

Exodus 34:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice;

Analysis

God reiterates the warning against covenants with Canaanites, explaining the mechanism of apostasy: social covenant leads to worship participation, which leads to sexual/spiritual prostitution (זָנָה, zanah—the term for both literal and spiritual harlotry). The phrase 'gods of the land' emphasizes the territorial nature of ancient paganism. Eating sacrificial meals created covenant bonds with the deity.

Historical Context

Pagan worship often involved communal meals where participants ate food sacrificed to idols, creating covenant fellowship with the deity and its worshipers (see Paul's discussion in 1 Cor 8-10).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How do social relationships and cultural participation create spiritual temptations today?

2. What boundaries do you need to maintain to preserve spiritual fidelity?

Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

Judges 2:17 (References God): And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so.

Psalms 106:28 (Sacrifice): They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

1 Corinthians 8:4 (Sacrifice): As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.

Deuteronomy 31:16 (Covenant): And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them.

Numbers 25:2 (Sacrifice): And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

1 Corinthians 8:10 (Parallel theme): For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

1 Corinthians 10:27 (Parallel theme): If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

Jeremiah 3:9 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.

Exodus 34:12 (Covenant): Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee:

1 Corinthians 8:7 (Parallel theme): Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.