

Isaiah 10:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?
or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as
if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as
if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

Analysis

God uses devastating analogies to expose Assyria's folly. Can an axe boast against the one wielding it? Can a saw magnify itself against the sawyer? Can a staff and rod wield the one lifting them? The absurdity is obvious—tools don't control those who use them. Assyria is God's tool, yet boasts as if autonomous. This illustrates the creator-creature distinction—humanity, and especially nations, are instruments in God's hands. To boast against God is ultimate folly.

Historical Context

Applied to Assyria but universally applicable to all human pride. Throughout history, nations and individuals forget their dependence on God, claiming autonomous glory. Nebuchadnezzar learned this lesson through humiliation (Daniel 4). Every empire that has boasted against God—Assyria, Babylon, Rome, and modern powers—eventually falls. The pattern validates this principle: creatures cannot successfully defy their Creator.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do the tool analogies help us understand our relationship to God as His instruments?
2. In what ways do we sometimes act as if we're autonomous rather than dependent on God?
3. How does remembering we're tools in God's hands produce both humility and purpose?

Interlinear Text

הִתְפָּאֵר	הַגֵּרֶזַן	עַל	הַחֹצֵב	בְּ	אֵם
boast	Shall the axe	H5921	itself against him that heweth	H0	H518
H6286	H1631		H2672		

לִּ	הַמִּשּׁוֹר	עַל	כְּהִנֵּי יָדָיו
magnify	therewith or shall the saw	H5921	itself against him that shaketh
H1431	H4883		H5130

כְּהִנֵּי יָדָיו	שֶׁ כֵּט	וְאֵת	כְּהִנֵּי יָדָיו
itself against him that shaketh	it as if the rod	H853	itself against them that lift it up
H5130	H7626		H7311

כְּהִנֵּי יָדָיו	מִטָּה	לֹא	עֵץ:
itself against them that lift it up	or as if the staff	H3808	itself as if it were no wood
H7311	H4294		H6086

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 45:9 (Parallel theme): Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

Isaiah 10:5 (Parallel theme): O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.

Isaiah 29:16 (Parallel theme): Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

Ezekiel 28:9 (Parallel theme): Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee.

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