

we find described in verses 1-12 is summed up in verse 13, this verse which is twice quoted in the New Testament as a description of the people.

It is interesting that in verse 13 we find not merely the note that the people draw near with their mouths and honor with their lips but not with their hearts, but the fact that their fear is taught by the precepts of men. This reminds one inevitably of the statement in the New Testament about the people making the Word of God of none effect in their traditions. It is their human precepts and their attempt to put things into a legalistic 1, 2, 3 rule, rather than a desire to penetrate and study into the real spiritual meaning of God's message, that has become characteristic of them. Therefore, verse 14 tells us, God is going to do something marvelous, something wonderful; not something merely commonplace, something everyday and matter-of-fact; but something so beyond what might be expected. The wisdom of their wise men is going to perish and the understanding of their prudent men, to be hid, because they have tried, as described in 15, to hide their counsel from the Lord. They think he does not see them. They use him as far as they can get glory to their land from his temple and his Word, but they do not try to follow the deeper meaning of his teachings. Instead of that, they make alliances with Egypt and Assyria, and look to clever human schemes in order to try to secure their own blessings.

So in verse 16 God says that their turning of things upside down will not accomplish it. They have seen the potter as the clay. They say of him that made them, that he did not make them, that he is not controlling things; but they, with their clever schemes and alliances with Egypt and Assyria, are going to control them.

It is interesting that the very figure used here in verse 16 is used by Paul in Romans 9 in the beginning of his long discussion of God's casting away temporarily his people, Israel. God is the potter and the people are the clay. If one vessel is marred in his hands, he has a right to cast it aside and to use another. He has a right to take a piece of one lump and make it a vessel