

1 Kings 8:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)

Analysis

Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)

This verse contributes to the broader narrative of dedication of the temple, within the book's focus on Solomon's wisdom, temple building, and tragic apostasy.

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. Solomon's reign (c. 970-930 BCE) represented Israel's golden age of peace and prosperity.

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 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the temple as God's dwelling place help us understand Christ's incarnation and the church as God's temple today?
2. What does Solomon's prayer and dedication teach about approaching God in worship and prayer?
3. How does this verse point toward or prepare for the coming of Christ and His eternal kingdom?

Interlinear Text

וְעַשْ يְתִּתْ וְסַלְחָתْ שְׁבַתْ בָּם תְּשִׁמְתָּעַ וְאַתָּה

H859 Then hear thou in heaven place thy dwelling and forgive and do

H8085 H8064 H4349 H3427 H5545 H6213

וְנַתְּתֵּן לְאִישׁ כָּל דְּבָרָךְ יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר

and give to every man according to his ways

H5414 H3605 H1870 H834

אַתָּה יְדַעַת לְבַבְךָ הַיְלָדָה אֲתָה

for thou even thou only knowest

H3045 H853 H3824 H859

בְּנֵי כָּל לְבַבְךָ אֲתָה לְבַדְךָ יְדַעַת

for thou even thou only knowest

H3045 H905 H853 H3605 H1121

בְּנֵי

of men

H120

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 28:9 (Parallel theme): And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

Jeremiah 17:10 (Parallel theme): I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Acts 1:24 (Parallel theme): And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

1 Samuel 16:7 (Parallel theme): But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

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