

Deuteronomy 12:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.

Analysis

The reason for prohibition: 'Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.' Canaanite worship included 'abominations' (to'evah, תועבה, detestable things)—practices God 'hates' (אִשָּׁה, sane). Specifically mentioned: child sacrifice—burning sons and daughters as offerings. This horrific practice honored Molech/Moloch, attested archaeologically at Carthage (Phoenician colony) and biblical texts (Leviticus 18:21; 2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 7:31). God absolutely forbids syncretizing His worship with such practices. What pagans do 'unto their gods' must never be done 'unto the LORD.'

Historical Context

Archaeological evidence confirms child sacrifice in Canaanite/Phoenician religion. Tophet sites (ritual burial grounds for sacrificed children) have been excavated. Despite prohibition, some Israelites adopted this practice—Ahaz and Manasseh sacrificed their sons (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6). Jeremiah condemns the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) where children were burned to Molech (Jeremiah 19:5). Josiah's reform desecrated these sites (2 Kings 23:10). This abomination exemplifies pagan religion's depravity, justifying God's command for complete destruction.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does child sacrifice illustrate the depths of human depravity when worshiping false gods?
2. What modern practices might parallel ancient child sacrifice in devaluing human life for selfish ends (abortion, exploitation)?
3. Why is syncretism (mixing true worship with false practices) so dangerous rather than merely neutral or misguided?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	עָשׂוּ	כִּי	יְהוָה	לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם:	כִּי	כָּל
H3808	Thou shalt not do	H3651	so unto the LORD	thy God	H3588	H3605
	H6213		H3068	H430		
	תּוֹעֵבַת	יְהוָה	אֲשֶׁר	שָׂנֵא	עָשׂוּ	
	for every abomination	so unto the LORD	H834	which he hateth	Thou shalt not do	
	H8441	H3068		H8130	H6213	
לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם:	כִּי	גַם	אֶת	בְּנֵיהֶם	וְאֶת	בְּנֵי תִיָּהֶם
thy God	H3588	H1571	H853	for even their sons	H853	and their daughters
H430				H1121		H1323
וְשָׂרְפוּ	בָּאֵשׁ	לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם:				
they have burnt	in the fire	thy God				
H8313	H784	H430				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 32:35 (Parallel theme): And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

Jeremiah 7:31 (Parallel theme): And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.

2 Kings 21:2 (References Lord): And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

Exodus 23:2 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:

Deuteronomy 12:4 (References God): Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 9:5 (References God): Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Leviticus 18:3 (Parallel theme): After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances.