

# Deuteronomy 18:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

## Analysis

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**When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken**—God provides an empirical test: unfulfilled prophecy proves false prophecy. The standard is 100% accuracy (not 'mostly right')—even one failure disqualifies the prophet. This protected Israel from manipulation by would-be seers claiming divine authority for personal agendas.

**But the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him**—The false prophet's error is ziddim (זִדָּה, presumption, arrogance), not mere mistake. Jeremiah condemned: **They prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not** (Jeremiah 29:9). Jesus warned: **Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing** (Matthew 7:15). The church must test prophecy (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21, 1 John 4:1), rejecting manipulation cloaked in divine authority. Scripture's completion provides the ultimate test: does the message align with written revelation?

## Historical Context

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Israel faced constant pressure from false prophets—optimistic nationalists predicting victory when judgment loomed (Jeremiah 28), or compromisers

encouraging Baal worship (1 Kings 18:19-40). God's empirical test (fulfilled prophecy) and theological test (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, does it promote other gods?) protected covenant fidelity.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. What modern 'prophets' (preachers, authors, influencers) claim divine authority while teaching what contradicts Scripture?
2. How do you test prophecy/preaching against the empirical standard (does it align with fulfilled Scripture) and theological standard (does it promote Christ)?
3. Why should you 'not be afraid' of false teachers—what authority do they actually lack despite impressive claims?

