

Isaiah 17:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands,
neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either
the groves, or the images.

Analysis

'And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images.' True repentance involves rejecting idolatry—not merely adding Yahweh worship alongside idols, but exclusive devotion. The phrase 'work of his hands...his fingers have made' emphasizes idols' human origin—manufactured gods cannot save. 'Groves' (Asherim—wooden poles) and 'images' (incense altars or sun pillars) represent Canaanite fertility cult objects Israel syncretistically adopted. This verse describes authentic repentance: turning FROM idols TO the living God. Reformed theology emphasizes repentance involves both turning from sin and turning to God—negative and positive aspects.

Historical Context

Archaeological excavations throughout Israel reveal widespread syncretism in pre-exilic period—Yahweh worship mixed with Canaanite practices. Asherah poles appear even in Yahweh temples. High places combined legitimate and pagan worship. The reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah attempted to purge such syncretism, though with limited lasting success. The Babylonian exile finally broke Israel's idolatrous tendencies—post-exilic Judaism showed rigorous monotheism. The historical progression from syncretism to pure monotheism demonstrates this prophecy's fulfillment—judgment purged idolatry from God's people.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does emphasis on idols being 'work of his hands' teach about manufactured religion's futility?
2. How does authentic repentance involve both turning from sin and turning to God?
3. What modern 'idols' (work of our hands) must believers reject for exclusive devotion to Christ?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא	יִשָּׁעַה	אֶל	הַמִּזְבְּחֹת	מַעֲשֵׂה	יָדָיו
H3808	H8159	H413	H4196	H4639	H3027
	And he shall not look	to the altars	the work	of his hands	
וַאֲשֶׁר	עָשָׂו	אֲצַבְעֹתָיו	לֹא	יִרְאֶה	
H834	H6213	H676	H3808	H7200	
have made	that which his fingers	neither shall respect			
וְהָאֲשֶׁר	וְהַחֲמָנִים:				
H842	H2553				
either the groves	or the images				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 30:22 (Parallel theme): Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.

Isaiah 27:9 (Sacrifice): By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.

Isaiah 2:8 (Creation): Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:

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