

2 Kings 23:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.

Analysis

And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.

This verse contributes to the overall theme of chapter 23: Comprehensive reformation cannot avert certain judgment. The reference to kingship reminds readers that all human authority is subordinate to God's ultimate kingship. In Judah's later history, we see both genuine reforms and deep-rooted corruption, revealing that external religious activity cannot substitute for heart transformation.

The narrative demonstrates God's justice in judging covenant unfaithfulness while maintaining His ultimate purposes for redemption.

Historical Context

Historical Setting: 2 Kings 23 takes place during the final century of Judah's existence, 7th century BCE, including Manasseh and Josiah's reigns. The chapter's theme (Josiah's Thorough Reforms) reflects the historical reality of the worst apostasy under Manasseh followed by the most thorough reforms under Josiah, demonstrating that external righteousness cannot reverse God's determined judgment. Archaeological evidence from this period includes royal inscriptions, administrative documents, and material culture that corroborate the biblical account while providing additional context for understanding the political and social dynamics at work.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to understanding the theological message of 2 Kings 23 regarding comprehensive reformation cannot avert certain judgment?
2. What does this passage reveal about God's character, particularly His justice, mercy, and faithfulness to covenant promises?
3. In what practical ways should this text shape contemporary Christian thinking about faithfulness, worship, and obedience to God?

Interlinear Text

וְהִשָּׁב יָת	אֶת	הַכֹּהֲנִים יִם	אֲשֶׁר	נָתַנוּ
And he put down	H853	the idolatrous priests	H834	had ordained
H7673		H3649		H5414
מִלְכֵי י	יְהוּדָה	הֵמָּקְטֹר יִם	בַּבְּמוֹת	
whom the kings	of Judah	them also that burned incense	in the high places	
H4428	H3063	H6999	H1116	
בְּעָרֵי י	יְהוּדָה	וּמִסָּבִי י	יְרוּשָׁלַם	וְאֵת
in the cities	of Judah	and in the places round about	Jerusalem	H853
H5892	H3063	H4524	H3389	
הֵמָּקְטֹר יִם	לְבַ עַל	לְשֶׁ מֶשׁ	וְלָרַח	
them also that burned incense	unto Baal	to the sun	and to the moon	
H6999	H1168	H8121	H3394	
וְלַמַּזְלֹת	וְלֹכֹל ל	צָבָא	הַשָּׁמַיִם:	
and to the planets	H3605	and to all the host	of heaven	
H4208		H6635	H8064	