

Ezekiel 6:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. The recognition formula returns, tied specifically to corpses surrounding idols at worship sites. The geographic specificity—high hills, mountaintops, green trees, thick oaks—catalogs idolatrous worship locations throughout the land. "Sweet savour" (reiach nicho'ach, רֵיחַ נִיחָח) ironically uses language for acceptable sacrifices to Yahweh (Genesis 8:21; Leviticus 1:9) applied to idol worship. The tragic reversal: instead of pleasing aroma ascending to God, corpses rot before powerless idols. This macabre scene teaches that idols neither prevent death nor receive offerings—they're as dead as their worshipers.

Historical Context

Archaeological surveys confirm widespread high place distribution across Israel's hill country. Remains of altars, standing stones, and cultic installations appear on hilltops, under ancient trees, and at mountain shrines throughout the land. The phrase 'under every green tree' became proverbial for idolatry (Deuteronomy 12:2;

1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 16:4; 17:10; Jeremiah 2:20; 3:6, 13). Canaanite religion associated sacred trees with divine presence, a practice Israel adopted despite prohibitions. The irony of corpses among idols at these sites vindicated Yahweh's exclusive deity while demonstrating idols' impotence.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the ironic reversal (corpses instead of pleasing aroma) expose idolatry's futility?
2. What modern 'high places' and 'sacred groves' do we establish where we worship false gods?
3. How does this passage challenge us to examine what truly receives the 'sweet savour' of our lives?

Interlinear Text

סְלִילִקָּם	בְּהִזְבְּחָתָם	אָנָּה	כִּי	וַיַּדְעָתָם	בְּהִזְבְּחָתָם	בְּהִזְבְּחָתָם	כִּי	וְתִּזְבְּחָתָם
Then shall ye know	H3588	H589	that I am the LORD	H1961	when their slain	H2491		
	H3045			H3068				
men shall be among	H8432	their idols	H1544	round about	H5439	their altars	H413	H3605
hill	H1389	upon every high	H7311	in all the tops	H7218	of the mountains	H2022	H8478
tree	H3605	and under every green	H7488		H8478		H3605	oak
and under every thick	H5687	the place	H4725	where they did offer	H5414		H8033	H7381
sweet	H5207							
gololikim:	H3605	their idols	H1544					

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 20:28 (Sacrifice): 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.

Hosea 4:13 (Sacrifice): They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow

thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.

Jeremiah 2:20 (Parallel theme): For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot.

1 Kings 14:23 (Parallel theme): For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.

Isaiah 1:29 (Parallel theme): For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.

2 Kings 16:4 (Sacrifice): And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.