

Exodus 20:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.

Analysis

An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.

God prescribes simple worship—earth altars, not elaborate structures. 'Altar of earth' (מִזְבֵּחַ אֲדָמָה, mizbeach adamah) emphasizes humility and accessibility—earth is abundant, free, unstained by human art. The contrast with gold idols (v. 23) is deliberate. Burnt offerings (עֹלֹת, olat) ascend wholly to God; peace offerings (שְׁלָמִים, shelamim) are shared meals expressing fellowship. 'In all places where I record my name' (בְּכֹל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֶזְכֹּר אֶת־שְׁמִי, bekol hamaqom asher azkhir et-shemi)—God designates where He'll meet them. The promise 'I will come and bless' shows worship's purpose: encounter with God resulting in blessing.

Historical Context

Before the tabernacle centralized worship, patriarchs built altars at divine encounter sites (Bethel, Moriah). God initially permitted multiple worship sites before centralizing at Jerusalem. Earth altars predate Solomon's ornate temple.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does God's preference for simple earth altars over elaborate gold structures teach about worship?
2. How does God 'coming to bless' where He records His name shape your expectations in corporate worship?

Interlinear Text

חַמִּיצֵה	אֶדְמָה	תַּעֲשֶׂה	לִי	וְזִבַּחַתְּ	עָלַי יְיָ		
An altar	of earth	thou shalt make	H0	unto me and shalt sacrifice	H5921		
H4196	H127	H6213		H2076			
אֶת	עֹלֹתַי יְיָ	וְאֶת	שְׁלָמֶיךָ יְיָ	אֶת	צֹאנְךָ		
H853	thereon thy burnt offerings	H853	and thy peace offerings	H853	thy sheep		
	H5930		H8002		H6629		
וְאֶת	בָּקָרְךָ	בְּכָל	הַמְּקוֹמִים	אֲשֶׁר	אֶזְכֹּר יְיָ	אֶת	שְׁמִי יְיָ
H853	and thine oxen	H3605	in all places	H834	where I record	H853	my name
	H1241		H4725		H2142		H8034
אֲבֹא	אֵלֶיךָ	וּבֵרַכְתִּיךָ:					
I will come	H413	unto thee and I will bless					
H935		H1288					

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 12:5 (Parallel theme): But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

2 Chronicles 6:6 (Parallel theme): But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.

1 Kings 9:3 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

2 Chronicles 7:16 (Parallel theme): For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

Deuteronomy 12:11 (Sacrifice): Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD:

Deuteronomy 16:11 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there.

Deuteronomy 26:2 (Parallel theme): That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there.

2 Chronicles 12:13 (Parallel theme): So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.

Ezra 6:12 (Parallel theme): And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed.

1 Kings 8:29 (Parallel theme): That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.

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