

Isaiah 1:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

Analysis

Isaiah employs devastating irony: even unreasoning animals recognize their master and source of provision, yet God's covenant people lack such basic recognition. The Hebrew 'yada' (know) implies intimate, experiential knowledge, not mere intellectual assent. The parallel 'consider' (bin) suggests careful reflection and discernment, both absent in apostate Israel.

Historical Context

This comparison would resonate in an agrarian society where livestock were essential to daily life. The audience would immediately grasp the shame of being less perceptive than farm animals.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Do you know God intimately through relationship, or only know about Him intellectually?
2. What spiritual 'benefits' from God do you enjoy without acknowledging the Giver?

Interlinear Text

doth not know	The ox	his owner	and the ass	crib	his master's	but Israel
H3045	H7794	H7069	H2543	H18	H1167	H3478
ל א	הַתְבֹּזֵן:	עַמִּים	ל א	הַתְבֹּזֵן:	ל א	ל א
H3808	doth not know	my people	H3808	doth not consider		
H3045		H5971		H995		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 8:7 (Parallel theme): Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.

Isaiah 44:18 (Parallel theme): They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

Jeremiah 4:22 (Parallel theme): For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

Isaiah 5:12 (Parallel theme): And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.

Romans 1:28 (Parallel theme): And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Isaiah 27:11 (Parallel theme): When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

Psalms 94:8 (Parallel theme): Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise?

2 Peter 3:5 (Parallel theme): For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

Proverbs 6:6 (Parallel theme): Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

Jeremiah 10:8 (Parallel theme): But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities.