

Joshua 22:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again, Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you.

Analysis

Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again, Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD—The eastern tribes envision a future scenario where their descendants face exclusion. They can point to the memorial altar and say, "Look at the pattern (תַּבְנִית, tavnit) of the LORD's altar"—proving their fathers intended to worship at the legitimate sanctuary.

Which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you—The repetition of "not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices" (third time) emphasizes the altar's non-cultic function. It witnesses TO the true altar, not competing WITH it. The memorial points to Shiloh, not away from it.

Historical Context

The word tavnit (pattern) is the same term used for the tabernacle pattern shown to Moses (Exodus 25:9). The eastern altar was likely a replica in appearance but entirely different in function—a visual testimony rather than a functional sanctuary.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do our churches and practices serve as 'patterns' or witnesses to future generations about what we believed?
2. What safeguards can we build now to help our children defend their covenant participation decades from now?
3. How does this vision for multi-generational faithfulness challenge short-term thinking in modern Christianity?

Interlinear Text

Therefore said	H1961	וְיֹאמֶר	H3588	Therefore said	H413	אֵל יְהוָה	H559	אֵל יְהוָה	H413	אֵל יְהוָה	H559
to us or to our generations	H1755	לְרֹתִית יְמֹנוֹ	H4279	מִן הַ	H559	אֵל יְהוָה	H7200	רְא אֵל	H853	אֵת	H3808
the pattern	H8403	מִזְבֵּח ח	H3068	יְהוָה	H834	אֲשֶׁר	H6213	עֲשֵׂה	H1	אֲבוֹת יְמֹנוֹ	H1931
not for burnt offerings	H5930	לֹא בְּכָה	H2077	לֹא בְּכָה	H3808	כִּי	H5707	כִּי	H1931	הִיא עַד	H996
	H996	בְּינֵיכֶם:	H996								

