

Joshua 22:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the LORD himself require it;

Analysis

That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon—The eastern tribes emphatically deny sacrificial intent. They list three types of offerings—olah (burnt offering, *עֹלָה*), minchah (grain offering, *מִנְחָה*), and shelamim (peace offerings, *שְׁלָמִים*)—covering the entire Levitical sacrificial system, affirming they will offer NONE of these on the altar.

Let the LORD himself require it—The phrase "require it" (*דָּרַשׁ*, darash) means to seek out and punish. They again invoke divine judgment if their altar serves sacrificial purposes, placing the matter directly in God's hands rather than human courts.

Historical Context

This categorical denial addresses the core legal issue: Deuteronomy 12 forbids sacrificial altars anywhere except the central sanctuary. By renouncing all sacrificial use, the eastern tribes claim exemption from this law—the altar serves another purpose entirely.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does their specific, detailed denial demonstrate the importance of clear communication in resolving conflict?
2. Why is it significant that they repeatedly invoke God's judgment rather than merely defending themselves to men?
3. What does this teach about addressing accusations with both truth and humility?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵם	יְהוָה	מֵאַחֲרַי	לִשׁוֹב	מִזְבֵּחַ	לְנוֹ	לְבָנוֹת
H518	the LORD	from following	to turn	us an altar	H0	That we have built
	H3068	H310	H7725	H4196		H1129
לְעֹשֵׂהוּ	וְאֵם	וּמִנְתָּהּ	עֹלָה	עָלָיו	לְהַעֲלֵהוּ	וְאֵם
H6213	H518	H4503	thereon burnt offering	or if to offer	H5927	or if to offer
			H5930	H5921		
יִבְקֹשׁ	הוא	יְהוָה	שְׁלָמִים	זִבְחֵי	עֲלָיו	
H1245	H1931	the LORD	peace	offerings	H5921	
		H3068	H8002	H2077		

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 18:19 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

1 Samuel 20:16 (References Lord): So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies.

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