

Isaiah 40:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

Analysis

This verse satirizes idol manufacture with biting irony: a craftsman creates what people then worship. The Hebrew 'nasak' (cast/pour) describes metal-working, while overlaying with gold and silver makes an impressive but impotent object. The absurdity is intentional—worshiping what human hands made inverts the Creator-creature relationship.

Historical Context

Babylon's religion featured elaborate idol processions and gold-covered statues. Isaiah mocks these expensive lifeless objects, contrasting them with the living God who cannot be contained in human-made forms.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What modern 'idols' do people carefully craft and decorate, only to serve them?

2. How does this verse expose the foolishness of trusting in anything created rather than the Creator?

Interlinear Text

הָפָּסֵל	נִסַּךְ	חֵבֶשׁ	צוֹרֵף:	בִּזְהָב	יִרְקַע נֹו
a graven image	melteth	The workman	and casteth	it over with gold	spreadeth
H6459	H5258	H2796	H6884	H2091	H7554

וּרְתָקֹוֹת	כֶּסֶף	צוֹרֵף:
chains	silver	and casteth
H7577	H3701	H6884

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 10:9 (Parallel theme): Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder: blue and purple is their clothing: they are all the work of cunning men.

Judges 17:4 (Parallel theme): Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.