

# Deuteronomy 12:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest:

## Analysis

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The warning: 'Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest.' The Hebrew *hishamer* (הִשָּׁמֶר, 'guard/beware') warns against unauthorized worship. The phrase 'every place that thou seest' describes human assessment—choosing worship locations based on personal preference or visible appeal. But God, not man, chooses worship location. This guards against Canaanite-style worship at aesthetically pleasing high places. Worship regulated by divine revelation, not human aesthetics or convenience, maintains covenant purity.

## Historical Context

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This command was frequently violated. Even faithful kings like Asa and Jehoshaphat failed to remove high places (1 Kings 15:14; 2 Chronicles 20:33). The northern kingdom's rival sanctuaries at Dan and Bethel violated this command (1 Kings 12:26-33), leading to condemnation as 'sin of Jeroboam.' Judah's high places persisted until Hezekiah and Josiah's reforms (2 Kings 18:4; 23:8-20). Unauthorized worship, however sincere, is disobedience.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does modern worship prioritize convenience, aesthetics, or preference over biblical regulation?
2. What safeguards exist to prevent individual or corporate worship innovation from replacing scriptural patterns?
3. How do we discern between cultural adaptation of worship and unauthorized deviation from biblical principles?

## Interlinear Text

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הִשָּׁמֶר	לִבְךָ	פָּנֶיךָ	תַּעֲלֶה	עֹלֹתֶיךָ	בְּכָל
Take heed	H0	H6435	to thyself that thou offer	not thy burnt offerings	H3605
H8104			H5927	H5930	
מִכָּל	אֵשׁ	תִּרְאֶה:			
in every place	H834	that thou seest			
H4725		H7200			

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