

Judges 6:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.

Analysis

Joash's response demonstrates courage and theological clarity: 'Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself.' This remarkable defense combines three arguments:

1. theological absurdity—why must humans defend an omnipotent god?
2. counter-threat—Baal's defenders deserve death for faithlessness to the true God
3. practical challenge—let Baal demonstrate his power by punishing Gideon himself.

Joash's reasoning echoes Elijah's later mockery of Baal prophets (1 Kings 18:27) and exposes idolatry's fundamental irrationality. His boldness suggests either previous private doubt about Baal or instant conversion upon seeing his son's courage.

Historical Context

Joash's argument 'let him plead for himself' reflects ancient polytheistic belief that gods actively defended their honor and sanctuaries. That Baal didn't immediately strike Gideon dead exposed his impotence. Joash's willingness to publicly defend

his son despite maintaining the Baal altar shows the complex religious situation—public conformity to cultural norms despite private doubts. His speech turned the mob by forcing them to confront Baal's obvious powerlessness.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Joash's reasoning expose the absurdity of defending gods who supposedly possess power?
2. What modern ideologies demand vigorous human defense despite claiming inherent truth and power?
3. How can Christians use similar reasoning to expose the irrationality of false worldviews?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	וַיֹּאֶשׁ	לְכָל	אֲשֶׁר	עָמְדוּ	עַל יוֹ	הָאֵת מִן
said	And Joash	H3605	H834	unto all that stood	H5921	H859
H559	H3101			H5975		
בְּרֵב	לְבַּעַל	אִם	אֲתָם	וְתוֹשִׁיעַ וְ	אֹתוֹ	אֲשֶׁר
against him Will ye plead	for Baal	H518	H859	will ye save	H853	H834
H7378	H1168			H3467		
בְּרֵב	לּוֹ	יוֹמָת	עַד			
against him Will ye plead	H0	for him let him be put to death	H5704			
H7378		H4191				
בִּבְקֹר	אִם	אֱלֹהִים	הוא	בְּרֵב	לּוֹ	
whilst it is yet morning	H518	if he be a god	H1931	against him Will ye plead	H0	
H1242		H430		H7378		
כִּי	נָתַץ	אֶת	מִזְבְּחוֹ			
H3588	for himself because one hath cast down	H853	his altar			
	H5422		H4196			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 10:11 (References God): Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.

Jeremiah 10:5 (Parallel theme): They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.

Ephesians 5:11 (Parallel theme): And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

1 Corinthians 8:4 (Sacrifice): As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.

