

Joshua 24:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.

Analysis

And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us—Joshua personifies the stone: **it hath heard** (shamea, שָׁמָעָה). Though inanimate, the stone 'testifies' by its presence. **It shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God**—the monument prevents covenant amnesia.

Creation bears witness to God (Psalm 19:1-4, Romans 1:20). Even stones can 'cry out' (Luke 19:40). Joshua's logic: if a stone remembers, how much more should living people? This witness stands **lest ye deny** (pen tekachashun, פֶּן תִּכְחַשׁוּן, 'lest you deceive/lie to') God—apostasy equals lying to the One who saved you.

Historical Context

Personifying witness-stones was common in ancient Near Eastern treaties. Hittite and Assyrian treaties invoked gods and natural elements as witnesses. Israel adapts this: not pagan gods but the true God, with creation as His witness stand. The stone stood for centuries, possibly until the Assyrian conquest.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What created things 'testify' to God's reality and your covenant obligations?
2. How do physical reminders of past commitments help prevent future compromise?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	אֵל	כָּל	הָעָם	הִנֵּה	הָאֵבֶן
said	And Joshua	H413	H3605	unto all the people	H2009	Behold this stone
H559	H3091			H5971		H68
הַזֹּאת	תְּהִיָּה	בְּנוֹ	לְעֵד	כִּי	יָא	שָׁמָעָה
H2063	H1961	H0	shall be a witness	H3588	H1931	unto us for it hath heard
			H5713			H8085
אֵת	כָּל	אֲמָרָיו	יְהוָה	אָשָׁר	דִּבֶּר	עַמּוֹ
H853	H3605	all the words	of the LORD	H834	which he spake	H5973
		H561	H3068		H1696	
וְהִיא	בְּכֶם	לְעֵד	פֶּן	תִּכְחַשׁוּן	בְּאֵלֵיכֶם:	
H1961	H0	shall be a witness	H6435	unto you lest ye deny	your God	
		H5713		H3584	H430	

Additional Cross-References

Luke 19:40 (Parallel theme): And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

Joshua 22:34 (Witness): And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar Ed: for it shall be a witness between us that the LORD is God.

Matthew 10:33 (Parallel theme): But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Deuteronomy 31:26 (Word): Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.

Isaiah 1:2 (References Lord): Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

Job 31:23 (References God): For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.

Proverbs 30:9 (References God): Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Deuteronomy 31:21 (Witness): And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear.

Deuteronomy 32:1 (Word): Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

1 Samuel 7:12 (References Lord): Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.