

# 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

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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, תֹּוֹבַעַת, detestable things)—practices God 'hates' (שָׁנֵא, 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

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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

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

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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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

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לֹא	עַשׂ	כִּי	יְהִי	הָכֹן	לְאֱלֹהִים	כָּל
H3808	<b>Thou shalt not do</b>	H3651	<b>so unto the LORD</b>	H3068	<b>thy God</b>	H3588
H6213				H430		H3605
תֹּועֵבָה תְּ		אֵשׁ ר	יְהִי הָ	שָׁנָה אֵשׁ	עַשׂ	
<b>for every abomination</b>	<b>so unto the LORD</b>	H834	<b>which he hateth</b>	<b>Thou shalt not do</b>		
H841		H3068	H8130	H6213		
בָּנִים תִּמְרֹךְ מִ		בָּנִים	וְאֶת	בָּנִים תִּמְרֹךְ מִ		
<b>thy God</b>	H3588	H1571	H853	<b>for even their sons</b>	H853	<b>and their daughters</b>
H430			H1121		H1323	
בָּאֵשׁ יְשַׁרְּפָ וְ		לְאֱלֹהִים				
<b>they have burnt in the fire</b>	H784	<b>thy God</b>				
H8313		H430				

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.