

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 worshippeth 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

וְשָׁא	רִית	וְ	אֵל	עַש	הַ	עַש	לְפָסָל	וְ	לֹ
And the residue	a god	thereof he maketh	even his graven image	he falleth down					
H7611	H410	H6213	H6459	H5456					
לֹ	וְיִשְׁתַּחַ	וְיִתְפָּלֵל	אֵל	וְיִאָמֶר					
he falleth down	unto it and worshippeth	it and prayeth	unto it and saith						
H5456	H7812	H6419	H413	H559					
אֵל	כִּי	בָּאֵל	בְּ	אַתָּה:	אֵל	כִּי	בָּאֵל	בְּ	אַתָּה:
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.

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