

1 Kings 16:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

Analysis

And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

This verse contributes to the broader narrative of kings of Israel: Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab, within the book's focus on spiritual decline of both kingdoms under various rulers. The temple represents God's dwelling among His people and foreshadows Christ as Immanuel ('God with us'). The sacrificial system points forward to Christ's ultimate sacrifice, fulfilling all temple offerings (Hebrews 10:1-18).

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. This period (c. 930-850 BCE) saw rapid succession and instability, especially in the northern kingdom.

Ancient Near Eastern kingship ideology viewed kings as divine representatives

responsible for maintaining cosmic order through right worship. Canaanite fertility religion promised agricultural prosperity through ritual practices honoring Baal (storm god) and Asherah (mother goddess), posing constant temptation to syncretism. 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 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does this passage illustrate the importance of complete obedience to God's word without compromise?
2. What does Elijah's ministry reveal about God's character and His commitment to His covenant people?
3. How does this verse point toward or prepare for the coming of Christ and His eternal kingdom?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁר רָאָב עַל מִזְבֵּחַ בְּיַתְּהֵר
And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house for Baal H834
H6965 H4196 H1168 H1004 H1168

בָּנָה בְּשַׂמְרֹן:
which he had built in Samaria
H1129 H8111

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 10:21 (Parallel theme): And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another.

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