

Deuteronomy 13:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams,
and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

Analysis

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

This chapter addresses false prophets who perform signs (ot, תֹּטָה) or wonders (mophet, מוֹפֵת). The Hebrew terms indicate miraculous phenomena—not necessarily tricks but possibly genuine supernatural events. The shocking reality: miracle-working doesn't authenticate divine messengers. Even false prophets may perform signs. The test isn't power but doctrine—do they 'speak to turn you away from the LORD your God' (v.5)? Miracles confirm truth but don't establish it; Scripture judges all claims. This warns against being deceived by supernatural displays lacking doctrinal fidelity.

Historical Context

Egypt's magicians replicated some of Moses's miracles (Exodus 7:11-12, 22; 8:7), showing Satan can empower counterfeits. Jesus warned: 'false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect' (Mark 13:22). Paul prophesied the antichrist would come 'with all power and signs and lying wonders' (2 Thessalonians 2:9). Church history confirms this—charismatic false teachers lead many astray through supernatural phenomena. Discernment requires testing doctrine against Scripture, not just observing power.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How should Christians respond to miracle claims that contradict biblical doctrine?
2. Why might God permit false prophets to perform genuine signs and wonders?
3. What role do signs and wonders play in validating truth versus leading to deception?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	יִקְרָא וְ	בְּקִרְבְּךָ	נָבִיא	אִו	חֵלֵם	חֵלֵם וְ
H3588	If there arise	among	you a prophet	H176	or a dreamer	of dreams
	H6965	H7130	H5030		H2492	H2472
וְנָתַן	אֵלַי יְ	אֹת	אִו	מוֹפֶת:		
and giveth	H413	thee a sign	H176	or a wonder		
H5414		H226		H4159		

Additional Cross-References

1 John 4:1 (Prophecy): Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Jeremiah 29:8 (Prophecy): For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.

Isaiah 9:15 (Prophecy): The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.

Jeremiah 27:9 (Prophecy): Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon:

1 Kings 13:18 (Prophecy): He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him.

Jeremiah 23:11 (Prophecy): For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 6:13 (Prophecy): For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

Mark 13:22 (Resurrection): For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

Zechariah 10:2 (Parallel theme): For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd.

Zechariah 13:4 (Prophecy): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: