

Hosea 13:3

Authorized King James Version (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.

Analysis

Transience like vapor: '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.' Four similes describe transience: כַּעֲנַן־בֹּקֶר (ka'anan-boqer, morning cloud), כֶּטֶל מִשְׁכִּים (katal mashkim, early dew), כֶּמֶץ (kemots, chaff) driven from threshing floor, קֶעֱשָׁן (ke'ashan, smoke) from window. All vanish quickly, leaving nothing. This demonstrates that life apart from God is vapor—substance and permanence require covenant relationship. Only Christ gives eternal life transcending transience (John 10:28).

Historical Context

Each metaphor draws from Palestinian climate and agriculture: morning clouds dissipate as sun rises; dew evaporates quickly; chaff blows away during winnowing; smoke disperses from cooking fires. All known to agricultural society, powerfully communicating evanescence. Applied to Israel: their apparent prosperity, strength, security—all temporary, vanishing when divine judgment arrives. Psalm 37:20, 68:2 use similar imagery. Archaeological evidence shows northern kingdom's prosperity ended swiftly in Assyrian conquest—within decades from peak prosperity to total disappearance. This demonstrates that human achievements apart from God lack permanence.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do the four metaphors (cloud, dew, chaff, smoke) emphasize complete, swift vanishing?
2. What does this transience teach about building life on temporal foundations versus eternal Rock (Christ)?

Interlinear Text

לְכִי H3651	יְהִיוּ H1961	כְּעָנָן H6051	בִּקְרֹךְ H1242	וְכֶטֶל H2919
		cloud	Therefore they shall be as the morning	dew
מִשְׁכֵּךְ יָם H7925	הֵלֵךְ H1980	כְּמֶזֶץ H4671	יִסָּע ר H5590	
and as the early	that passeth away	as the chaff	that is driven with the whirlwind	
מִגַּד הָרֶץ H1637	וּכְעָשָׁן H6227	מֵאֶרְבֶּה: H699		
out of the floor	and as the smoke	out of the chimney		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 1:4 (Parallel theme): The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Hosea 6:4 (Parallel theme): O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

Psalms 68:2 (Parallel theme): As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

Isaiah 17:13 (Parallel theme): The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

Daniel 2:35 (Parallel theme): Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.