

Psalms 135:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths.

Analysis

The anatomical mockery continues: 'They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths.' Ears that cannot hear means no prayer reaches the idol, no cry for help is registered, no worship is acknowledged. The climactic declaration 'neither is there any breath in their mouths' strikes at life itself. The Hebrew 'ruach' means breath, wind, or spirit - idols possess none of these. They are essentially corpses, resembling the living without sharing their vitality. This recalls Genesis 2:7 where God breathed life ('ruach') into Adam. The living God gives breath; idols have none to give. While verse 7 celebrated God bringing wind from His treasures, idols lack even enough breath to fog a mirror. Ezekiel's vision of dry bones receiving breath (Ezekiel 37) demonstrates what only the living God can do - animate the inanimate, give life to the lifeless.

Historical Context

Pagan rituals sometimes included attempts to 'animate' idols through mouth-washing and mouth-opening ceremonies designed to give images divine breath. The biblical polemic dismisses these as futile - no ritual can impart life to dead matter. Only the Creator who breathed life into humanity possesses such power.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Why is it significant that idols have no breath or life?
2. How does this expose the foolishness of idolatry?

Interlinear Text

אָזַן ים	לָהֶם	וְלֹא	יִשְׁמְעוּ יְהוָה	אֵין	אֵין	שׁוֹמֵר
They have ears	H1992	H3808	but they hear	H637	H369	not neither is there
H241			H238			H3426
וְאֵין	בְּפִיהֶם:					
any breath	in their mouths					
H7307	H6310					

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