

1 Samuel 14:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.

Analysis

And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.

The notation that Saul 'built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD' suggests religious sincerity coexisting with spiritual failure. Building an altar represents worship, thanksgiving, and covenant recognition. Yet this is Saul's 'first' altar - remarkably late in his reign for such a basic act. His religious impulse appears genuine but inconsistent. The altar addresses his relationship with God without examining the oath that caused his people to sin.

Historical Context

Altar-building marked significant spiritual moments for patriarchs and leaders throughout Israel's history. That Saul had not built an altar previously is striking given his religious responsibilities. This delayed action suggests reactive rather than proactive piety.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Can genuine religious acts coexist with fundamental spiritual blindness?
2. What does delayed religious devotion suggest about priorities?

Interlinear Text

בָּנָה	וְ	שָׁאֵל	מִזְבֵּחַ	לִיהְיוֹת	אֵת	וְ	לִבְנֵוּ וְ	הַחַדְשָׁה
built	And Saul	altar	unto the LORD		H853		the same was the first	
H1129	H7586	H4196	H3068				H2490	

בָּנָה	וְ	מִזְבֵּחַ	לִיהְיוֹת
built	altar	unto the LORD	

H1129 H4196 H3068

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 7:17 (Sacrifice): And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

Hosea 8:14 (Parallel theme): For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.

1 Samuel 7:9 (Sacrifice): And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.

1 Samuel 7:12 (References Lord): Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

Judges 21:4 (Sacrifice): And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

2 Timothy 3:5 (Parallel theme): Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

