

Amos 3:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him I will also visit the altars of Beth-el: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground.

Analysis

In the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him (בְּיוֹם פִּקְדֵי, b'yom pokdi pish'ei yisrael alav)—The verb פָּקַד (pakad, 'visit, attend to, punish') appears frequently in judgment contexts; God's 'visitation' brings reckoning. **I will also visit the altars of Beth-el** (וּפִקְדַתִּי עַל־מִזְבְּחוֹת בֵּית־אֵל, ufakadti al-mizbechot beit-el)—Bethel's golden calf altar, established by Jeroboam I (1 Kings 12:28-29), epitomized Israel's syncretistic worship. **The horns of the altar shall be cut off** (וְנִגְדַעְוּ קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, v'nigde'u karnot hamizbeach)—altar horns provided sanctuary (1 Kings 1:50), but now even that refuge is destroyed.

The cutting off of altar horns symbolizes judgment reaching even sacred spaces. No false worship, religious tradition, or holy place can protect covenant-breakers. This prefigures Christ's prophecy that Jerusalem's temple would be destroyed (Matthew 24:1-2)—structures of false confidence collapse under divine judgment.

Historical Context

Bethel ('House of God') was where Jacob encountered God (Genesis 28:19), making Jeroboam's idolatry there particularly blasphemous. This sanctuary became the center of Israel's apostate worship. In 722 BC, the Assyrians destroyed these altars; Josiah later desecrated the site completely (2 Kings 23:15-16).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What false refuges—religious traditions, church buildings, rituals—do people trust instead of Christ alone?
2. How does God's judgment on religious institutions that bear His name warn contemporary churches?
3. In what ways might modern Christians be like Israel—maintaining religious forms while living in covenant unfaithfulness?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	בַּיּוֹם	וּפָקַדְתִּי	פְּשָׁעַי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	עַל יְדֵי	
H3588	That in the day	that I shall visit	the transgressions	of Israel	H5921	
	H3117	H6485	H6588	H3478		
וּפָקַדְתִּי	עַל	הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	בֵּית	אֵל	וְנִגְדָּעוּ	קַרְנֵי וְ
that I shall visit	H5921	of the altar	H0	of Bethel	shall be cut off	and the horns
H6485		H4196		H1008	H1438	H7161
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	וְנָפַל	לָאָרֶץ:				
of the altar	and fall	to the ground				
H4196	H5307	H776				

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 23:15 (Sin): Moreover the altar that was at Beth-el, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove.

