

it with the strength of his arms. He becomes hungry and his strength fails. When he drinks no water he becomes faint. (13) An artisan shapes wood; he marks it with a line; he fits it with planes and delimits it with a compass, making it like the form of a man, like the beauty of mankind, to dwell in a house. (14) He cuts down cedars, or takes a cypress or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a fir, and the rain makes it grow. (15) Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself. He kindles a fire to bake bread. He also makes a god and worships it. He makes it into a carved image and falls down before it. (16) Half of it be burns in the fire. This half enables him to eat meat as he roasts it, and satisfies his hunger; he also warms himself and says, I am warm and I have seen fire. (17) But the rest of it he makes into a god for his graven image. He bows down before it and worships; he prays to it and says, Deliver me, for you are my god. (18) They do not know or understand. He has shut their eyes so that they cannot see, and their hearts so they cannot understand. (19) And no one considers, or has knowledge or understanding to say, I have burned half of it in the fire and also have baked bread over its coals. I roast meat and eat it; then I make the rest of it into an abomination; I fall down before a block of wood! (20) He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside, so that he cannot deliver himself or say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

These verses repeat with more detail the criticisms of idolatry expressed in earlier passages, laying particular emphasis on the absurdity of using part of a tree for fuel and another part of the same tree to make a god to be worshiped.

After this long discussion of idolatry, two verses predict great blessing for Israel, which is here twice designated as God's Servant.

(21) Remember these things, O Jacob and Israel, for you are my servant. I have formed you; you are my servant, O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me. (22) I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you. (23) Sing, O heavens, for the