

Jeremiah 11:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal.

Analysis

This verse quantifies apostasy: 'For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah.' Every city had its local deity—municipal Baal worship pervading the land. 'And according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal.' Jerusalem's streets each contained Baal altars—the capital city saturated with idolatry. 'That shameful thing' (bosheth, בּוּשֶׁת) was a term substituted for Baal in texts, indicating the shame associated with his worship. The multiplication of altars demonstrates systematic, comprehensive apostasy.

Historical Context

Archaeological surveys confirm widespread local shrines throughout ancient Israel and Judah. The Kuntillet Ajrud inscriptions from eighth century BC mention 'YHWH and his Asherah,' showing syncretism was endemic. Jerusalem's rooftops had altars for astral worship (Jeremiah 19:13, Zephaniah 1:5). Josiah's reforms destroyed many such sites (2 Kings 23), but they were rebuilt after his death.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does the multiplication of idols proportional to cities and streets reveal about systematic apostasy?
2. How does calling Baal 'that shameful thing' express prophetic contempt for idolatry?

Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 2:28 (References God): But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.

2 Kings 23:13 (References Jerusalem): And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.

