



Daily Verse and Comment

1 Kings 11:4-8

(4) For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of his father David. (5) For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. (6) Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as *did* his father David. (7) Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that *is* east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. (8) And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

New 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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