

spreading. And while the method of our separation has changed today, the severity of the danger remains the same: we must watch and test for these false prophets:

*“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup> You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. (MT 7.15-20)*

**1JN 4.1** ~ *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.* We are to test—examine the words of the people who claim to be of God. **But how can we know a teacher was false?** By knowing what was true. Let us be like the Bereans— *examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. (AC 17.11b)* And when we find a false teacher, let us now allow them into our homes or into our churches: *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, <sup>11</sup> for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works. (2JN 10-11)*

### CONCLUSION

The American settlers packed up their wagons and all their worldly possessions and journeyed west. Their journey was dangerous: with a wilderness untamed and dangers unknown. And yet, they packed up and left: a lesson in courage and determination in the face of unknown and unimaginable odds.

To the Jewish people, they looked across the Jordan river in hope: hope of a new future. Hope of a settled and blessed life. Hope of a land *“flowing with milk and honey” (EX 3.8)* But Moses knew there were dangers ahead that could cause their destruction and death: **their own human curiosity** in the face of the godless teachings, religions, and customs of the nations around them and the **false words of false prophets** that would rise up from among them, seeking to lead them back, again, to Egypt and the slavery in flesh and in spirit.

Today, we stand at the cusp of the river: similarly in battle against the enemies of God—*the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (EH 6.12b)* And we, also, are at risk of the same temptations and sins—the threat of failing and falling from grace—that the Israelite people did then. May we stand tall in battle: resisting **our own human curiosity** toward the temptations and desires of the world around us, turning a deaf ear to the **false words of false prophets**—knowing the Word well enough to resist the siren call of sin and Satan.

**1CR 15.50-58** ~ *I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” <sup>55</sup> “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

### INVITATION

#652 [EXP-OTH]  
07/26/2025

How the Saved are Lost – Part 1  
PC Pchd

DT 12.29-13.5

**QUESTION:** How are the saved lost?

### TRN TO DT 12

### INTRODUCTION

### AMERICAN HISTORY/Westward Expansion/Manifest Destiny

The call, **“Westward Ho!”** rang across the nation—and with the expansion of American dominion came, soon, the American people, themselves. They sought to move west to a land of new and untapped potential and opportunity—seeking to leave behind them the cities, debt, and lives that they had and move on to something new. And so, with hope, they packed themselves up in covered wagons and began the dangerous journey into the largely untamed west.

### BACKGROUND

As Moses is preparing for the people’s entry into the promised land, he was similarly standing on the edge of a new future. In his case, he wouldn’t be permitted to enter it due to his disobedience in striking the rock (**NM 20**). But as he looked out at the people he’d led out of Egypt and through the wilderness, he desired for them to head into their future with the best possible chance at success. To help with this, he spent **DT 1-5** reviewing the past and helping the Israelites to see what God had done from them. He then spent **DT 6-11** calling for them to respond to the goodness of God and obey Him (to learn from the mistakes of the people whose bodies were buried out in the wilderness). In the next section (**DT 12-26**), he’d look to the future: a future where they’d live not as slaves or wanderers, but rather as conquerors and residents in the Promised Land. But he knew this would be a difficult road.

Today, we often spend so much of our attention on getting people to **“obey the gospel”**—**but after a person comes up out of the waters, what’s next?** We encourage them to keep coming—twice on Sundays and once on Wednesdays. We call on them to continue their study of God’s Word and to apply it to their lives—becoming a new person in Christ. If we’re doing well, we urge them to bring their friends and family along—to evangelize! And we encourage them to **“remain faithful”**— *Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. (1CR 10.12)* In that, we raise a frightening concept: the idea that the Christian can fall away—the saved can be lost. **But how?**

There are many passages we can turn to—but to me, one of the greatest places to turn is Moses’ discussion to God’s chosen people in **DT 12**. For like us, they were standing on the edge of the Promised Land—promised a home, a hope, and an inheritance. But they wouldn’t simply walk into the new land and be given it on the silver platter: they’d have to fight for it.

**DT 12.1-3** ~ *“These are the statutes and rules that you shall be careful to do in the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth. <sup>2</sup> You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. <sup>3</sup> You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You shall chop down the carved images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place.*

God had promised them their home—much like God has promised us our Heavenly Home! But there was still a battle to be won. For them, it would be against people like the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites. For us, *we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.* (EH 6.12b) As Moses reached the close of **DT 12**, we see what Moses considered to be the greatest threats to the faithfulness of God's people. And today, the same threats remain. This morning, we'll look at the first two of these warnings, with the intent to look at the final two tonight.

### **BD1: Their Own Human Curiosity (DT 12.29-32)**

**BKGRND:** We've seen a dramatic shift in the perspective on the conqueror today. In many of our youth, we saw the conquistador portrayed as the heroes against a bloodthirsty native population. That was probably a bit simplistic and false. Now, we empathize almost exclusively with the native or conquered populace: portraying the conqueror as the bloodthirsty **"savage"** population. That's also probably a bit simplistic and false. When people consider the conquering of the people of Canaan by the Israelites, that can sometimes make the modern sensibility queasy. But when we consider the behavior of the native nations in the Promised Land, we begin to understand why God wanted them conquered.

**DT 18.9-14** ~ *There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer <sup>11</sup> or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, <sup>12</sup> for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord. And because of these abominations the Lord your God is driving them out before you. <sup>13</sup> You shall be blameless before the Lord your God, <sup>14</sup> for these nations, which you are about to dispossess, listen to fortune-tellers and to diviners. But as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do this.*

Their life and lifestyle was wicked and bloody and foul. But God knew something dark and terrible about the people: despite how wicked and how foul the behavior was, it would tickle something dark within the human heart. And in this, we learn the first area that leads the saved to fall away: **their own human curiosity.**

**DT 12.29-32** ~ *"When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, <sup>30</sup> take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods?—that I also may do the same.' <sup>31</sup> You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods. <sup>32</sup> "Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.*

**EX:** The conquering Israelite people would come into the broken and burned city and would find evidence of the people's foreign gods and customs, traditions and practices, and it would grab their curiosity: and curiosity would turn to temptation. And temptation, to sin.

**2KN 17.16-17** ~ *And they abandoned all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made for themselves metal images of two calves; and they made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. <sup>17</sup> And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger.*

### **INTELLIGENCE/Curiosity/Core to Humanity**

**AP:** Today, we see the same thing. Our children are drawn by the glitz and glamor of YouTubers, TikTok, and Instagram influencers. And we're pulled right

alongside: raising our pop-stars, athletes, and politicians to near idols—pulled along by that **human curiosity** to pour over the lifestyles of the rich and famous: desiring to **"keep up with the Kardashians"**, **"D'Amelios"**, or Taylor Swift. And like the Israelites, curiosity turns to temptation, and temptation, to sin.

It is good for us to learn about the culture around us—but we must be careful of its pull. *But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. <sup>15</sup> Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.* (JM 1.14-15)

### **BD2: Through the False Words of False Prophets (DT 13.1-5)**

**BKGRND:** Up to this point, there'd only been a single primary prophet in Israel—Moses (maybe Aaron and Miriam). But he knew there would be more. And in Scripture, there was an expectation that a prophet would perform mighty works (a sign that their message had authority behind it). But there came a question: **what if their mighty work was followed by wicked words?**

**DT 13.1-3a** ~ *"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, <sup>2</sup> and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' <sup>3</sup> you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams.*

**EX:** Moses, here, warned of a second way that they could be lost—**through the false words of false prophets.** There are two possibilities with these prophets: perhaps these were former Godly prophets, who'd performed great works and previous preached great truths of God. But then, they began to drift—perhaps tempted by power or praise. We see this happen all around us: men and women of faith who taught for years the faithful words of God and, in later years, were tempted away. God's answer is that their former deeds do not authorize unfaithful words. Their false teachings remain false no matter what might have come before.

The other possible vision is false teachers performing wonderous signs. My mind goes to the priests of Egypt: who for the first few plagues were able to mimic the miracle—*But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts.* (EX 20.22a) We wonder whether their wonder was real or not. It doesn't matter! For their message was not! *For the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.* (DT 13.3b)

**AP:** People ask me what I would do if a person performed a great sign—raising the dead, healing the sick, or blocking out the sun—followed by proclaiming that they are Christ, returned, or that we live in a simulation, or that we should follow Buddha or Mohammed or Joseph Smith. The answer now is the same as the answer then: I would reject them. For no matter how wondrous the sign may appear or the wonder may seem—if the message paired with it contradicts the clear teaching of scripture, it must be rejected.

### **MIRACLES/False/When Paired with False Teaching**

**DT 13.4-5** ~ *You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. <sup>5</sup> But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.*

God considered the evil of these false prophets to be so great, their betrayal so severe, that extreme measures were to be taken to prevent their influence from