

1 Samuel 6:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD.

Analysis

And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD.

Divine providence directed the cart to stop at a specific location - the field of Joshua (whose name means 'salvation') beside a great stone suitable for an altar. The Hebrew 'even gedolah' (great stone) would serve both as altar and memorial. The people's immediate response demonstrates proper instinct: the cart that carried the Ark becomes fuel for sacrifice, and the cows that pulled it become offerings. This transformation of transport into worship shows that everything touched by sacred service belongs ultimately to God. The burnt offering ('olah', meaning 'ascending') represented complete consecration - the entire animal consumed by fire, symbolizing total dedication. Yet even this proper impulse contained improper elements: the men of Beth-shemesh, though in Levitical territory, were not all priests authorized to offer sacrifice.

Historical Context

The sacrifice of the cows followed ancient Near Eastern practice of not returning to secular use animals employed in sacred transport. The 'great stone' may have

served as a natural altar, though Mosaic law typically required unhewn stones (Exodus 20:25). This field became a lasting memorial, referenced in verse 18.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the transformation of the cart and cows into offerings illustrate the principle that sacred service consecrates what it touches?
2. What balance must be maintained between spontaneous worship and proper procedure?

Interlinear Text

הַשְׁמִינִי	בֵּית	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	וְ	בַּעֲגָל	הַ	אֵל	בְּ	אֵה	בַּעֲגָל	הַ
And the cart	came	H413	into the field	of Joshua	H0	a Bethshemite				
H5699	H935		H7704	H3091		H1030				
וְ	יָמָם	שָׁמֶן	וְ	בָּן	אָ	גָּדוֹל	הַ	וְ	יְבָקַעַ	וְ
and stood	H8033	H8033	stone	there where there was a great	and they clave					
H5975			H68	H1419	H1234					
עַל	הַ	בְּ	פָּר	וְ	תְּ	בַּעַל	וְ	עַל	הַ	עַל
the wood	And the cart	H853	the kine	H853	H6510	and offered	H5927	H5930		
H6086	H5699									
לִיהְיוֹה:										
unto the LORD										
H3068										

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 24:22 (Sacrifice): And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood.

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.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org