

Amos 6:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?

Analysis

Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, (בְּשִׁמְחָה לֹא לְבָרָה) hasemechim l'lo davar, literally 'rejoicing in no-thing, vanity')—they celebrate empty achievements. **Which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?** (פָּאָמָרִים בְּלוֹא בְּמִזְקָנָה) ha'om'rim halo v'chozkeinu lakachnu lanu karnayim)—'horns' (לְקָרְנִים, karnayim) symbolize military power (Deuteronomy 33:17). They boast about military victories achieved 'by our own strength' (בְּמִזְקָנָה, b'mizkanah), crediting themselves rather than God.

This reveals the root sin: pride that denies God's sovereignty and credits human achievement. Jeroboam II's military successes (2 Kings 14:25-28) produced nationalistic arrogance—forgetting that God gave the victories. Habakkuk 1:11 describes similar pride: 'his own might is his god.' All human achievement apart from acknowledging God's enablement is 'vanity.'

Historical Context

Jeroboam II expanded Israel's borders to near-Davidic dimensions, creating prosperity and military confidence. Rather than attributing success to God's covenant faithfulness, Israel credited their own strength—the pattern of all proud civilizations that rise and fall.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 – Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What modern achievements—technological, economic, military—do nations or individuals credit to their own strength rather than God?
2. How does rejoicing in 'things of nought' describe celebrating temporary, earthly accomplishments while ignoring eternal realities?
3. What's the difference between legitimate thanksgiving for accomplishments and proud self-credit that forgets God?

Interlinear Text

בְּחִזְקַת נֵזֶם	בְּשָׁמָחַ יִם	בְּלֵ וְאֶ	בְּאֶמֶר יִם	בְּלֵ וְאֶ	בְּחִזְקַת נֵזֶם
H8055	of nought	in a thing	which say	of nought	by our own strength
H3808		H1697		H559	

Additional Cross-References

James 4:16 (Parallel theme): But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

2 Kings 14:25 (Parallel theme): He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher.

