

2 Chronicles 33:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places,
yet unto the LORD their God only.

Analysis

Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the LORD their God only.

This verse is part of the narrative of Judah's kings, specifically addressing God's mercy even to the worst sinner who truly repents. The Chronicler's theological perspective emphasizes immediate divine retribution—kings who seek God prosper, while those who forsake Him face judgment. This pattern provides instruction for the post-exilic community on the conditions for God's blessing.

The account demonstrates God's covenant faithfulness despite human unfaithfulness. Even in judgment, God preserves a remnant and offers restoration through repentance. The repeated cycle of apostasy, judgment, and restoration reveals both human sinfulness and divine mercy. References to the temple, proper worship, and priestly service emphasize the Chronicler's concern for correct religious observance.

Theologically, these accounts point beyond immediate history to God's ultimate purposes through the Davidic line. Despite repeated failures, God preserves David's dynasty, anticipating the perfect King who will reign in righteousness. The pattern of judgment for sin and restoration through repentance prefigures the gospel message of salvation through Christ.

Historical Context

This passage occurs during the divided monarchy period when Judah existed separately from northern Israel. The Chronicler writes from a post-exilic perspective, addressing the restored community in Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile (539 BCE onward). His emphasis on temple worship, proper religious observance, and God's covenant faithfulness speaks directly to the needs of his audience who had just rebuilt the temple and were reestablishing their identity as God's people.

The historical context demonstrates both God's judgment on persistent sin and His readiness to restore those who genuinely repent. The Chronicler omits most northern kingdom material, focusing on Judah and the Davidic line to emphasize God's faithfulness to His covenant promises. Archaeological discoveries from sites like Lachish, Beersheba, and Jerusalem corroborate the biblical accounts of various kings' reigns and building projects.

Understanding the Chronicler's post-exilic perspective is crucial—he's not merely recording history but applying past lessons to his contemporary audience, showing that the same principles of seeking God, maintaining proper worship, and covenant faithfulness that determined blessing or judgment in the past still apply.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse illustrate the principle of divine retribution (blessing for obedience, judgment for sin)?
2. What specific applications does this passage have for maintaining spiritual faithfulness in contemporary Christian life?

3. How does this account point to God's ultimate purposes through the Davidic line and the coming Messiah?

Interlinear Text

בְּבָמָה וְתַּחַת	בְּבָמָה וְתַּחַת	אָבָל	אָבָל
Nevertheless	H5750	the people	did sacrifice
H61		H5971	H2076
yet unto the LORD	H3068	their God	still in the high places
	H430		H7535

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 32:12 (Sacrifice): Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it?

1 Kings 22:43 (References Lord): And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.

2 Kings 15:4 (Sacrifice): Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places.

2 Chronicles 15:17 (Parallel theme): But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.

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