

# Hosea 13:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel;  
but when he offended in Baal, he died.

## Analysis

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The tragic reversal: 'When Ephraim spoke, there was trembling; he was exalted in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died' (ke-daber Ephrayim retet nasa hu be-Yisra'el wa-ye'esham ba-Ba'al wa-yamot). Ephraim (Joseph's son, representing the Northern Kingdom) once commanded respect—his words caused trembling, he was lifted up. But Baal worship brought spiritual death. The Hebrew 'asham (offend/become guilty) indicates covenant violation bringing guilt and liability to punishment. 'He died' refers not just to political collapse but spiritual death—separation from God, the source of life. Romans 6:23 declares 'the wages of sin is death.' Idolatry doesn't merely displease God; it severs the relationship with Him who is life itself (John 14:6). This demonstrates that apostasy from the living God always leads to death—spiritual, and often temporal.

## Historical Context

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Ephraim's prominence traced to Joshua (Ephraimite), Samuel (based in Ephraim), and the region's central location and fertility. When Jeroboam I (Ephraimite) led the northern secession, Ephraim became synonymous with the Northern Kingdom. Their size and influence were immense—yet Baal worship, introduced systematically by Jeroboam's calves and intensified under Ahab and Jezebel, led to their destruction. By Hosea's time (mid-8th century BC), despite material prosperity under Jeroboam II, spiritual death was evident: moral corruption, injustice, and idolatry pervaded society. Within decades, Assyria conquered and

deported them (722 BC)—fulfilling this prophecy. Power and prominence mean nothing when covenant with God is broken.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does my society's or church's past faithfulness compare to its present spiritual vitality?
2. What 'Baals'—false gods, ideologies, or values—have I allowed to bring spiritual death to my soul?

## Interlinear Text

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|----------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|-------|-------------------|
| כָּדַבַּר            | אֶפְרַיִם!   | רִתֵּת    | נָשָׂא     | הוא   | בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל     |
| spake                | When Ephraim | trembling | he exalted | H1931 | himself in Israel |
| H1696                | H669         | H7578     | H5375      |       | H3478             |
| וַיֹּאשִׁי           | בַּבַּעַל    | וַיָּמָת: |            |       |                   |
| but when he offended | in Baal      | he died   |            |       |                   |
| H816                 | H1168        | H4191     |            |       |                   |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Hosea 11:2** (Parallel theme): As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.