

15:¹ But thou, our יהוה , art gracious and true, long-suffering, and in mercy ordering all things. ² For if we sin, we are thine, knowing thy power: but we will not sin, knowing that we are counted thine. ³ For to know thee is perfect righteousness: yea, to know thy power is the root of immortality. ⁴ For neither did the mischievous invention of men deceive us, nor an image spotted with divers colours, the painter's fruitless labour; ⁵ the sight whereof enticeth fools to lust after it, and so they desire the form of a dead image, that hath no breath.

This is a fourfold portrait of יהוה

1. Gracious (ḥanan): He gives what we cannot earn.
2. True (emet): The reliable, unchanging One.
3. Long-suffering(erekh): Delays judgment for the sake of repentance.
4. Mercifully (rachûm) ordering all things: Providence is not random - creation is structured by divine wisdom.

Romans 2:4 The goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of elohim leads you to repentance.

Colossians 1:17– In Him all things hold together.

Knowing that יהוה governs all things keeps us calm and strategic in chaos.

V. 2 For if we sin, we are thine, knowing thy power: but we will not sin, knowing that we are counted thine.

This is ownership theology; even when we fail, we belong to Him.

But belonging isn't license: knowing our covenant status should compel holy living!

1 Corinthians 6:19 You are not your own, you were bought with a price.

Romans 6:1 Grace isn't a license to sin – it motivates righteousness.

In verse 3 knowing יהוה = true righteousness/tzadik. Knowing His power = the root of immortality – eternal life begins in right relationship with Him.

John 17:3 This is eternal life: that they know You, the only true elohim, and Yahusha Ha Moshiach whom You sent.

Philippians 3:10 – To know Yahusha and the power of His resurrection is to attain life beyond death!

Colossians 2:8 See to it no one takes you captive by empty deceit, human traditions, and the elemental spirits.

Romans 1:25 Worshiping the creature over the Creator corrupts the heart.

Don't lust after dead things. If it can't breathe life into you, it's just decoration.

V 1. יהוה is gracious, true, and providential – align with His order.

V2. We belong to Him – identity fuels holiness.

V3. Knowing Him = righteousness & immortality – real power.

Vv 4 5. Reject lifeless illusions – don't fall for shiny dead things.

So we to open up with Solomon telling us righteousness isn't moralism – it's knowing Elohim.

Immortality isn't a myth – it's rooted in His power.

⁶ Both they that make them, they that desire them, and they that worship them, are lovers of evil things, and are worthy to have such things to trust upon. ⁷ For the potter, tempering soft earth, fashioneth every vessel with much labour for our service: yea, of the same clay he maketh both the vessels that serve for clean uses, and likewise also all such as serve to the contrary: but what is the use of either sort, the potter himself is the judge. ⁸ And employing his labours lewdly, he maketh a vain god of the same clay, even he which a little before was made of

earth himself, and within a little while after returneth to the same, out of the which he was taken, when his life which was lent him shall be demanded.

⁹ Notwithstanding his care is, not that he shall have much labour, nor that his life is short: but striveth to excel goldsmiths and silversmiths, and endeavoureth to do like the workers in brass, and counteth it his glory to make counterfeit things.

¹⁰ His heart is ashes, his hope is more vile than earth, and his life of less value than clay: ¹¹ forasmuch as he knew not his Maker, and him that inspired into him an active soul, and breathed in a living spirit. ¹² But they counted our life a pastime, and our time here a market for gain: for, say they, we must be getting every way, though it be by evil means. ¹³ For this man, that of earthly matter maketh brittle vessels and graven images, knoweth himself to offend above all others.

Now we get into the potter metaphor exposing the foolishness of those who turn clay (and themselves) into false gods, contrasting of course divine providence with our human vanity.

Verse 6 – Lovers of evil things

Romans 1:32 – Idolaters; ***not only do such things but approve of those who practice them.***

John 3:19 Men; ***loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.***

Romans 9 of course!

2 Corinthians 4:7 We have this treasure in jars of clay... to show the power belongs to יהוה.

Mark 8:36 What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

Philippians 3:19 Their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things.

Divine service, not personal display.

Chasing status instead of purpose leaves you empty *even* when you win!

Verses 11–13 they forgot their maker! nihilism + greed = exploitation.
They know they offend – so sinning with awareness increases culpability.

All spirituality begins by acknowledging the One who breathed life into clay.
(Gen. 2:7).

The potter metaphor is supposed to humble us:

We're just shaped clay brethren; not the hand that shapes.

If your walk makes you forget who gave you the breath to travel the path,
you're already bankrupt.

Or as Paul puts it: ***We are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yahusha for good works. (Eph. 2:10)***

¹⁴ And all the enemies of thy people, that hold them in subjection, are most foolish, and are more miserable than very babes. ¹⁵ For they counted all the idols of the heathen to be יהוה s: which neither have the use of eyes to see, nor noses to draw breath, nor ears to hear, nor fingers of hands to handle; and as for their feet, they are slow to go. ¹⁶ For man made them, and he that borrowed his own spirit fashioned them: but no man can make a god like unto himself. ¹⁷ For being mortal, he worketh a dead thing with wicked hands: for he himself is better than the things which he worshippeth: whereas he lived once, but they never. ¹⁸ Yea, they worshipped those beasts also that are most hateful: for being compared together, some are worse than others. ¹⁹ Neither are they beautiful, so much as to be desired in respect of beasts: but they went without the praise of יהוה and his blessing.

Idolatry then is really intellectual regression - when humans – made in elohim's image lower themselves beneath the beasts they worship!

It's of course the prelude to Paul's argument in Romans 1 and perfectly illustrates an inversion: dead and chaotic energies masquerading as divine.

v.14 *Foolish, more miserable than babes.*

Romans 1:22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools.

Romans 1:28 Elohim gives them over to a debased mind – the end result of willful ignorance.

The madness abounds: a spirit-breathing man makes a breathless god. Derivative things cannot replace the source of their own being.

Romans 1:23 They exchanged the glory of the immortal elohim for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

v.17–19 – Mortal man works a dead thing... worshipping hateful beasts... without the praise of Elohim.

The inversion is complete: man bows to what is lower than himself. Idolatry strips man of יהוה's blessing and leaves him with spiritual death feeding energy into dead, hateful forms that can only drain, the worshiper.

Once energy flows into these husks, they drain the worshiper making them actually less human and more beast-like (*Ps. 115:8: Those who make them become like them*).

Idolatry Today: Career, wealth, technology, relationships as “props” mistaken for gods.

Idolatry doesn't just dishonor יהוה – *it actually dehumanizes us.*

Only when we worship the living elohim do we fully live as His image-bearers.

3 Torah examples

Exodus 32:1

The people gathered themselves to Aaron and said, 'Make us gods who shall go before us...' And he received the gold from their hand... and made a golden calf. And they said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.

Man making gods with borrowed breath (v.16): Aaron crafts the idol using borrowed life from Elohim, turning divine gifts (gold from Egypt) into a false god.

Counterfeit glory (32v.9): The calf becomes a festival, but really it is a mockery of יהוה's glory, exactly as Wisdom condemns.

2. The Bronze Serpent (Numbers 21:4–9; 2 Kings 18:4)

Then the יהוה said to Moshe, 'Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole... and if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.'

(Later: Hezekiah broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moshe made, because Israel was burning incense to it; it was called Nehushtan.)

This comes down to the Potter vs. the vessel In Wisdom 15:7, the potter (יהוה) determines a vessel's purpose.

The bronze serpent was good when consecrated for יהוה's purpose (healing), but became cursed when worshiped.

You see; vessels misused become idols (v.8) just as Wisdom criticizes making vain gods from clay, Israel turned a sacred tool into an object of worship.

This explains why Wisdom 15:4 rejects the; *mischievous invention of men* — because: *beauty without a consecrated purpose entices fools but corrupts the soul.*

Finally 3. The Creation of Man (Genesis 2:7)

Then יהוה elohim formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul.

Borrowed breath (v.16 of Wisdom) mocks idol-makers for using יהוה's loaned breath to craft lifeless images.

Genesis 2 reveals why this is so crazy! Man himself is clay brought to life by divine breath— yet he worships dead matter.

But perfect righteousness (v.3): of our text is knowing YHWH as the breath-giver as this is the root of immortality— the Torah here shows man's life is only sustained by elohim's ongoing Spirit, not by anything made.

So the reality of our existence is: we are living vessels of Elohim's breath, not creators of divinity!

And if we forget our origin (יהוה's hands and Spirit), we collapse into false worship and become less than what we were made to be (as Wisdom says in v.17, man is “better than what he worships”).

So in conclusion:

Golden Calf Idolatry makes us less than beasts (intellectual and spiritual regression).

Bronze Serpent idolatry: Even holy things, when misused, become dead idols.

Creation of Man: Our true dignity is as living clay, animated by elohim, not as self-made gods of dust.

Solomon warns: Never confuse tools, vessels, or images for divine power. They are conduits, not gods.