

The censure of false prophets in this chapter is very striking, and under pins the importance of the cohesive understanding of the entire Biblical record. To split the Old and New Testaments apart and expound different theologies from each as some progressive advancement in the evolution of the so-called civilisation of man is not only wrong but dangerously so. The implication of the Lord Jesus Christ as a prophet who did not respect obey and fulfil the law of Moses is to make him by this definition given by Moses under inspiration as being from God, a false prophet sent by the Eternal to test the people to see if they would depart from His ways.

Even the provision of signs and wonders was not enough to prove such a prophet as dependable, only if the God of the Old Testament as revealed to Moses and his people is the same God as presented in the New Testament and not redefined into something "which thou (Israel) had not known" were the nation to be confident. The very idea then of a new trinitarian understanding of the deity of Christ and the personification of the Holy Spirit which are not explicitly taught in the Old Testament would have been a test by God to "*prove you to know whether you love the LORD*". Any such definition of the Godhead must be independently discernible from the Old Testament alone to be in keeping with what is taught here. Moses was warned that such tests would come, Jesus was not such a test because his role as the suffering Messiah but not very God, is explicitly taught in the Hebrew scriptures.

There were many false prophets which arose, most made no claim to divine miracles, but the working of signs and wonders is not to be believed above any doctrinal issues. We should never believe anyone just because they appear to do miracles. It is important not to lose sight of that emphasis. Signs and wonders confirm the doctrine, as Jesus also explicitly did himself, "*the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*" Mark 16v20.

That the Jews crucified Jesus of Nazareth is in keeping with this requirement as the penalty for such wayward teachers was death. "*And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death*". They did this because he was to them an imposter, however he never denigrated the Law of Moses, rather he fulfilled it and thereby respected his Father.

The exaction of the sentence of capital punishment for such offences should be a stern warning to the modern reader of the seriousness of these transgressions, just as Moses was taught by God in his day and generation "*And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.*" The fear of earning such a penalty was very real in former times, but the idea that people should not die for any crimes is very strongly eld now in so called progressive societies. This mirrors the watering down of the understanding of sin, which to many people today is just a joke as they do not believe that God is real and if He is real, that He excuses everyone of the consequences of their sins because He is a God of Love, showing their ignorance of love as well as of God.

When Israel were enticed by evil people to turn away to other gods, they were to turn such people in, to receive their punishment. They were explicitly told not to pity even their own family members but all the guilty were to be killed, irrespective of their status.

“If thy brother the son of thy mother, or thy son or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly”. Family bonds must not stand in the way of divine justice.

This is not the way people behave today. This is not an improvement, we have not got morally better than the days of Moses, rather the reverse. The standards have been perverted; evil is called good and good evil. Those who argue for the Biblical standards are called horrible things and are denied the latitude of their conscience in such vital affairs. In Moses’ day, the punishment of death was done by stoning. This has the value of involving all the people so that they have to participate in the exacting of the punishment and not hire it out to some executioner. They literally had to put their hands to it! This bound the people to their responsibilities, not farmed them out to others as a job! No one should be required to kill people continually, it dehumanises you. The hopefully rare occasions when capital punishment was needed in any town or city was thus a stark reminder to all of what was necessary to keep the divine standards pure. The eradication of unrepentant sinners is a part of such laws; it was not optional. *“Neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shall thou conceal him.”* It should be remembered that Israel was an Ecclesia.

All such matters were to be approached with care and concern. *“Then thou shalt enquire. And make search, and ask diligently, and behold if it be truth, and the thing be certain, that such abomination is wrought among you. Thou shalt surely....”.*

Everything from a rebellious city was to be destroyed, not just the people but also the cattle and the goods as well. All was to be destroyed by fire. This extreme measure was not because the cattle were guilty or morally defiled by sin because sin brings death and the consequences cannot be controlled nor isolated but corrupts everything it touches. There is nothing clean about sin it is dirty and unpleasant. Thus God thoroughly condemned it in all its form.

It is when sin is not treated as God intended that problems arise. The antidote to this is to adopt more of the divine standards in our lives. Not that we stone sinners today, but unrepentant sinners need to be reminded that they have placed themselves in the position of death. To pretend otherwise is not kind or an act of love but an avoidance of what is necessary and the perpetuation of the problem.