



Deuteronomy 12:29-32 Adopting Worthless Idols

29 " When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land,

30 "take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.'

31 "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.

Some things we can pick up from other people are good and useful. For instance, the bible acknowledges in Titus 2 that it is the duty of the older women in the church to set an example for the younger women and to be teachers of good things. Among them ***“to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”*** Similarly the young men in the church are to learn from the example of the older men, their way of life, their habits of godliness and reverence, their character their good works are to be passed on to the next generation. God’s people can also learn practical things from those outside the church. For instance, when the Pilgrims came and settled in America they had little practical knowledge of the animals and agriculture of the land, and so they were able to learn many things that helped them to survive and produce their own harvests from the Indians who already lived here.

However, one of the things that the Pilgrims had the sense not to pick up was the worship of the Indians. Here I know I’m committing the multi-cultural equivalent of blasphemy, but they recognized that the Indians were unbelievers and people who needed to be evangelized, and therefore the first American missions were actually to the Indian tribes. Incidentally, one of the greatest works of Puritan devotion and missionary biography is found in the diary of David Brainerd an 18th century missionary to the Indians. Kids at some point in your lives you need to read this work, it will teach you much about what it means to be a man or woman who ***loves the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.***

But it is telling that as the knowledge of God and his word amongst Christians in America has declined, there has been a renewed interest in native American worship, you can’t drive anywhere without seeing “dream catchers” on rear view mirrors and the book stores are crammed full of the paganism of the ancient inhabitants of this land. The same is true unfortunately of the Christians of other lands, as their own love of the Lord has waned, there is renewed interest in the paganism of the earlier inhabitants, in England it’s all Celts and Druids, and so on throughout Europe. In Mexico and California, its all Aztec Gods and so on.

The children of former Christians love this stuff, despite the fact that their worship was brutal and often involved human sacrifice, burning people in wicker cages and so on. And the fruit of their practices was never good. A sure sign of foolishness is when we assume the practices of people who have destroyed themselves. As Matthew Henry put it: ***“Those are wretchedly besotted indeed who will walk in the way of sinners, after they have seen their end.”***

So here on the verge of the promised land the Lord once again warns the Israelites of the consequences of turning from him and adopting the false gods of the nations he was going to destroy.

He warns them after they enter “do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’” Part of the reason this would seem to make sense was the pervasive but false notion of local Gods. The Canaanites for instance will assume that they cannot beat the Israelites because He is a “mountain God”

2 Kings 5:17 So Naaman said, "Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD.

But the Lord warns of the degeneration that will occur from false worship, to even greater abominations including the greatest abomination - Child Sacrifice –that is why there is Capital punishment for Child Sacrifice – Lev. 18:21, 20:2-5

2 Kings 16:10 Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship.

11 Then Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made it before King Ahaz came back from Damascus.

12 And when the king came back from Damascus, the king saw the altar; and the king approached the altar and made offerings on it.

13 So he burned his burnt offering and his grain offering; and he poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar.

14 He also brought the bronze altar which was before the LORD, from the front of the temple -- from between the new altar and the house of the LORD -- and put it on the north side of the new altar.

15 Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, "On the great new altar burn the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, the king's burnt sacrifice, and his grain offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, their grain offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. And the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire by."

16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded.

2 Kings 16:3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel; indeed he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel.

Extended discussion of the people falling into idolatry and widespread Child sacrifice in 2 Kings 17:10-18

***Psalm 106:34 They did not destroy the peoples, Concerning whom the LORD had commanded them,
 35 But they mingled with the Gentiles And learned their works;
 36 They served their idols, Which became a snare to them.
 37 They even sacrificed their sons And their daughters to demons,
 38 And shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and daughters, Whom they sacrificed to the
 idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with blood.
 39 Thus they were defiled by their own works, And played the harlot by their own deeds.
 40 Therefore the wrath of the LORD was kindled against His people, So that He abhorred His own
 inheritance.***

These children were the Lord's they were his godly heritage – “*Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.*” and it was his intention that they be raised up to know and to love Him. The most abominable thing they could do therefore would be to take these gifts, these image-bearers of the Lord and sacrifice them to worthless idols. It was never our prerogative to sacrifice a child, the only one who had that right was God who is the Lord and giver of life, and the only time he chose to exercise it was in the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ for our sins.

1) When the Israelites no longer taught the Word of God to their children, nor took pleasure in serving Him, they inevitably turned aside to the worship of false idols!

When Reformed Christians began to lose their faith in God and His word, they began to enquire as to how the surrounding non-reformed denoms had worshipped.

“For this is the origin of idolatry, when the genuine simplicity of God’s worship is known, that people begin to be dissatisfied with it, and curiously to inquire whether there is anything worthy of belief in the figments of men; for men’s minds are soon attracted by the snares of novelty, so as to pollute, with various kinds of leaven, what has been delivered in God’s word.” - Calvin

By the 1800s the initial Spiritual vigor that had marked the first Puritan settlers of New England had begun to dampen. Nominalism, legalism, revivalism, and heresy were all working to produce moribund and listless congregations in what had once been the fiery heart of Calvinism in America. Unitarian Universalism, which represented the triumph of rationalism and liberalism over the Scriptural faith nurtured by the Reformation, was growing in popularity, and by 1805 even the old Puritan bastion of Harvard had been overcome by it. In the midst of this sea-change in the religious attitudes of New Englanders, both the laymen and clergy of Calvinistic denominations began to express a curiosity about the rites and practices of different denominations.

They argued that the gradual moving away from simple biblical worship and incorporating of the unbiblical rites added zest, one deformer of worship Comegys pointed out that the Presbyterian Church had been gradually introducing other innovations that did not square with the regulative principle and that "no bad effects have followed." From this he concluded that the average layman (and presumably himself) could not "see why other changes may not be adopted."

At this point then it is not surprising that their worship often involves pagan elements such as the Sophia worship of the reimagining conferences, and that the mainline churches have adopted the morals of the surrounding culture. Including our culture’s widespread practice of child-sacrifice.

“He would have them so abominate the practice of superstitions, as to fly even from the infection of hearing of them..

2) *How can we allow the worship and practices of the nations to overcome us?* You would never invite someone in to your household to teach your children immorality Two ways in which we “unwittingly” do so via TV – 1992 – 7 hours average per day.

Teens – 5.6 hours homework, 2.9 hours speaking with their parents, 1.8 hours reading, 21 hours TV week

What do they learn, well for instance about sex, only 4% of it involving married heterosexuals.

Only 5% of TV characters practice any religion, and only kooks are evangelicals.

Child 8000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence by the end of grade school

The average child therefore will learn thousands of times more from TV than school or their parents –

Music - : Between the seventh and twelfth grades, the average teenager listens to 10,500 hours of rock music, just slightly less than the entire number of hours spent in the classroom from kindergarten through high school.

What must you do?

First Cleave to Christ, without faith in him we inevitably decline

Second don't begin the freefall

From these words we may gather what it is not to make to one's self the gods of others, viz., to bid farewell to all the inventions of men, and to pay attention to this one thing — what God commands. For why does God desire to be worshipped by His elect people, otherwise than the nations were in the habit of serving their gods, except because there ought to be a notable distinction, so that religion may not be confused? And surely unless men cleave to God's word, so as resolutely to determine that nothing else is permitted to them except what is there taught, they will not only be vacillating, but. they will receive indiscriminately whatever comes in their way. We must then hold fast to this, “Thou shalt not do so;” and our minds must be restrained by this curb, lest any superstition which may defile the service of God should insinuate or establish itself.