

# Jeremiah 10:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder: blue and purple is their clothing: they are all the work of cunning men.

## Analysis

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This verse describes idol materials: 'Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz.' Tarshish, likely in Spain, was renowned for silver trade; Uphaz may be a variant of Ophir, famous for gold. The finest materials from distant sources—yet still just metal. 'The work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder.' charash (שָׁרַשׁ, craftsman) and tsaraph (תְּרַאַפֵּה, metalworker, refiner) are human artisans. 'Blue and purple is their clothing: they are all the work of cunning men.' Expensive dyes (blue from tekhelet, purple from argaman) dress the statues in royal colors—yet underneath is dead material. Every element is human product: imported metals, skilled craftsmen, expensive dyes.

## Historical Context

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Tarshish (possibly Tartessos in Spain) traded silver throughout the Mediterranean. Ophir's location is debated—possibly East Africa, Arabia, or India—but it was legendary for gold (1 Kings 9:28, 10:11). Blue and purple dyes were extraordinarily expensive, extracted from murex snails. The finest materials from around the known world, combined by the most skilled craftsmen—yet still producing lifeless objects. The contrast with YHWH, who creates by speaking, is absolute.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does listing the finest materials and craftsmen intensify rather than diminish the critique of idolatry?
2. What does investing the best resources in creating lifeless objects reveal about human religious impulses?

## Interlinear Text

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מַזְהַב וְ מַזְהַב יְבוּשׁ מִתְּרָשִׁישׁ יְבוּשׁ מִעִפָּז וְ מִעִפָּז  
Silver spread into plates from Tarshish is brought and gold from Uphaz  
H3701 H7554 H8659 H935 H2091 H210

אַרְגָּמָן תְּכִלָּת צָוֵב כְּלָת מַעַשׂ הַמְּלָאֵךְ  
and purple blue like that of the founder and of the hands and of the workman  
H713 H8504 H6884 H3027 H2796 H4639

כְּלָמָם חַכְמַת יְמִינָם מַעַשׂ הַלְּבֹשׂ מַעַשׂ הַמְּלָאֵךְ  
cunning of the founder of the hands of the workmen of their clothing  
H3605 H2450 H4639 H3830

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 115:4** (Parallel theme): Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

**Daniel 10:5** (Parallel theme): Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz:

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

**1 Kings 10:22** (Parallel theme): For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

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