

1 Kings 12:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

Analysis

And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

This verse contributes to the broader narrative of kingdom divided: rehoam and jeroboam, within the book's focus on kingdom division as judgment for Solomon's idolatry. The temple represents God's dwelling among His people and foreshadows Christ as Immanuel ('God with us').

The Hebrew text reveals nuances important for understanding this passage's contribution to 1 Kings' theological message about kingship, covenant, and faithfulness to Yahweh. This verse demonstrates the consequences when God's people—especially their leaders—either follow or forsake the covenant established at Sinai.

Historical Context

First Kings was written during or after the Babylonian exile (6th century BCE), reflecting on the monarchy period (10th-9th centuries BCE) to explain why the kingdoms fell. The kingdom division (c. 930 BCE) created the northern kingdom (Israel, 10 tribes) and southern kingdom (Judah, 2 tribes).

Ancient Near Eastern kingship ideology viewed kings as divine representatives responsible for maintaining cosmic order through right worship. Archaeological

discoveries from sites like Megiddo, Hazor, and Samaria confirm the historical reliability of 1 Kings' descriptions of building projects and administrative structures.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How can leaders today avoid Rehoboam's mistakes and lead with wisdom rather than pride?
2. What does the kingdom division teach about the long-term consequences of generational sin and compromise?
3. How does this verse point toward or prepare for the coming of Christ and His eternal kingdom?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַשׂ	אֶת	בֵּית	בָּמֹת	וַיַּעַשׂ	כֹּהֲנִים	מִקְצַת
And he made	H853	an house	of high places	And he made	priests	of the lowest
H6213		H1004	H1116	H6213	H3548	H7098
הָעָם	אֲשֶׁר	לֹא	הָיוּ	מִבְּנֵי	לֵוִי:	
of the people	H834	H3808	H1961	which were not of the sons	of Levi	
H5971				H1121	H3878	

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 17:32 (Creation): So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.

2 Chronicles 13:9 (Creation): Have ye not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods.

Numbers 3:10 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

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