

Deuteronomy 18:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.

Analysis

For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners—Me'onenim (observers of times) likely refers to those who interpreted omens from clouds or practiced astrology. Qosemim (diviners) encompasses various techniques for discerning the future or the will of deities—examining animal entrails, casting lots, observing bird flight patterns. These practices assumed that hidden knowledge could be obtained through manipulation of supernatural forces.

But as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do—The Hebrew natan (suffered/permited) indicates God's sovereign prohibition. Israel's distinctiveness wasn't cultural preference but divine command. Why? Because occultism represents humanity's attempt to control the future and manipulate divine will rather than submitting in faith to God's revealed word. It's the epistemological arrogance of the Fall—seeking forbidden knowledge apart from God. Israel's alternative: trust the prophetic word God provides (vv. 15-22).

Historical Context

Canaanite religion was profoundly divinatory. Clay liver models for haruspicy (divination by examining animal organs), astral observation texts, and dream interpretation manuals have been discovered throughout the ancient Near East. Israel entered a culture saturated with these practices. Later biblical history

shows Israel's chronic failure—Saul consulting the witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28), Manasseh practicing divination (2 Kings 21:6), and the prophets condemning Israel's reliance on diviners rather than God's word (Isaiah 8:19-20; Jeremiah 27:9-10).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do modern forms of seeking control over the future (fortune-telling, astrology, manifestation techniques) parallel ancient divination?
2. What does your reaction to uncertainty reveal about whether you trust God's sovereign provision or seek to manipulate outcomes through spiritual techniques?

Interlinear Text

וְיַעֲשֶׂה	אֲשֶׁר	בְּנֹתָיו	לְהִנֵּה	אַתָּה	וְיַעֲשֶׂה
H3588	For these nations	H428	H834	H859	which thou shalt possess
	H1471				H3423
וְיַעֲשֶׂה	אֲלֹתָם	מִתְּבָנָם	וְיַעֲשֶׂה	וְיַעֲשֶׂה	וְיַעֲשֶׂה
H853	H413	unto observers of times	H6049	H413	and unto diviners
				H7080	H8085
וְיַעֲשֶׂה	לֹא	יָמַר	לְבָנָךְ	יְהִי הָ	אֱלֹהִים
H859	H3808	H3651	H5414	H0	but as for thee the LORD
					H3068
					H430

Additional Cross-References

Acts 14:16 (Parallel theme): Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

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