

Isaiah 44:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshipping it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.

Analysis

The residue ('sheerith' - what's left over, the remainder) becomes a god. He falls down before leftover wood, prays to it, asks 'Deliver me; for thou art my god.' The Hebrew 'natsal' (deliver) implies rescue from danger - he asks the leftovers to save him. The pathos and absurdity merge: this is both ridiculous and tragic.

Historical Context

The 'residue' language is deliberately demeaning - the god is made from scraps, leftovers, the portion not good enough for fire. Yet people entrust their deliverance to these remnants.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What 'residue' or leftovers do people today treat as worthy of ultimate trust?
2. How does praying to what you created expose the absurdity of all idolatry?

Interlinear Text

וְשֵׁאֵר הִיט וְ	אֱלֹהִים	עָשָׂה	לְפָסֶל וְ	ל וְ
And the residue	a god	thereof he maketh	even his graven image	he falleth down
H7611	H410	H6213	H6459	H5456
ל וְ	וְשִׁתְּ חוֹ	וְיִתְפַּל ל	אֵל יוֹ	וַיֹּאמֶר
he falleth down	unto it and worshippeth	it and prayeth	H413	unto it and saith
H5456	H7812	H6419		H559
הַצִּיל נִי	כִּי	אֱלֹהִים:		
Deliver	H3588	a god	H859	
H5337		H410		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 45:20 (Prayer): Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.