

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

בָּאָתִים מִן עַל יְהוָה אָתָר
unto all that stood
H5921 H859

אָמַר וְיֹאשֶׁר לְכָל
said And Joash
H559 H3101 H3605 H834

אָשָׁר רֹאשׁוֹת וְתוֹשִׁיעַ וְאֶתְּמָם
will ye save
H3467 H853 H834

בְּרִבְעָנָה לְבַעַל אָמַר
against him Will ye plead
H7378 H1168 H518 H859

עַד יְמִינָת לְבִרְעָנָה
for him let him be put to death
H4191 H5704

בְּרִבְעָנָה לְבַעַל אָמַר
against him Will ye plead
H7378 H0

לְבַעַל אָלָה יְמִינָת הָוָה
if he be a god
H430 H1931 H518 H859

בְּרִבְעָנָה לְבַעַל אָמַר
against him Will ye plead
H0 H7378

מִזְבֵּחַ אֲתָה נָתַת יְמִינָת
his altar
H4196 H853 H5422 H3588

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.

