



1 Kings 11:4-8

(4) For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. (5) For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. (6) And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. (7) Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. (8) And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

King James Version

Even though the common people of Israel were frequently involved in idolatry (because they ignored God's words about being separate), the high places and associated pagan rites did not have *official* acceptance until the later years of Solomon—a king whose reign began so well.

Solomon set an example that many later kings followed, and the high places remained a facet of the societies of both Israel and Judah—a thorn in their spiritual sides—until their violent subjugations by Assyria and Babylon. This negligence was no small matter. Because Solomon turned away from [God](#) and embraced the high-place paganism of the heathens, the [northern ten tribes of Israel](#) were torn from the line of David in Judah, and the two kingdoms have yet to be reunited ([1 Kings 11:9-13](#); see [Ezekiel 37:15-26](#)).

Burning incense to a pagan god on top of a hill does not probably tempt us. However, the lessons and warnings still apply because, symbolically, a high place can represent anything that leads a person away from the true God—anything that leads to spiritual weakness or distracts us from our high calling. It need not be as blatantly pagan as [Christmas](#), [Easter](#), or [the occult](#).

Just as the natural elevations of the Promised Land were not of themselves evil, so also many of the things we encounter in life and participate in may not be morally objectionable. However, how they are used becomes the critical issue: If they lead us to embrace the world and its ways, our rightfully jealous God begins to be squeezed out of our minds. Left unchecked, the end will be just as disastrous as that of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:

[The High Places \(Part One\)](#)

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