

Deuteronomy 18:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

Analysis

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire (לֹא יִמְצָא בְךָ מַעֲבִיר בְּנוֹ וּבִתּוֹ בָּאֵשׁ)—child sacrifice to Molech, where children were burned alive or passed through fire as dedication. Ma'avir ba'esh literally "causing to pass through the fire." Archaeological evidence confirms this horrific practice in Carthage (Phoenician colony) and possibly Canaan.

The list continues: **or that useth divination** (qosem qesamim, one who practices divination—reading omens, casting lots for occult knowledge); **an observer of times** (me'onen, one who observes clouds, practices astrology, reads signs in nature); **an enchanter** (menachesh, one who practices augury, serpent charming, seeking omens); **a witch** (mekhashshef, one who practices sorcery, uses spells and potions).

These practices sought knowledge and power through demonic rather than divine sources. They represented autonomy—accessing spiritual reality independently of God's authorized revelation. Leviticus 19:31 and 20:6,27 prescribe death for such practices, showing their covenant-breaking severity. Saul's consultation with the medium at Endor (1 Samuel 28) exemplified the spiritual bankruptcy these practices represent.

Historical Context

Child sacrifice was practiced in the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) south of Jerusalem during the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh (2 Kings 16:3, 21:6). Josiah's reforms destroyed these sites (2 Kings 23:10). Divination and sorcery permeated ancient Near Eastern religion—Babylonian priests read sheep livers, studied stars, and consulted spirits. Daniel's superiority to Babylonian wise men (Daniel 2) demonstrated YHWH's supremacy over occult practices.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do modern equivalents—horoscopes, mediums, fortune-tellers, Ouija boards—represent the same forbidden attempt to access spiritual knowledge apart from God?
2. Why is God so severe about these practices, and what does their prohibition teach about the exclusivity of biblical revelation?

Interlinear Text

לֹא H3808	יִמָּצֵא א H4672	בָּרַךְ H0	מַעֲבִיר H5674	
	There shall not be found		to pass	
	בְּנֶוֹ H1121	וּבִתּוֹ H1323	בְּאֵשׁ H784	קִסָּם H7081
	among you any one that maketh his son	or his daughter	through the fire	divination
קִסָּם יִמָּצֵא H7080	מַעֲבִיר H6049	וּמְנַחֵשׁ H5172	וּמְכַשֶּׁפֶת H3784	
or that useth	or an observer of times	or an enchanter	or a witch	

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 19:31 (Parallel theme): Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 19:26 (Parallel theme): Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times.

Exodus 22:18 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.

Isaiah 47:13 (Parallel theme): Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.

Acts 19:19 (Parallel theme): Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Deuteronomy 12:31 (Parallel theme): 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.

1 Chronicles 10:13 (Parallel theme): So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it;

2 Kings 21:6 (Parallel theme): And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

2 Kings 17:17 (Parallel theme): And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

2 Kings 16:3 (Parallel theme): But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel.