

Deuteronomy 32:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.

Analysis

So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him (YHWH badad yanchenu we-'en 'immo 'el nekar)—badad (alone) emphasizes exclusive divine leadership without assistance from pagan deities. 'El nekar (strange/foreign god) denotes covenant violation—Israel worshiped YHWH exclusively, without syncretistic compromise.

This verse establishes monotheistic loyalty as the foundation for covenant relationship: God alone delivered Israel from Egypt, sustained them in the wilderness, and brought them to Canaan. No Canaanite Baal, Egyptian deity, or Moabite Chemosh contributed. Therefore, crediting other gods or mixing worship constitutes covenant adultery.

The exclusivity claim has two dimensions: theological (YHWH is the only true God) and covenantal (Israel must worship Him alone). The first commandment ('no other gods before me,' Exodus 20:3) and Shema ('the LORD our God is one LORD,' Deuteronomy 6:4) codify this non-negotiable principle. Jesus reaffirms it: 'No man can serve two masters' (Matthew 6:24).

Historical Context

Israel's chronic temptation was syncretism—worshipping YHWH alongside Baal for fertility, Asherah for prosperity, or household gods for protection. The wilderness generation largely avoided idolatry (except the golden calf incident), but Moses

prophetically warns the Canaan generation about pagan seduction (vv. 16-18 predict apostasy). The 'alone' emphasis counters ancient Near Eastern polytheism, where people hedged religious bets by honoring multiple deities. Israel's radical monotheism was revolutionary, later influencing Christianity and Islam. The New Testament transfers this exclusive loyalty to Christ—salvation is in 'none other' (Acts 4:12), and believers must avoid spiritual adultery (James 4:4; Revelation 2:4).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What 'strange gods' (money, success, approval, comfort) compete for the exclusive lordship that belongs to God alone?
2. How does remembering that God 'alone' delivered and sustained you strengthen resistance to spiritual compromise?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה	בְּדָד	יָנִיחַ	וְאֵין	עִמּוֹ	אֵל
So the LORD	alone	did lead	H369	H5973	god
H3068	H910	H5148			H410

וְאֵין עִמּוֹ
him and there was no strange
 H5236

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 46:4 (Parallel theme): And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

Psalms 136:16 (Parallel theme): To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalms 78:14 (Parallel theme): In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.

Deuteronomy 1:31 (References God): And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org