

Hosea 10:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods.

Analysis

Trained heifer turned to plowing: 'And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods.' Ephraim like עֵגְלָה מְלֻמְדָּה (eglah melumdah, trained heifer) loving to thresh (דָּשָׁ, dush—pleasant work, eating while working, Deuteronomy 25:4). But God will yoke fair neck for harder work: Ephraim to pull plow, Judah to plow, Jacob to break clods. This demonstrates that refusing disciplined service leads to forced labor. Willing obedience is easier than compulsory service. Christ's yoke is easy compared to sin's bondage (Matthew 11:28-30).

Historical Context

Threshing (trampling grain) was relatively pleasant work for oxen—moving freely, eating grain (Deuteronomy 25:4). Plowing required harder labor: pulling heavy plow through resistant soil. The metaphor describes Israel's preference for covenant benefits (pleasant threshing) without covenant obligations (hard plowing). God's response: yoking them for harder discipline through exile and oppression. Judah mentioned alongside Ephraim suggests both kingdoms eventually experience this harder yoking. Historically, Assyrian and Babylonian servitude proved far harder than covenant service to YHWH would have been. This

demonstrates that resisting God's light discipline results in experiencing heavier discipline.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does preferring 'threshing' (pleasant activity with benefits) over 'plowing' (hard necessary work) describe spiritual immaturity?
2. What does Christ's 'easy yoke' teach about how willing service to God is lighter than resistant slavery to sin?

Interlinear Text

וְאֶפְרַיִם	כַּגֵּל הַ	מְלֻמָּדָה	אֵה בְתִי	לְדֹשׁ	וְאֶנִּי
And Ephraim	is as an heifer	that is taught	and loveth	to tread out	
H669	H5697	H3925	H157	H1758	H589
וְאֶפְרַיִם	עַל	טוֹב	צַמְךָ הַ	אֶרֶץ יִב	וְאֶפְרַיִם
the corn but I passed over	upon her fair	neck	to ride	And Ephraim	
H5674	H5921	H2898	H6677	H7392	H669
וְיִסְדּוּ	יְהוּדָה הַ	יִשְׁדָּד	לֹא	וְיַעֲקֹב:	
shall plow	Judah	shall break his clods		and Jacob	
H2790	H3063	H7702	H0	H3290	

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 4:16 (Parallel theme): For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place.

Jeremiah 50:11 (Parallel theme): Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage, because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls;

Deuteronomy 25:4 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.

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