

Judges 6:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it.

Analysis

The townspeople demand Gideon's execution: 'Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it.' Their capital charge—desecrating Baal's sacred sites—shows how thoroughly Israel had abandoned Yahweh. No one appeals to Mosaic law forbidding idolatry; instead, destroying idolatry is treated as criminal. This inversion of values typifies the judges period: 'every man did that which was right in his own eyes' (Judges 17:6, 21:25). The mob's demand for death parallels later Jewish leaders demanding Christ's crucifixion—both cases involve the righteous threatened by those defending religious error.

Historical Context

Capital punishment for religious offenses was standard in ancient Near Eastern cultures. Attacking a deity's altar was viewed as attacking the deity itself, meriting death to appease divine wrath and deter others. That the community mobilized so quickly shows Baal worship's entrenchment. The demand directed at Joash makes him responsible for his son's actions under ancient Near Eastern household accountability—the patriarch must deliver the offender or face collective punishment.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the mob's demand for Gideon's death illustrate spiritual warfare's reality when confronting entrenched idolatry?
2. What does their prioritizing Baal over family loyalty reveal about idolatry's power to corrupt natural affections?
3. How should Christians respond when obedience to God provokes hostility from family, community, or culture?

Interlinear Text

בָּתָּה	אֶת	הַזֶּכֶר	אֶת	וְאֶשְׁר	אֶל	הַעִיר	אֶנְשׁוֹן	וַיֹּאמֶר	וַיֹּאמֶר
said	H376	of the city	H413	unto Joash	H853	Bring out	H853	thy son	H1121
H559		H5892		H3101		H3318			
וְיִמְתַּם	תִּ	כִּי	נִתְמַצֵּ	אֶת	מִזְבֵּחַ	אֶת	עַל	כִּי	מִתְבָּעֵל
that he may die	H3588	because he hath cast down	H853	the altar	H3588	of Baal	H1168		
H4191		H5422		H4196		H1168			
כִּי	תִּ	אֲשֶׁר	הַאֲשֶׁר	הַ	עַלְיוֹן				
and because he hath cut down	H3772	the grove	H834		H5921				
		H842							

Additional Cross-References

Acts 26:9 (Parallel theme): I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Philippians 3:6 (Parallel theme): Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

