

Deuteronomy 18:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

Analysis

When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations (פִּי אֱתָה בָּא) —the verb talmad (learn, teach yourself) implies deliberate adoption, not accidental exposure. Israel would encounter Canaanite practices; God forbids studying them for imitation.

Abominations (to'evot) denotes what is detestable, ritually abhorrent, morally repulsive—particularly idolatrous practices. The phrase **of those nations** (hagoyim hahem) refers specifically to Canaan's seven nations (Deuteronomy 7:1): Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites. Their religious practices included child sacrifice, ritual prostitution, divination, and necromancy.

This transitions Deuteronomy 18 from priestly provisions (vv. 1-8) to prophetic revelation (vv. 9-22). The contrast is stark: Israel must support God's authorized ministers (priests, Levites) and reject false spiritual intermediaries (diviners, mediums, necromancers). The occult practices listed in verses 10-11 represent satanic counterfeits to legitimate prophetic revelation, which God will provide through true prophets (vv. 15-19).

Historical Context

Canaanite religion (circa 1400 BC) included worship of Baal, Asherah, Molech, and other deities through practices Israel found in the land. Archaeological discoveries at Ugarit (modern Syria) reveal liturgical texts describing fertility rites, sacred prostitution, and child sacrifice. These 'abominations' caused God to expel Canaan's inhabitants (Leviticus 18:24-28). Tragically, Israel later adopted these very practices, provoking the Babylonian exile (2 Kings 16:3, 21:6, Jeremiah 32:35).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What modern 'abominations of the nations'—cultural practices contrary to God's word—are believers tempted to 'learn' and adopt?
2. How can Christians live in a pagan culture without being shaped by its spiritual assumptions and practices?

Interlinear Text

וְ	כִּ	אַתָּה	וְ	אֵלֶּךָ	אֵל	בְּ	אֶת	רֶ	בְּ	אֶת	אָשֶׁר	וְ	הִנֵּ	הַ	אֲשֶׁר	וְ	הַ	יְהִי	
H3588	H859				H413			H776			H834								
		When thou art come						into the land					which the LORD						
			H935					H776			H3068								
לֹא	לְ	נָתָת	וְ	אֱלֹהִים	יְהִי	תְּלִמְדֵ	תְּלִמְדֵ	תְּלִמְדֵ	תְּלִמְדֵ	תְּלִמְדֵ	תְּלִמְדֵ	תְּלִמְדֵ	תְּלִמְדֵ	תְּלִמְדֵ	תְּלִמְדֵ	תְּלִמְדֵ	תְּלִמְדֵ		
thy	God	giveth	H0	H3808		thee	thou	shalt	not	learn			to	do					
H430	H5414		H0	H3808				H3925					H6213						
כְּתֻועַב	תְּ					בְּגֹויִם													
after	the	abominations				of	those	nations											
H8441						H1471													

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 18:30 (References God): Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God.

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