



You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. תָּמִים תִּהְיֶה עִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ.

Deuteronomy 18:13

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## Deuteronomy 18:9-14

### An Abomination to the LORD

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*<sup>9</sup> “When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. <sup>10</sup> There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, <sup>11</sup> or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. <sup>12</sup> For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. <sup>13</sup> You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. <sup>14</sup> For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.*

You’ve heard the verses read, you surely have an idea of what most of the categories Moses spoke forth mean, and we will go through them methodically so that you have all the relevant details as well. But, in a general sense, would you agree that any or all of the following would fall into the overall list of what Moses said –

- Chiromancy, or hand (palm) reading.
- Tarot card reading.
- Tasseography, or tea leaves (or coffee) reading.
- Sorcery.
- Divination (Fortune telling).
- Astrology (Horoscope).
- Witches and witchcraft.
- Mysticism.
- Numerology to predict the future.
- Interpreting omens.

Obviously, several of these are right out of the passage we read. Others certainly fall into the same categories but are simply given a different name than that found in the NKJV.

This is just a list of ten various things that most of you seemed to agree are exactly the type of thing that Moses is referring to. And the list is not all-inclusive of the variety of such things to be found in... anyone? In Israel today.

Although some of these are not legal there, one can find any and all of them through a general search on the internet. It only took me a couple minutes to do so. There are websites, Facebook pages, and even articles on news sites such as the Jerusalem Post to be found.

And more, just a couple weeks after typing this sermon, a video came online via an Israel publisher with the title, ‘WITCH HARLOTS’ HOLD RALLY IN JERUSALEM.’ The identification of

the participants with witchcraft was, ostensibly, in name only, but that is only because being a witch is a punishable offense in Israel.

And the list of them conducted by Jews here in the US and around the world is even greater in both scope and type. If one wants a confirmation of Ezekiel 36:22, all he needs to do is to compare what the book of Deuteronomy says, and what continues on in both the Jews and in the nation of Israel...

**Text Verse:** *“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.” Ezekiel 36:22*

This is not intended as a slam on the Jews. It just makes the point more relevant to see that even Jews participate in such things. They are the ones who bear the name of the Lord – His holy name. And yet, they have gone out into the world and done all of those things forbidden by the law, thus profaning the name of the Lord.

If one picks up and reads the Law of Moses, he can come to no other conclusion than that Israel was exiled because of these things. And more, the calamities they have suffered are a result of this as well. What this means for them, meaning those who practice such things, is that they either don’t know what the word says, they don’t believe the word is true, or they simply just don’t care.

Either way, it is a scary place to be because that same word continues to tell of many great woes to come upon them for continuing on in this same walk.

But we have to also remember that the passage we just read said that the Lord was going to dispossess the inhabitants of the land for exactly the same things. If that is true, and it is, then no nation today should feel any more smug at the thought of Israel’s continued judgment.

America is so filled with the crimes against the Lord mentioned here that it is hard to believe we are still operating as a nation. And the worst part of it of all is that churches actively participate in many of these practices. Is there hope? Well, one thing is for sure – with the Lord, there is abundant mercy for those who will simply humble themselves.

But that is the hard part for stubborn humans, isn’t it? Bad times lay ahead before things get better. Such truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

## **I. You Shall Be Blameless (verses 9-14)**

**<sup>9</sup>“When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you,**

Words similar to this have been repeated again and again throughout Deuteronomy. The most recent time was in verse 17:14 where the words are almost identical.

And this is not the last time Moses will say this. He is speaking to the people who are right on the banks of the Jordan, just about to enter into the land of promise. And yet, the words are referring to a possibility that may be years away, or that – ostensibly – may never come to pass.

But they are spoken out with the assumption that what will be discussed is something the people will face. This is because of several reasons. The first is that the inhabitants in the land already do these things.

A second, and more important reason, is that the Lord knows the human heart. He knows the kind of people He is dealing with, and He knows the propensities of them.

And then, based on those failings and weaknesses, He knows that once one person follows this path, unless it is handled according to the set law now being spoken forth, it will blossom into a fashion where disobedience to the precept becomes an accepted and established norm.

This is absolutely evident in the world today. Even if the world doesn't have the law as its guide, the practices to be referred to in the verses ahead enter into a society, and they become so ingrained in it that they become a standard means of pursuing spirituality, that anyone who speaks against them is thought of as a spiritual prude or unenlightened.

Instead, it is those who practice these things that are supposedly the true connection to the divine. They are the trendsetters, they are the ones to be sought after, and simple faith without demonstrative predictions and explanations of the future is thought to be a ridiculous waste of time.

Right now, at the beginning of the thought, Moses reminds them that it is the Lord who is giving them the land, and that they will, in fact, go in to possess it. As this is so, and if they can remember this, then it is He to whom their allegiance is due.

And more, it is He to whom they are to look to for their spiritual life, thus demonstrating that they have faith in the word that has been given, and in the promises and warnings that are set forth in it. Despite the law being of works, it does not negate that faith in the Source of the law is still necessary – even before one can work out the requirements of the law.

With this understood, the immediate context of these next few verses needs to be considered. Verses 1-8 (our last passage) dealt with the priests and Levites – the tribe who ministers to the people on behalf of the Lord.

It spoke of what was due to them from the sacrifices. As it is due to them, and because that is a requirement of the law, it is as if what is rendered is being given to the Lord. They are the intermediaries representing the Lord.

But under the law, there are others who will act in an intermediary manner as well, the prophets. They, and one in particular, will be referred to in verses 15-22. With this in mind, Moses' words now – being placed between these two thoughts – will deal with those who are not to be considered as intermediaries for spiritual matters.

The placement of these six verses is purposeful and orderly. The people are to go to those who serve in the name of the Lord, but...

<sup>9 (con't)</sup> **you shall not learn to follow**

*lo tilmad laasot* – “No you shall learn to follow.” It is the word *lamad* that was introduced in verse 4:1 and is now being given for the twelfth time, showing it is a favorite of Moses. It comes from a root signifying “to goad.”

Moses is saying that the people are not to be goaded into conduct that is inappropriate for them as a people. There is the sanctuary, there are those who serve the Lord there, and there is to be adherence to the law of which they are the ministers. That is where their spiritual guidance is to be sought out, rather than...

<sup>9 (con't)</sup> **the abominations of those nations.**

*k'toavot ha'goyim ha'hem* – “according to abominations the nations the those.” The word *toevah*, or abomination, is something deplorable to the Lord. It has been used quite a few times already from Genesis through Deuteronomy.

One of those instances was in Deuteronomy when referring to the dietary laws set forth before the people. It then went on to name the clean and unclean animals for the people.

As seen there, and as is understood throughout Scripture apart from the Law of Moses, those things that are an abomination under the law are not an abomination for those not under law. This is because the animals anticipated Christ and believers' conduct in Christ. Those considered unclean were typical of inappropriate conduct for believers.

The unclean animals were only unclean because of this, not because of some inherent uncleanness in them. The issue comes back to what is typical of life in Christ. In Christ, those distinctions between the animals are now no longer considered.

On the other hand, that cannot be said of what will be presented in the next few verses. The reason, in relation to the clean or unclean animals, is explained by Paul –

“But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.” 1 Corinthians 8:8

As seen from after the flood of Noah, and as is seen in the words of Jesus (*Matthew 15:17 & Mark 7:19*) and elsewhere in the New Testament epistles, foods are neutral.

It is the law (because the dietary laws anticipated Christ) that makes the foods acceptable or not. As *“every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving”* (1 Timothy 4:4), then those precepts of the law only applied while the law was in effect.

On the other hand, the precepts Moses will next speak out will still apply even after the law is set aside. They are not commandments which if disobeyed will bring about the imputation of sin, but they are matters which are inherently abominable to the Lord.

Why is this so? It is because unlike foods which do not commend us to God nor draw us away from Him, these precepts will – in fact – draw us away from God. They directly pertain to a right relationship with the Lord, or its lack thereof. That type of precept is found again in the words of Paul –

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:  
'I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.' <sup>17</sup> Therefore 'Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.' <sup>18</sup> 'I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.'” 1 Corinthians 6:14-18

The type of people to be presented in the coming verses practice that which belongs to unbelievers. Further, they present that which is contrary to the message of God in Christ. God has appointed Christ as the one and only mediator between God and men.

As this is so, those who follow after the type of people to next be presented are abandoning that which is right and proper. Again, simply looking at the context of what is presented shows us this. Moses spoke of the priests and Levites, and then after this, he will speak of the prophets of the Lord.

As has been seen of the priests and Levites, and as will be seen of the prophet, these all anticipate Christ in His various roles. He is our High Priest. He is the Firstborn among the church. He is our Prophet like Moses.

These people now to be presented, whether under law or under grace, only separate us from intimacy with the Lord. They are to be rejected.

The reason for all of this explanation is so that when someone comes to you and asks about going to a palm reader, you can feel secure in the notion that even though you tell them “No, you should not go,” you are at the same time not somehow reintroducing the Law of Moses.

Rather, you are properly instructing them that at any time, and in any circumstance, we are to come to the Lord solely through Christ. Foods do not commend us to God, but Jesus does.

If something inhibits, or interferes with, our connection to God because it is not of Christ, then we are to refrain from joining ourselves to it. It is not a matter of law, but it is rather a matter of relationship.

**<sup>10</sup> There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire,**

In Leviticus 18:21, it said –

“And of thy seed thou dost not give to pass over to the Molech; nor dost thou pollute the name of thy God; I am Jehovah.” Leviticus 18:21 (YLT)

Again, in Leviticus 20:2 it says –

“And unto the sons of Israel thou dost say, Any man of the sons of Israel, and of the sojourners who is sojourning in Israel, who giveth of his seed to the Molech, is certainly put to death; the people of the land do stone him with stones;” Leviticus 20:2 (YLT)

What Moses is referring to now, may or may not be the same thing spoken of in those verses. There, it referred to the seed of the person. Therefore, that may have been speaking of something sexual in nature, or “seed” could have referred to children.

Either way, here, it is definitely referring to children – “his son or his daughter.” Further, where those verses in Leviticus said nothing of fire, here that is explicit. It may or it may not be referring to the same thing in both accounts, but Moses’ words now are something understood by the people.

As all of the other offenses listed in these verses are referring to accessing spiritual insights from another realm, it is certain that this is the intent of this practice as well. A literal translation would be, “No shall be found in you who makes pass through his son and his daughter in the fire.”

It is something that actually came into practice during the time of the kings. It is noted in 2 Kings 16 at the time of Ahaz. Again, it says this of Manasseh in 2 Kings 21 –

“Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.” 2 Kings 21:6

In whatever manner the practice of burning the children was accomplished, it wasn’t just done in order to appease the god, but it was accomplished in order to obtain revelation from this supposed god.

And more, this wasn’t only performed to Molech, but to Adrammelech, Anammelech, and Baal, and maybe others. This is what the nations did before Israel entered the land, and it is a practice that, unfortunately, was picked up by Israel.

<sup>10 (con’t)</sup> **or one who practices witchcraft,**

*qosem qesamim* – “divining divinations.” It is a verb followed by its cognate noun, coming from a primitive root meaning “to distribute. In other words, it is a means of determining the future by lot or by a magical scroll.

While emailing Sergio about a technical issue in the Hebrew, he came back with his own paraphrases –

- Magicifying magics
- Witchcrafting witchcrafts

His are more sensational and fun than my “divining divinations,” but his videos are more sensational and fun than my sermons, so that is not at all surprising.

Along with the previous sin of making children pass through the fire, this was one of the sins of Israel –

“And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, **practiced witchcraft** and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. <sup>18</sup>Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone.” 2 Kings 17:17, 18

It is also what King Saul asked for of the witch of En Dor –

“Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you.”  
1 Samuel 28:8

What the law forbid, Israel was willing to participate in. This includes the next offense...

<sup>10</sup> (con't) **or a soothsayer,**

The *anan*, or soothsayer, comes from a primitive root meaning “to cover.” It is the verb form of *anan*, meaning “a cloud.” The idea then is that person acts covertly, searching out dark and hidden things. It is used in the same verse cited earlier concerning Manasseh –

“Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.” 2 Kings 21:6

<sup>10</sup> (con't) **or one who interprets omens,**

The word is *nakhash*. It comes from a primitive root meaning to hiss. Thus, it signifies to whisper a spell, observe signs, or prognosticate.

Adam Clarke ties it to the word *nikhish*, meaning to view attentively. Thus, it would be one who inspects the entrails of animals, determines signs from the flight of birds or the movement of snakes, and so on. This is what the king of Babylon did when deciding which city he would wage war against –

“For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. <sup>22</sup>In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem: to set up battering rams, to call for a slaughter, to lift the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to heap up a siege mound, and to build a wall. <sup>23</sup>And it will be to them like a false

divination in the eyes of those who have sworn oaths with them; but he will bring their iniquity to remembrance, that they may be taken.” Ezekiel 21:21-23

This sort of interpretation was also sought out by Manasseh as noted in the same verse just mentioned where it said he “consulted spiritists.” Moses next says...

<sup>10</sup> (con’t) **or a sorcerer,**

It is the verb *kashaph*, coming from the noun *kesheph*. The root signifies “to whisper a spell,” and so it means to enchant or practice magic. In a comparable verse to those in 2 Kings 21, this word is used of Manasseh as well –

“Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.” 2 Chronicles 33:6

Manasseh was a very bad person. He seemed to revel in his disobedience of the law and in his complete defiance of the Lord. And yet, the list for him is not exhausted yet. Moses continues...

<sup>11</sup> **or one who conjures spells,**

*v’khover khaver* – “and enchanter of enchantment.” It is the verb and noun form of the same root. The root of the words means “to join.” In Exodus 26:3, it is used when referring to the coupling together of the curtains in the tabernacle.

A paraphrase of this, then, might be a “knot-tier who ties knots.” One can see that in calling forth with a spell, one is then attempting to join to the entity being called forth.

If you ever saw the movie Blackbeard’s Ghost, this is what the wife of Blackbeard, Aldetha Teach, was. She wrote out spells to call forth whatever spirit was adjoined to it. Steve Walker (played by Dean Jones) read her spell and Blackbeard, played by Peter Ustinov, came forth. In this, the knot between them was tied.

Like here in Deuteronomy, both words are used together in Psalm 58 as well –

“The wicked are estranged from the womb; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. <sup>4</sup>Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; They are like the deaf cobra that stops its ear, <sup>5</sup>Which will not heed the voice of **charm**ers, **Charming** ever so skillfully.” Psalm 58:3-5

David, being a king familiar with the law, may have used this verse in Deuteronomy to weave together his words of the Psalm. Next...

11 (con't) **or a medium,**

*v'shoel ov* – “and inquirer wineskins.” That would be a literal translation, but it requires explanation. The first word is the noun *shaal*. It means to inquire or ask for. Thus, one can think of “to consult.” The second word, *ov*, literally means wineskin.

But when one blows into something hollow like a wineskin or a bottle, it makes that ooky spooky sound – whooooo. From that, one can then imagine a ghost, familiar spirit, or the like.

With that understood, you can then think of the medium who calls forth spirits with long hollow utterances – “whooooooooooooo, we caaaaalllll youuuuuu to coooooomme....” In Blackbeard’s Ghost, this would be comparable to the woman in the tent who pretended to be a medium at the fundraiser.

The word *ov* is used five times in the account of the witch at En Dor in 1 Samuel 28. She is expressly called this in verse 7 –

“Then Saul said to his servants, ‘Find me a woman who is a **medium**, that I may go to her and inquire of her.’

And his servants said to him, ‘In fact, there is a woman who is a **medium** at En Dor.’” 2 Samuel 28:7

In an ironic twist, she literally let out a loud cry when Samuel actually came forth. It appears from the account that she wasn’t actually expecting him to appear. For now, Moses says...

11 (con't) **or a spiritist,**

The word is *yideoni*. It is derived from *yada*, “to know.” Thus, it signifies a spiritist or a wizard. It is someone who is in the know concerning matters of the spirit world. As before, Manasseh sought out these as is recorded in both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

11 (con't) **or one who calls up the dead.**

*v'doresh el ha'methim* – “And seeker unto the dead.” The words are self-explanatory. Any attempt to call to the dead for counsel, guidance, comfort, and so on would be a violation of this. The KJV uses the term necromancer. That can mean either a person who calls to the dead or one who raises the dead. This is only referring to the former, calling the dead.

If one thinks this through to its logical end, the Roman Catholic doctrine of praying to Mary or the saints is exactly this. There is nothing in the Bible to justify the idea that they are anything but dead. Therefore, to call to them for prayer or protection would qualify as doing exactly this. Thus...

**<sup>12</sup> For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD,**

*ki toavath Yehovah* – “For abomination of Yehovah.” In other words, the people make themselves an abomination by doing these things.

As noted earlier, there are abominations and then there are abominations. Those things of the law that were only anticipatory of Christ, meaning the conduct of His people, such as the dietary laws, cannot be considered as truly abominable to the Lord. Only what they typify, such as perverse conduct, is.

The law was being used as a tutor to reveal spiritual truths in those things. However, because the things in the passage we are looking at now will detract a person’s thoughts, actions, and attention away from the Lord, they must be considered abominable in any dispensation of time.

Telling someone to stay away from witchcraft or necromancy isn’t placing a person back under the law of Moses. Rather, it is conveying a timeless truth. Our mediation is to be through those whom the Lord has appointed. For Israel, it was the priest and prophet. For the church, it is Christ Jesus. Anything else is an abomination before Him.

**<sup>12 (con’t)</sup> and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.**

*u-biglal ha’toevoth he’elleh* – “and on account of the abominations the these.” The word is *galal*, it signifies to roll around. In other words, their actions will cause the consequences which then roll around, right back to them.

The note of driving them out because of their conduct was actually first stated to Abraham over four hundred years earlier –

“Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. <sup>15</sup> Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. <sup>16</sup> But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” Genesis 15:13-16

The iniquity of the Amorites included these detestable practices. Eventually, the cup of their iniquity, came to measure with the cup of God's wrath. In this, there could be no remedy for them. Because of this, Israel was to become the rod of God's judgment upon them.

As this is so, Israel could expect no less should they act in the same manner. That is implicitly understood from the next words...

**<sup>13</sup> You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.**

It does not say "before." Rather, it reads: *tamim tihyeh im Yehovah elohekha* – "Perfect you shall be with Yehovah your God." The words certainly must be considered based on the context. If Moses had said this in a talk about sexual purity, then it would mean, "You shall not commit sexual acts which defile you, but you shall accept the constraints of the Lord."

If he had said this in matters of sacrifices and offerings, then it would mean, "The sacrifices that you make and the offerings you give shall be perfect, without spot or blemish. Rather, you shall offer according to His glory."

Because Moses is speaking about matters related to the forbidden spiritual realm, it then means, "You shall not attempt to pry into either matters of fortune or future that belong to the Lord alone. You shall walk in this life as it comes to you, and you shall be content with how it unfolds before you, because it is the Lord who has ordained your portion, your state, and your days."

Understanding this, it makes supposed "prophets" in the church today all the more abominable. They claim to be speaking for the Lord and giving insights into the future of their parishioners when they are either making it up out of their heads, or they are actually under the influence of demons.

Not pursuing such things is what it means to be perfect "with" the Lord God. With this understood, Moses will finish with a contrast between those not of Israel, and those of Israel...

**<sup>14</sup> For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners;**

It is the same implied warning that Moses has made elsewhere. In other words, and without directly saying it, "These nations are being dispossessed by you because they are doing these things. They listen to soothsayers, and they listen to diviners. If you do such things, you too will be dispossessed."

And again, without saying it directly, Moses emphasizes the notion in the final words of the passage...

**\*14 (fin) but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.**

*v'atah lo ken nathan lekha Yehovah elohekha* – “And you not so has given for you Yehovah your God.” The beginning word, *v'atah*, is placed there as a nominative absolute. Thus, it forms a strong emphasis – “but you, concerning you, not so!”

Without directly saying it, as he will later, he could not be firmer in his warning. You have no authorization to go outside of the lines of spiritual authority granted for Israel.

*What will you gain by calling up the dead?  
Or what good can a witch be to you?  
Will you accept everything they have said?  
Or will you to the Lord and His word stay true?*

*There is no profit in searching out a soothsayer  
The one who will surely get scammed is you  
Such a person is a loose and fast player  
Nothing he presents is honest or true*

*But the Lord is always faithful through His word  
And He has a marvelous future mapped out for you  
If you accept the message of Christ, you have heard  
For You, great things the Lord God will do*

*Put away your abominations from before Lord  
And hold fast to the truth of His magnificent word*

## **II. A Lesson in Mercy**

Although many of the kings of Israel, from Saul on, involved themselves in these forbidden things, King Manasseh was especially highlighted for having done so. The word used in verse 11, *darash*, is often translated as to search or seek after.

At times, the word is used when seeking after the Lord – either in exhortation to do so, or in someone (or some group) who did so. In Deuteronomy 4, when referring to Israel in exile, Moses uses the word –

“But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” Deuteronomy 4:29

There were kings that sought after the Lord, like David, Josiah, and others, but there were kings who either partly sought after the Lord, or who completely rejected that avenue. Manasseh pretty much sought after every wicked entity, and every false god, he could find.

As the king, and as the representative of Israel, his actions in not seeking after the Lord, but instead seeking after all of these abominations, brought judgment on the land. A summary of this is found in 2 Chronicles 33 –

“Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. <sup>3</sup> For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. <sup>4</sup> He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, “In Jerusalem shall My name be forever.” <sup>5</sup> And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. <sup>7</sup> He even set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; <sup>8</sup> and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers—only if they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.” <sup>9</sup> So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.”

2 Chronicles 33:1-9

Because of his actions, we read the Lord’s decided judgment upon the people –

“And the LORD spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, <sup>11</sup> ‘Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations (he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols), <sup>12</sup> therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. <sup>13</sup> And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. <sup>14</sup> So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies, <sup>15</sup> because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.’” 1 Kings 21:10-15

Several kings, and many years later, while the land was facing its final destruction before exile, the word again says –

“Surely at the commandment of the LORD this came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, <sup>4</sup> and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon.” 2 Kings 24:3, 4

Israel was the rod of the Lord’s judgment against the Amorites. Eventually, the Lord brought Babylon against Israel as His rod of judgment against them. But in their exile, He remembered them and had mercy on them, according to the covenant He made with them.

The Lord had to judge Israel because of the actions of this most wicked king. Under his leadership, the people also turned to the same vile conduct. But in the same chapter of 2 Chronicles where the Lord said he would judge the king, we also learn there of the mercy of the Lord –

“And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. <sup>11</sup> Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon. <sup>12</sup> Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, <sup>13</sup> and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.” 2 Chronicles 33:10-13

Though the Lord remembered the sins of Manasseh as the principal cause of the eventual exile of Judah, he also faithfully forgave Manasseh of his own personal sins. This is a true demonstration of the greatness of the Lord.

As we saw at the beginning of the sermon, the things that have been forbidden here are commonly practiced in some measure, whether in Israel, in societies in general, and even within the church at times. Because of this, societies will be judged, and people will be condemned.

But, as we just saw with Manasseh, the Lord is willing to forgive even the worst of offenders. What would be good for any who hear and care about the matter, is to forego reliance on such things, forget tuning into the nonsense that can’t profit anything, and hold fast to the Lord instead.

There is nothing that we need to know about tomorrow, about our futures or our fortunes, or about anything else around us, that won't be made known in due time. The Lord has made sure promises to us, and what happens in the meantime is really not that important.

Get up, live out your day while accepting it as being exactly what the Lord intended for you, while at the same time striving to do your best at it. The day will end as it will end, and there is no need to pry into those things that the Lord has told us to leave alone.

This isn't a matter of law versus grace. Rather, it is a matter of allowing the Lord to be the Lord while living in His glorious presence as such.

**Closing Verse:** *"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. <sup>5</sup>Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days." Hosea 3:4, 5*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 18:15-22 *What is it about him that the word shows us?* (A Prophet Like Moses) (56<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **An Abomination to the LORD**

"When you come into the land  
Which the LORD your God is giving you  
You shall not learn to follow  
The abominations of those nations, such you shall not do

There shall not be found among you  
Anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire  
Or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer  
Or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer – raising the Lord's ire

Or one who conjures spells, or a medium, just as I have said  
Or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead

For all who do these things  
Are an abomination to the LORD for what they do  
And because of these abominations

The LORD your God drives them out from before you

You shall be blameless before the LORD your God  
For these nations which you will dispossess, as you shall do  
Listened to soothsayers and diviners  
But as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...