the law and to the testimony! Bind our hearts to Your written Word. When the world tells us to look within ourselves or to seek out hidden mysteries, remind us that Your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Let us find all our wisdom in You. Amen.

Day 5: The Ultimate Prophet

Scripture Reading

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear." (Deuteronomy 18:15, NKJV)

Teaching

After severely warning the people against the demonic substitute of divination, Moses points them to the true provision of God. God will raise up a Prophet. Ultimately, this points directly to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the center of the gospel message. God has not left us in darkness. He has spoken to us through His prophets, and in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. Jesus Christ is the living Word, the one who perfectly reveals the Father to us. When we cast aside worldly reliance and put our hope completely in Christ and His Word, we will see spiritual strength in our lives. We do not need omens. We do not need fortune tellers. We have the Son of God, and Him we shall hear.

Reflection

Have you truly submitted to Jesus Christ as the final authority in your life? Discuss as a family what it means to practically "hear Him" in your daily routines, your decisions, and your obedience.

Prayer

Father, we thank You that You have spoken to us through Your Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true Prophet, the one who brings us the words of eternal life. Give us ears to hear Him and hearts to obey Him. May our family be anchored securely in the truth of the gospel, looking

nowhere else for our salvation or our guidance. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.