

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 (הַשְׂמֵחִים לֵלֵא דָבָר, 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?** (הַאֲמָרִים הֵלֹא בְחֹזְקֵנוּ לָקַחְנוּ לָנוּ קַרְנִים, ha'om'rim halo v'chozkeinu lakachnu lanu karnayim)—'horns' (קַרְנִים, karnayim) symbolize military power (Deuteronomy 33:17). They boast about military victories achieved 'by our own strength' (בְּחֹזְקֵנוּ, v'chozkeinu), 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

הַשְׂמִיחַ יִם	הֵל וְאֵ	דָּבָר	הָאֵל מְרִי יִם	הֵל וְאֵ	בְּחִזְקָא נֹו
H8055	of nought	in a thing	which say	of nought	by our own strength
	H3808	H1697	H559	H3808	H2392
לָקַחְנוּ	לָנוּ	קַרְנִים:			
Have we not taken	H0	to us horns			
H3947		H7161			

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.

