

Deuteronomy 32:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.

Analysis

They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods—the Hebrew *qin'ū* (קִנְעָן) from *qānā'* means to incite intense jealous anger. **Strange gods** (בָּזָרִים, *bēzārîm*) literally means 'foreign ones,' emphasizing covenant betrayal—spiritual adultery. God's jealousy is not petty envy but righteous indignation at covenant violation, like a husband's justified anger at his wife's adultery (Exodus 20:5, 34:14).

With abominations provoked they him to anger—*tô'ēvôt* (תֹּוֹבֶת) denotes detestable practices, especially idolatry and its associated immorality. Paul quotes this passage in Romans 10:19 and 11:11, showing how Israel's rejection of Messiah provoked God to extend salvation to Gentiles, fulfilling the 'not a people' prophecy (v.21).

Historical Context

Moses anticipates Israel's adoption of Canaanite Baal worship, Asherah poles, and child sacrifice to Molech—all documented in Judges through 2 Kings. These 'abominations' included ritual prostitution, divination, and infant sacrifice, practices expressly forbidden in Deuteronomy 12-18. The prophets (especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel) would later echo this language of divine jealousy.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God's jealousy as covenant faithfulness rather than petty emotion change your view of His character?
2. What modern 'strange gods' (career, comfort, entertainment) compete for the exclusive devotion God deserves?

Interlinear Text

בָּתוּלָבּ תְּ	בְּזִיכְרֵי יְמֵינוֹ	לְזִנָּא הִ
They provoked him to jealousy	with strange	gods with abominations
H7065	H2114	H8441
provoked they him to anger		
H3707		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 78:58 (Parallel theme): For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

1 Corinthians 10:22 (Parallel theme): Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

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