

Psalms 106:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

Analysis

This verse summarizes Israel's spiritual adultery. 'Thus were they defiled with their own works' shows their actions polluted them. 'Defiled' (tame, טָמַא) means ritually unclean or polluted—they became ceremonially unfit for covenant relationship. 'Went a whoring with their own inventions' uses prostitution imagery for idolatry. 'Whoring' (zanah, זָנָה) means to commit fornication or be a harlot. Throughout Scripture, idolatry is spiritual adultery—betraying the covenant spouse (God) for other lovers (false gods). 'Their own inventions' emphasizes that idols are human creations, not divine revelation. The verse teaches that sin defiles and that idolatry is covenant infidelity.

Historical Context

The prophets extensively used marriage imagery for God's covenant with Israel (Hosea, Ezekiel 16, 23; Jeremiah 3). Israel's idolatry was portrayed as a wife committing adultery, becoming a prostitute. God's jealousy for His bride drove His judgment of her unfaithfulness, yet His covenant love ensured eventual restoration. This imagery continues in the New Testament, where the church is Christ's bride (Ephesians 5:25-32; Revelation 19:7-9).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does understanding idolatry as spiritual adultery affect our view of sin?
2. What modern 'inventions' do Christians pursue instead of wholehearted devotion to God?
3. How does God's jealousy for His people reflect His love and covenant commitment?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּטְמְאוּ	בְּמַעֲשֵׂיהֶם	וַיֵּלְכוּ זָנִי
Thus were they defiled	with their own works	and went a whoring
H2930	H4639	H2181

בְּמַעֲשֵׂלֵיהֶם:
with their own inventions
H4611

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 20:18 (Parallel theme): But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols:

Leviticus 17:7 (Parallel theme): And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations.

Numbers 15:39 (Parallel theme): And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:

Isaiah 59:3 (Parallel theme): For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

Ezekiel 20:43 (Parallel theme): And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.

Hosea 9:1 (Parallel theme): Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor.

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