

Notes on Hosea Chapter 13

Hosea 13:1 (KJV) *When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.*

When Ephraim spake, there was trembling... Ephraim was a leading tribe in Israel. Jeroboam was from Ephraim (1 Kings 11:26). They were one of the largest tribes. The most prominent place of worship for the Northern kingdom was at Bethel in Ephraim's region. The other tribes feared and respected Ephraim. Ephraim is often used to refer to the totality of the Northern kingdom.

when he offended in Baal, he died.... Their idolatry caused them to fall.

Hosea 13:2 (KJV) *And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.*

they sin more and more ... The calf worship in Dan and Bethel started out as a means by which they would worship Jehovah, albeit a sinful means. It was not long however, until they had totally abandoned the worship of Jehovah and started worshipping Baal. Sin is like this. One may begin small, but before the conscience is seared (Rom. 1:28, 1 Tim. 4:2, Eph. 4:19) they sin "more and more".

all of them the work of the craftsmen... Insofar as they were made by men, obviously they are not gods! (Hos. 8:6, Isa. 40:19-20, Acts 17:24-25).

kiss the calves... They showed great affection toward these idols, affection that was due God (Job 31:26-28, 1 Kings 19:18, Psa. 2:12).

Hosea 13:3 (KJV) *Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.*

they shall be as... Several metaphors are used here to describe how the nation will not long survive because of their sins (cf. Psa. 1:4, 68:2). Contrariwise, those who are faithful and do God's will are firmly established (Deut 28:1-2, 7, 9, 13-14, 2 Sam 7:16, Prov. 12:19, 25:5, 29:14).

Hosea 13:4 (KJV) *Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.*

from the land of Egypt... God has been with them since their birth as a nation, yet they have repeatedly forsaken Him and been unfaithful.

thou shalt know no god but Me... How does one know about Baal? The same way one knows about anything. They inquire and ask questions... These are the things they should have been doing in order to get to know Jehovah (Deut. 6:4-9, 20-25, 12:30, 18:9, 20:16-18, Jer. 10:2, II Kings 16:8-10).

no saviour beside me... Why serve an idol that has no power whatsoever to save you? Only one can save and that is God.

Hosea 13:5-6 (KJV) *I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought. According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.*

in the wilderness... God cared for and provided all Israel needed during their wandering in the wilderness (Deut. 2:7, 8:15-16).

they were filled, and their heart was exalted... When they thought they no longer needed God, then they become haughty and turned to idolatry (Deut. 6:10-12, 8:12-14, Jer. 2:31). Multitudes today fall into the same sin. When one is in need, wandering through a proverbial wasteland, then they call upon God. In times of plenty, however, they tend to become haughty and self-satisfied and then forget about Him.

Hosea 13:7-8 (KJV) *Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them: I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.*

I will be unto them as a lion... a leopard... a bear... These were all dangers that existed in the wilderness which God protected them from. Now these were the least of their worries, God Himself will execute judgment upon them in anger described as a she-bear deprived of her cubs. Perhaps there is no greater example of ferocity than what is described here.

Hosea 13:9 (KJV) *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.*

There is absolutely no good reason for Israel to be destroyed. God is right there willing to save them if they will turn to Him (Acts 17:27, Isa. 55:6, Heb. 3:13).

Hosea 13:10 (KJV) *I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?*

where is any other... Who else but God can save them? They wanted a king to protect them and these very kings led them away from God, 1 Sam. 8:6-7.

Hosea 13:11 (KJV) *I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.*

God wanted to rule over them, yet because of their stubbornness He permitted them to have a king and was angry with them because of it. When the king then turned away from God (particularly Jeroboam) and turned the people away from God, then God removed the king in his anger (1 Kings 13:1-2, 14:7-16).

Hosea 13:12 (KJV) *The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid.*

God has been storing up the sins of the nation as one might store up money and put it away in a jar or bank.

Hosea 13:13 (KJV) *The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.*

sorrows of a travailing woman... Judgment will come upon the nation suddenly and painfully as a woman going into labor (Isa. 13:6-8, Jer. 13:21, 1 Thes. 5:3).

he should not stay long in the place... This statement and the verse following are somewhat difficult to understand but I will give what I believe (at least at this time) to be the correct understanding.

Ephraim is an *unwise son* and therefore must be punished. The punishment is described as the birth process. It is not good, during this process, if the son should remain long in the birth canal or the *place of breaking forth*. Nevertheless, it must be so. God, however will save him from the grave, cf. v.14.

Hosea 13:14 (KJV) *I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.*

I will ransom them... This is saying that the nation will not be totally lost. Yes, they will lose their national identity, but people (descendants) from all of these tribes will be restored back to the land during Judah's return.

repentance shall be hid from mine eyes... For the time being, however, God will not show compassion upon them. He will carry out His judgments.

Hosea 13:15-16 (KJV) *Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels. Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.*

Though he be fruitful among his brethren... Ephraim may have been a preeminent tribe in Israel (v.1), but this will not protect them from God's judgment.

the wind of the LORD shall come up... This wind is the Assyrian nation which shall carry away the people and plunder their treasure (10:5-6).

their infants... their women with child... A more disgusting and disturbing picture could hardly be described and this describes the utter brutality and lack of mercy of the Assyrian armies (10:14-15, Isa. 13:16, Amos 1:13).