

Ezekiel 20:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For when I had brought them into the land, for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering: there also they made their sweet savour, and poured out there their drink offerings.

Analysis

'For when I had brought them into the land, for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering: there also they made their sweet savour, and poured out there their drink offerings.' Upon entering the promised land, Israel immediately adopted Canaanite worship practices. 'Every high hill, and all the thick trees' describes Canaanite high places and sacred groves. Rather than exclusive Yahweh worship, they offered sacrifices at pagan sites. 'The provocation of their offering' indicates how offensive this syncretism was to God.

Historical Context

Archaeological excavations throughout Israel/Palestine confirm widespread high place worship. These were often hilltop platforms with altars, standing stones (masseboth), and Asherah poles. Israelites syncretistically worshiped Yahweh alongside Baal and Asherah at these sites, exactly what God forbade (Deuteronomy 12:2-4).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do we syncretistically mix true worship with cultural or pagan elements?
2. What does God's demand for exclusive worship teach about the nature of covenant relationship?

Interlinear Text

וַאֲבִיָּאִם	אֶל	הָאָרֶץ	אֲשֶׁר	נָשָׂא אֹתִי		
For when I had brought	H413	them into the land	H834	for the which I lifted up		
H935		H776		H5375		
אֶת	יָדִי	וַתִּנָּח	אֹתָהּ	לָהּ		
H853	mine hand	and there they presented	H853	H0		
	H3027	H5414				
וַיֵּרְאוּ	כָּל	גִּבְעָה	כָּמָה	וְכָל	עֵץ	עֵבֶת
it to them then they saw	H3605	hill	every high	H3605	trees	and all the thick
H7200		H1389	H7311		H6086	H5687
וַיִּזְבְּחוּ	אֶת	זִבְחֵיהֶם	וַתִּנָּח	שָׁם		
and they offered	H8033	H853	there their sacrifices	and there they presented	H8033	
H2076		H2077		H5414		
כֶּעָס	קִרְבָּנָם	וַיַּשְׁכֵּמוּ	שָׁם	יְיָ		
the provocation	of their offering	there also they made	H8033	savour		
H3708	H7133	H7760		H7381		
נִיחַ וְחִיָּהּ	וַסֵּךְ	אֶת	נֹסְפֵיהֶם:			
their sweet	and poured out	H8033	H853	there their drink offerings		
H5207	H5258			H5262		

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 6:13 (Sacrifice): Then shall ye know that I am the LORD, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols.

Jeremiah 3:6 (Parallel theme): The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.

Jeremiah 2:7 (Creation): And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.

Joshua 23:14 (Parallel theme): And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

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