

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' (וַיִּכְתֹּב, vayikhtov)—creating the first Scripture. Written revelation prevents oral corruption. He builds an altar (for sacrifice) and twelve pillars/standing stones (מִצְבֵּה, 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

וַיִּכְתֹּב ב	מֹשֶׁה ה	אֶת	כָּל	דִּבְרֵי י	יְהוָה	וַיָּשָׁם
wrote	And Moses			all the words	of the LORD	and rose up early
H3789	H4872	H853	H3605	H1697	H3068	H7925
בַּבֹּקֶר	וַיִּבֶן	מִזְבֵּחַ	תַּחַת	הַהֵר		
in the morning	and builded	an altar		under the hill		
H1242	H1129	H4196	H8478	H2022		
לְשָׁנֵי יָם	עֲשָׂהָ	מִצְבֵּה		לְשָׁנֵי יָם		
according to the twelve		and twelve pillars		according to the twelve		
H8147	H6240	H4676		H8147		
יִשְׂרָאֵל: שְׁבֵטֵי י	עַשְׂרֵה					
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.