

Hosea 10:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us?

Analysis

Kingless confession: 'For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us?' The anticipated confession: אין מלך לנו (ein melekh lanu, no king for us) because פִּי לֹא יָרֶאנוּ אֶת־יְהוָה (ki lo yarenu et-YHWH, we feared not the LORD). The rhetorical question: what can human king accomplish without divine blessing? This demonstrates political futility when covenant relationship is broken. Kings cannot substitute for God; human authority depends on divine legitimization. Only Christ the King rules righteously and eternally (Revelation 19:16).

Historical Context

The confession 'we have no king' proved literally true: Israel's last king Hoshea imprisoned by Assyria, kingdom ending without successor (2 Kings 17:4). The rapid succession of assassinations meant many periods effectively kingless. The admission that fearing YHWH is prerequisite for beneficial kingship addresses Israel's core failure: establishing monarchy 'not by Me' (8:4), trusting human rulers rather than divine King. Judges period showed this pattern: when Israel served YHWH, even flawed leaders succeeded; when apostate, even capable kings failed. This demonstrates that political structures succeed only when founded on covenant faithfulness. Church-state relations throughout history confirm this principle.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that 'fearing the LORD' is prerequisite for beneficial government affect Christian political engagement?
2. What does the futility of kingship apart from divine blessing teach about human authority's limitations?

Interlinear Text

ל	א	כ	ל	כ	עַתָּה	וְאָמַר י	א	לְג	וְהַפְלָגָה	לְכָנָה	וְאָמַר י	לְג	וְהַפְלָגָה	לְכָנָה
H3588	H6258		For now they shall say	H559		H369		We have no king	H4428		H0	H3588	H3808	
because we feared	H853		not the LORD	H3068		We have no king	H4428		H4100	do	H0	H6213		לְכָנָה +עֲשָׂה מְהַפְּלָגָה

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 10:15 (Kingdom): So shall Beth-el do unto you because of your great wickedness; in a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.

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

Hosea 10:7 (Kingdom): As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water.

John 19:15 (Kingdom): But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

Genesis 49:10 (Parallel theme): The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Hosea 3:4 (Kingdom): For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim:

Micah 4:9 (Kingdom): Now why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail.