

Isaiah 44:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.

Analysis

The satire becomes vivid: the smith works with tongs in coals, fashions iron with hammers, works with his strong arm, then grows hungry and weak. The irony is devastating - the god-maker exhausts himself creating a 'god' that cannot give him strength. His thirst and faintness contrast with God who never faints or grows weary (40:28).

Historical Context

This detailed description of metalworking mocks the labor-intensive idol production in Babylon, where professional smiths created religious images. Their human weakness exposes their products' impotence.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the idol-maker's exhaustion creating his 'god' contrast with God who strengthens the weary?
2. What does it reveal when we exhaust ourselves serving things that cannot give life?

Interlinear Text

וּבְמְקֹבֵב וְתַּחַת בְּפֶלֶת מִפְעֵל הַזֶּבֶן שְׁבָבֵשׁ
H2796 The smith with the tongs and worketh in the coals it with hammers
H1270 H4621 H6466 H6352 H4717

אֵין יְהִיב גַּם כִּי וְפָעֵל הַזֶּבֶן וְפָעֵל הַזֶּבֶן
and fashioneth and worketh of his arms and his strength H1571 H7456 H369
H3335 H6466 H2220 H3581

כִּי שְׁתָה לֹא מִם תִּיעַף
and his strength H3808 he drinketh no water and is faint
H3581 H8354 H4325 H3286

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 40:19 (Parallel theme): The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

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