

High Places



God allowed his people to employ cultural practices and ideas if they had no pagan content and were used only in God's service. Because the people of the ancient Near East honored their gods by worshiping them on high places, God allowed his people to build altars to him—and him alone—on high places. He also communicated with his people on high places.

But God detested the high places of the Canaanites and instructed the people of Israel to destroy their idols, break down pagan altars, cut down their Asherah poles, and demolish all the pagan high places. God did not want his people tempted by the fertility cults. And he did not want them to blend the worship of false gods with the worship of Yahweh, the one true God.

The Israelites did not follow God's commands concerning high places. They sinned against the Lord by building high places in all their towns, worshiping other gods, and conforming to pagan practices. As a result, God allowed his people to be taken captive by their neighbors, the Assyrians and Babylonians.