

Hosea 11:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return.

Analysis

Not returning to Egypt, going to Assyria: 'He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return.' Seemingly contradictory to 8:13, 9:3 threatening Egypt-return. Perhaps: not literal Egypt but Assyria will be new taskmaster. Or: they won't return to Egypt (which they're seeking alliance with) but to Assyria (where they'll be exiled). The cause: מֵאֲנֻ לָשׁוּב (me'anu lashuv, they refused to return/repent). This demonstrates that refusing to return to God results in forced return to bondage. Only through Christ do we escape bondage permanently (Galatians 5:1).

Historical Context

Israel's final king Hoshea sought Egyptian alliance while Assyrian vassal (2 Kings 17:4), hoping to avoid Assyrian control. The prophecy indicates this strategy would fail: rather than Egyptian help, Assyrian conquest. 'Assyrian shall be his king' fulfilled literally: Israel became Assyrian province, people deported throughout Assyrian empire. The phrasing emphasizes irony: seeking Egypt's help, they get Assyria's domination. The theological point: refusing to 'return' (repent) to YHWH results in forced 'return' to bondage. Deuteronomy threatened this reversal (Deuteronomy 28:68). Archaeological evidence confirms Assyrian control of northern Israel 732-722 BC.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does refusing to 'return' to God in repentance result in forced 'return' to bondage?
2. What does failure of political alliances (Egypt) teach about trusting human solutions rather than divine deliverance?

Interlinear Text

ל א	לָשׁוּב:	אֶל	אֶרֶץ	מִצְרַיִם!	וְאִשׁ וִר	ה וּא
H3808	He shall not return	H413	into the land	of Egypt	but the Assyrian	H1931
	H7725		H776	H4714	H804	
מֶלֶךְ ו	כִּי	יִמָּאֵן ו	לָשׁוּב:			
shall be his king	H3588	because they refused	He shall not return			
H4428		H3985	H7725			

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 7:16 (References Egypt): They return, but not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

Hosea 8:13 (References Egypt): They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt.

Hosea 10:6 (Kingdom): It shall be also carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

Hosea 9:3 (References Egypt): They shall not dwell in the LORD'S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.

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