

# Psalms 78:58

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

## Analysis

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**For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.** The causative **For** explains Israel's treachery—idolatry, the ultimate covenant violation. **High places** (bamot, בָּמוֹת) were elevated worship sites, often Canaanite shrines Israel adopted for syncretistic worship. They **provoked him to anger** (vakhi'isuhu, וַכִּי־עִסְוֵהוּ), using vocabulary of intense emotional response to betrayal.

**Moved him to jealousy** (yakni'uhu, יַכְנִיאוּהוּ) employs marital language—God's jealousy isn't petty envy but righteous zeal for exclusive relationship. He is 'a jealous God' (El kanna, אֱלֹהֵי קָנָא, Exodus 20:5) who refuses to share affection with idols. **Graven images** (pesilim, פְּסִילִים) were carved idols, direct violations of the second commandment.

This verse exposes idolatry's heinousness—it's spiritual adultery against a faithful husband. Israel took God's gifts (the land, prosperity) and used them to worship other deities. Paul later identifies covetousness as idolatry (Colossians 3:5), showing that any rival affection provokes divine jealousy.

## Historical Context

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Throughout the judges and monarchy periods, Israel struggled with Baal and Asherah worship, often integrating pagan practices with Yahweh worship. The high places remained a snare even under some godly kings (1 Kings 15:14, 22:43).

God's jealousy eventually expressed itself in Assyrian (722 BC) and Babylonian (586 BC) exile.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. What modern 'high places' (culturally acceptable idolatries) tempt believers to syncretistic worship?
2. How should understanding God's jealousy as marital devotion rather than petty envy affect your worship?
3. What heart idols (career, comfort, approval) might you need to 'cast out' from your personal 'high places'?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיִּכְעֹס וְהוּא	בְּבָמוֹתָם	וּבִפְסִילֵיהֶם
For they provoked him to anger	with their high places	with their graven images
H3707	H1116	H6456
וַיִּקְנֵאֵהוּ:		
and moved him to jealousy		
H7065		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 32:21** (Parallel theme): They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will

move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

**Leviticus 26:30** (Parallel theme): And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

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

**Deuteronomy 12:2** (Parallel theme): Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree:

**1 Kings 11:7** (Parallel theme): Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

**1 Kings 12:31** (Parallel theme): And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.