

Isaiah 44:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.

Analysis

This begins the satire on idol-making (verses 9-20). Those who fashion idols are 'tohu' (formlessness, chaos - the same word describing earth before creation in Genesis 1:2). Their 'delectable things' (precious idols) 'shall not profit.' The irony is biting: their own witnesses (the idols themselves) neither see nor know, ensuring their worshipers' shame.

Historical Context

Isaiah exposes idolatry's fundamental absurdity: worshiping what cannot see, know, or help. This mockery recurs throughout prophetic literature as Israel repeatedly fell into idol worship despite knowing better.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What modern 'idols' promise much but deliver nothing and bring shame?
2. How does the inability of idols to see or know contrast with God's omniscience?

Interlinear Text

יִצְרֵי They that make H3335	פֶּסֶל a graven image H6459	כָּלָם H3605	תְּהוּ are all of them vanity H8414
וְחִמּוּדֵיהֶם and their delectable things H2530	בֶּל H1077	יֹנֵעַ יָלֹוּ shall not profit H3276	וְעֵדֵיהֶם and they are their own witnesses H5707
מֵהָ H1992	בֵּל H1077	וְיָרָא וְ H1077	לֹא יָדָע וְ H3045
תִּרְאוּ H7200	וְיָדָע וְ H4616	לֹא יָדָע וְ H3045	לֹא יָדָע וְ H3045
יִבְשׁוּ: that they may be ashamed H954			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 41:24 (Parallel theme): Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.

Isaiah 41:29 (Parallel theme): Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.

Psalms 97:7 (Parallel theme): Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.

Isaiah 44:18 (Parallel theme): They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

Isaiah 45:20 (Parallel theme): 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.

Isaiah 42:18 (Parallel theme): Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.

Isaiah 44:20 (Parallel theme): He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

Isaiah 43:8 (Parallel theme): Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.

Psalms 135:18 (Parallel theme): They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.

Psalms 115:8 (Parallel theme): They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.