

Jeremiah 10:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.

Analysis

This verse returns to idol critique: 'Every man is brutish in his knowledge.' The Hebrew *nivr* (נִבְרָה) indicates stupidity, senselessness; 'knowledge' (*da'ath*) suggests that supposed wisdom produces foolishness when directed toward idols. 'Every founder is confounded by the graven image.' The Hebrew *tsaraph* (צָרַף, metalworker, refiner) should know best that his product is mere metal—yet he worships it. 'Confounded' (*hovish*, הוֹבִישׁ) means shamed, disappointed when expectations fail. 'For his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.' *sheqer* (שֶׁקֶר, falsehood, lie) exposes idols as deceptive non-entities. 'No breath' (*ruach*) confirms their lifelessness—they cannot animate themselves or respond to worship.

Historical Context

The irony intensifies: metalworkers who shape idols know the manufacturing process yet somehow believe their products possess divine power. This self-deception parallels Isaiah 44's extended satire. Archaeological evidence shows that ancient craftsmen sometimes signed or marked their idol work—they knew they made them, yet participated in their worship.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How can those who manufacture idols with their hands simultaneously believe they possess divine power?
2. What contemporary parallels exist to this self-deception about human-made objects of devotion?

Interlinear Text

יִבְעֵר רַ	כָּל	אָדָם	מִדַּע עֵת	הֵב יֵשׁ	כָּל	צוֹרֵף
is brutish	H3605	Every man	in his knowledge	is confounded	H3605	every founder
H1197		H120	H1847	H3001		H6884
בְּמַצֵּבֶת	יְ	שֶׁ קֵר	נִסָּכֵי	וְלֹא		
by the graven image	H3588	is falsehood	for his molten image	H3808		
H6459		H8267	H5262			
וְאֵין	בָּנֵם:					
and there is no breath	H0					
H7307						

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 42:17 (Parallel theme): They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods.

Jeremiah 10:8 (Parallel theme): But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities.

Isaiah 45:16 (Parallel theme): They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.

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

Isaiah 44:11 (Parallel theme): Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.

Psalms 14:2 (Parallel theme): The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

Psalms 92:6 (Parallel theme): A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.

Psalms 94:8 (Parallel theme): Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise?

Proverbs 30:2 (Parallel theme): Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.