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God Hates Sorcery

18: 9-14

God hates sorcery DIG: What was the gift that ADONAI gave Isra'el? What was the aim of false prophets, and the goal behind the abominations of other nations? What the purpose behind the practice of sorcery by the ancients? Why does God hate sorcery? Who else in the TaNaKh does God say was blameless? Are you surprised at any of those listed? Why?

REFLECT: How can you protect yourself from these evil practices today? How hard is it to be blameless or righteous in such an evil world that we live in today? How can you protect your family, especially your children (Proverbs 22:6)? Who, caught up in sorcery, can you pray for today? How else can you help them? Why does YHVH want you blameless?

The Land ADONAI was giving to the Israelites was a gift, in which God's covenantal people were to conduct themselves as loyal citizens of His Kingdom.



For the second time in **Deuteronomy** we are warned about the false prophets and teaches. The first time was in **Chapter 13 (to see link click [Cy](#) - Do Not Inquire or be Trapped by Foreign Gods)**, right at the beginning of the specific stipulations of the Covenant. And here, also, it is very strategically placed. It is right after the description of **God's** selected teachers of the Torah, **the Levites**, and right before a foreshadowing of the coming of **the Messiah**.

A. The Land (18:9): When you enter the land ADONAI your God is giving you, you are not to learn to do the abominations of those nations living in Canaan (18:9). This

section of scripture is framed, like to book ends, by the idea of **God's** gift of **the Land**. This gift should not be abused. The whole person needed to be committed to **YHVH**, and not chasing after the gods and practices of the Canaanites, which would be spiritual adultery.

*Dear Heavenly **Father, You** are so awesome and **You** have planned such a wonderful time in heaven for all who love **You**. Everyone wants to go to heaven, but there is only way to heaven - thru loving and following as **Lord, Yeshua** as the sacrificial death for our sins (**Second Corinthians 5:21**) and the resurrection to **eternal life (Romans 10:9-10)**. We want keep our hearts focused on **Your** holy love and to follow you always. No idols allowed in our lives, even the idol of self. **You** are the most wonderful **Father!** Following **You** is the wisest! In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

B. Detestable practices (18:10-12): The prophets of **God** were not called to talk about the personal business of individuals. Therefore, here we see the Enemies' plan to pray on the weak by speaking of their personal dealings. Because the need to hear a word from their god(s) was universally felt in the ancient world a whole array of occultic arts and practices grew up. The magicians of Pharaoh (**Exodus 7:11**); the wise men of Nebuchadnezzar (**Dani'el 2:2**); and even the magi in the B'rit Chadashah (**Matthew 2:1**) echo that world thought. **Ezeki'el** also, has a mocking picture of **the king of Babylon** consulting **his** means of divination as **he** conducted a campaign of conquest. **He shook his arrows at a fork in the road, consulted his idols, and looked at the liver** of an animal (**Ezeki'el 21:26**). The sacrifices of these ancients were intended to prod their gods to do what they wanted. The epitome of playing **God**. Kings, in particular, resorted to such means in order to make important decisions, as in times of war. The list of forbidden activities covers a wide range of such practices.

1. There must not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire (18:10a): The context here indicates that the reference is not simply child sacrifice, but to the offering of a child with the specific purpose of discerning the outcome of events. This was practiced by the worshipers of **Molech (Second Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 32:35)**. **The king of Mo'ab**, losing ground in a battle against **Isra'el**, made a burnt offering of **his son** and heir, to try to persuade the deity by the act of self-sacrifice itself, or to discern how to turn the tide of events (**Second Kings 3:26-27**).⁴⁰¹

2. Or practice witchcraft (18:10b): The expression includes a participle and a noun both derived from the Hebrew root *qesem*. A variety of devices were used in various lands but all were designed to discern the will of the gods. When **Balak**, king of Mo'ab,

hired the false prophet **Balaam** to curse **Isra'el**, when **his curse** turned into **blessings**, he said: **There is no witchcraft effective against Jacob (Numbers 23:23)**; when **King Sha'ul** did not destroy **Agag of Amalek** as **Ha'Shem** had instructed **him** to do, **Samuel** said **his** action was **rebellion** against **YHVH**, **like the sin of witchcraft (First Samuel 15:23)**.

3. Or a soothsayer (18:10c): It is derived either from the root *anan*, in which case it seems to refer to casting spells by reading clouds, or from a root which occurs in Arabic, meaning *to make casual noises, croon, or hum*, in which case it may refer to some kind of incarnation. It was practiced by the Philistines (**Isaiah 2:6**) and the apostate King Manasseh of Judah (**Second Kings 21:6**). It is the attempt to control people or circumstances through the power given by demons.

4. Or an omen reader or fortune-teller (18:10d): Like the horoscope readings of today, the ancients used various means to try to predict the future based on "signs" such as the movements of birds, fire, rain, or water. When **Joseph** pretended to practice **divination** with **the silver bowl** he had hidden in **Benjamin's sack**, he said to **his brothers** when **they** returned to **his** house: **Don't you know that a man like me can discern by divination** (Hebrew: *nachash*, meaning *tell the future*)? This is how those **silver bowls** were used. Clean water would be poured into such a **bowl**, then particles of gold, **silver** or precious stones would be dropped into the clean water. Then oil would be added to the clean water. Then depending on how light would shine between the oil and the particles, a prediction would be made.

5. Or a sorcerer (18:10e): This involved practicing magic, and derived from the Hebrew root *kashaph*, meaning *to cut up*, and may denote one who cuts up herbs and brews them for magical purposes. When Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and it became a snake, **the sorcerers of Egypt did the same thing with their secret arts (Exodus 7:11)**. When King Nebuchadnezzar had troubling dreams, so he summoned his magicians, astrologers, and **sorcerers** in order to explain to the king his dreams (**Dani'el 2:2**).

6. Or one who casts spells (18:11a). In **Psalm 85:3-5**, **David** wrote: **The wicked are strangers from the womb. Speaking lies, they go astray from birth. Their venom is like a serpent's venom, like a deaf cobra shutting its ear - not hearing the voice of charmers, or one who casts spells** (Hebrew root: *chabar*, meaning *to unite, to be joined, to tie a magic knot or spell, to charm, thus one who binds other people by magical mutterings*).

7. Or a medium, a spiritist, who calls up the dead (18:11b): The last secret art is communicating with the dead to predict future events, famously resorted to by King Sha'ul in the cave of a **spiritist** (see the commentary on [the Life of David By - Sha'ul and the Medium at Endor](#)). **The medium** supposedly communicates with **the dead**, but actually communicates with, and is controlled by, demons. Greek versions translate this term translate it *engastgrimuthoi*, meaning *ventriloquists*.

For whoever does these things is an abomination to ADONAI, and because of these abominations ADONAI your God is driving them out from before you (18:12). Not only are **these** practices **an abomination to YHVH**, but whoever practices **them** is likewise **an abomination**. **They** were forbidden in **Isra'el** precisely because **they** were a part of the reason for **God's** judgment of the Canaanites, which would be seen in their being expelled from **the Land**. And if **the Israelites** adopted the same practices, **they too** would be expelled from **the Land**.⁴⁰²

All **these** practices were forbidden to **the Israelites**, as **they** are forbidden to us as well because **they** touch the demonic world. The aim of these false prophets was, and is, to drive a wedge between believers and **ADONAI**. It is not a coincidence that this precedes the section about **the Messiah** (see [Dk - A Prophet Like Moses](#)). These false prophets have the mission to blind people from **the Savior** and all that **He** has done for us.⁴⁰³

B. You are to be blameless (18:13): You are to be blameless before **ADONAI your God**. The essence of the covenant tradition appears once again. **The LORD** would give **the Land** to **the Israelites** as a gift, but the continuing possession of **the Land** would be dependent upon her faithfulness to **her** covenant obligations, namely, that **her** obedience to the mitzvot of **ADONAI** would make **her blameless**.⁴⁰⁴

The adjective **blameless** or **righteous** (Hebrew: *tamim*) occurs frequently to describe offerings that perfectly match the priestly requirements, in other words, they are **whole, perfect, or blameless (Exodus 12:5; Leviticus 9:2, 22:21; Numbers 6:14, 28:19)**. It can also depict the serenity of a relationship between **YHVH** and **the righteous** of the TaNaKh that is **without spot or blemish (Genesis 6:9, 17:1; Joshua 24:14)**. There are several people that **ADONAI** declares **blameless, or perfect, in the TaNaKh**. **Noah was blameless (tamim) among the people of his time (Genesis 6:9); Abraham was to walk before ADONAI and be blameless (tamim) (Genesis 17:1); Job was a man who was blameless (tamim) and upright, he feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1); and Jacob was blameless!** What? Can

that be right? Most churches teach that **Jacob** was a supplanter who stole Esau's birthright, but **God** blessed **him** anyway. However, the Bible doesn't call **Jacob** a thief, it says **Jacob was a blameless (*tamim*) man** (see the commentary on **Genesis Gn - Then Jacob Gave Esau Some Lentil Stew and Esau Despised His Birthright**).

A. The Land (18:14): For these nations, which you are about to dispossess from the Land, listen to soothsayers and fortune-tellers, but as for you, **ADONAI your God will not allow you to do so (18:14)**. **Moses** returns to where **he** began by reminding the **Israelites** of the fundamental issue before **them**. An exclusive relationship with **YHVH** leaves no room for any failed human attempts at discerning, or determining future human affairs. **Ha'Shem** is going to use **His chosen people** to evict the Canaanites (who were engaging in those detestable practices) from **the Land** they were occupying. **God's covenantal nation** could trust **ADONAI Himself** was worthy of **their** absolute trust with regard to any future events.⁴⁰⁵