

Exodus 24:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Analysis

And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Moses 'wrote all the words' (וַיַּכְתֹּב, vayikhtov)—creating the first Scripture. Written revelation prevents oral corruption. He builds an altar (for sacrifice) and twelve pillars/standing stones (מַצְבָּה, matzevah) representing twelve tribes. The altar is one (God's unity), pillars are twelve (tribal diversity)—unity and diversity coexist in covenant community. The altar 'under the hill' positions Israel below Sinai, under God's authority. The twelve pillars witness covenant ratification—stone witnesses that outlast human memory (Joshua 24:27). The gospel creates one body (altar) from many members (pillars)—church unity in diversity.

Historical Context

Standing stones (pillars/matzevot) served as witnesses and memorials throughout Israel's history (Genesis 28:18, 31:45, Joshua 4:20). Twelve pillars representing twelve tribes symbolized national covenant participation.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Why does Moses write God's words rather than relying on oral tradition—what does written revelation accomplish?
2. How do the one altar and twelve pillars illustrate the relationship between unity and diversity in God's people?

Interlinear Text

תִשְׁכַּח אֶת מֹשֶׁה דְבָרָי יְהוָה וַיַּכְתֵּב
wrote And Moses all the words of the LORD and rose up early
H3789 H4872 H853 H3605 H1697 H3068 H7925

בְּרֹא בְּרֹא בְּרֹא בְּרֹא בְּרֹא בְּרֹא
in the morning and builded an altar under the hill
H1242 H1129 H4196 H8478 H2022

לְשָׁנִים מִצְבָּה הַעֲשֵׂרָה לְשָׁנִים יָמִים
according to the twelve and twelve pillars according to the twelve
H8147 H6240 H4676 H8147

שְׁבָטִים שְׁבָטִים שְׁבָטִים
tribes of Israel
H6240 H7626 H3478

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 28:18 (Parallel theme): And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

Deuteronomy 31:9 (Word): And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel.

Revelation 21:14 (Parallel theme): And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Luke 22:30 (References Israel): That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Galatians 2:9 (Parallel theme): And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

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