

# Deuteronomy 17:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant,

## Analysis

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Conditional case law: **If there be found among you**—the community must actively investigate covenant violations. **Within any of thy gates** (שְׁעָרֵיךְ, she'arekha) means 'your cities'—local jurisdiction, not distant rumors. Apostasy isn't private sin; it's public covenant-breaking.

**Wrought wickedness** (עָשָׂה אֶת-הַרְעָעָה, asah et-hara)—'done the evil'—in God's sight, not merely human opinion. **Transgressing his covenant** (עָבֵר אֶת-בְּרִיתְךָ, avar et-berito)—literally 'crossing over' or violating the binding treaty. Idolatry wasn't theological preference; it was treason against the suzerain King who redeemed Israel from Egypt.

## Historical Context

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Covenant (berit) in ancient Near Eastern context meant a binding treaty with curses for violation. Deuteronomy 27-28 lists blessings and curses. Israel at Sinai swore allegiance to Yahweh alone (Exodus 20:3-5). Idolatry thus constituted political rebellion, not merely 'religious pluralism.' The death penalty for apostasy maintained covenant integrity.

## Related Passages

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

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

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does understanding idolatry as covenant treason (not mere 'personal choice') change how you view spiritual compromise?
2. What modern idols—money, success, approval—compete with exclusive allegiance to Christ?

## Interlinear Text

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אָשָׁר שָׁעַר יְהֹוָה אֲמֹת אֲמֹת בְּקָרְבָּךְ בְּאַמְתָּךְ אֲשֶׁר  
H3588 If there be found among you within any H834  
H4672 H7130 H259 H8179

אֲשֶׁר אֲשֶׁר הָאָשָׁר אֲשֶׁר יְהֹוָה אֲלֹהָם יְהֹוָה  
of the LORD thy God giveth H0 thee man H176 or woman H834  
H3068 H430 H5414 H376 H802

אֲלֹהָם יְהֹוָה בְּעֵינֵי תְּבֻשָׁת הַעֲשֵׂה  
that hath wrought H853 wickedness H7451 in the sight H5869 of the LORD H3068 thy God H430  
H6213

בְּרִיתְהוּן: לְעֵבָר  
in transgressing his covenant  
H5674 H1285

## Additional Cross-References

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**Hosea 8:1** (Covenant): Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.

**Judges 2:20** (Covenant): And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;

**Deuteronomy 17:5** (Evil): Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die.

**Joshua 7:15** (Covenant): And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

**Joshua 7:11** (Covenant): Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

**Joshua 23:16** (Covenant): When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

**Hosea 6:7** (Covenant): But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

**2 Kings 18:12** (Covenant): Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them.