

Exodus 34:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods.

Analysis

Intermarriage (taking Canaanite wives) would lead to idolatry spreading to the next generation. Foreign wives would 'make your sons go a whoring after their gods'—exactly what happened to Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-8). This principle extends to the New Testament prohibition on believers marrying unbelievers (2 Cor 6:14). The concern is not ethnic but spiritual—preservation of covenant faithfulness.

Historical Context

This command was tragically disregarded by many Israelites (Judges 3:5-6), leading to cyclical apostasy during the judges period. Ezra later enforced this principle (Ezra 9-10).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does marriage to an unbeliever create unique spiritual dangers?

2. What practical steps can believers take to prioritize spiritual compatibility in relationships?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹקַחַת	בָּנָתִים	בָּנִים	וְהַזְנוֹת	בָּנָתִים
And thou take	and their daughters	thy sons	and make	and their daughters
H3947	H1323	H1121	H2181	H1323
אַלְהִים	אַת	בָּנִים	אַלְהִים	אַת
after	their gods	and make	H853	thy sons
H310	H430	H2181	H1121	H310
אַלְהִים	אַת	בָּנִים	אַלְהִים	אַת
their gods				

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 13:25 (References God): And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

Ezra 9:2 (Parallel theme): For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

Nehemiah 13:23 (Parallel theme): In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: