

Hosea 5:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment.

Analysis

Oppression and worthless worship: 'Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment.' The phrase רצוץ דקוא משפט (retsuts dakku mishpat): 'crushed, trampled in judgment.' This occurred because Ephraim 'willingly walked after the commandment' (וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶפְרַיִם אֶתְנְשָׁלָל, ho'il acharei-tsav)—but which commandment? Not God's but man's (likely Jeroboam's establishment of calf worship, 1 Kings 12:28-33). The Hebrew צָב (tsav) can mean divine command or human tradition. Israel chose human religious innovation over divine revelation. This demonstrates that following false teaching, even zealously, leads to judgment. Only God's Word provides sure foundation (Matthew 7:24-27). Christ alone is the way (John 14:6)—all other paths lead to destruction.

Historical Context

Jeroboam I's 'commandment' establishing golden calves at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:28: 'Behold thy gods, O Israel') initiated northern kingdom's permanent apostasy. Every subsequent king 'walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin' (1 Kings 15:34, etc.). This human tradition, religiously maintained for 200+ years, resulted in national destruction. The phrase 'willingly walked' emphasizes voluntary choice—they preferred convenient false worship over demanding true worship requiring pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This demonstrates that religious tradition contradicting God's Word, no matter how established, leads to judgment. The Reformation similarly confronted human traditions that contradicted Scripture.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How can religious zeal directed toward human traditions rather than God's Word lead to spiritual destruction?
2. What distinguishes godly tradition that preserves biblical truth from human tradition that contradicts it?

Interlinear Text

וְאַתָּה	מִשְׁפָּט	בְּ	כִּי	זֶה	אַפְתָּה	מִן	עַש	וְ	71
because	judgment		then	thus	willingly	you	will	you	is oppressed
H3588	H4941								H6231

בָּל	אַתָּה	אַתָּה	אַתָּה
walked	after	the commandment	
H1980	H310	H6673	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:33 (Parallel theme): The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway:

Micah 6:16 (Parallel theme): For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people.

