

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, רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ) 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

וַיֵּדְעוּם	כִּי	אֲנִי	יְהוָה	בְּהִי וְ	חָלְלִיהֶם
Then shall ye know	H3588	H589	that I am the LORD	H1961	when their slain
H3045			H3068		H2491
בְּתוֹךְ	גִּלּוּלֵיהֶם:	סָבִיב וְ	מִזְבְּחֹתֶיהֶם	אֶל	כָּל
men shall be among	their idols	round about	their altars	H413	H3605
H8432	H1544	H5439	H4196		
גִּבְעָה	כָּמָה	בְּכָל	רֹאשֵׁי	הָהָרִים	וְ
hill	upon every high	H3605	in all the tops	of the mountains	H8478
H1389	H7311		H7218	H2022	
כָּל	עֵץ	רֶעֱנָן	וְ	כָּל	אֶלֶּה
H3605	tree	and under every green	H8478	H3605	oak
H6086		H7488			H424
עֲבֹתָהּ	מָקוֹם	אֲשֶׁר	נָתְנוּ	שָׁם	רֵיחַ
and under every thick	the place	H834	where they did offer	H8033	savour
H5687	H4725		H5414		H7381
גִּלּוּלֵיהֶם:	לֵךְ לֵ	נִיחַ	חֶ		
sweet	H3605	their idols			
H5207		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.

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