

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 רָצוּץ דָּכּוּא מִשְׁפָּט (retsuts dakku mishpat): 'crushed, trampled in judgment.' This occurred because Ephraim 'willingly walked after the commandment' (הוֹאִיל הָלַךְ אַחֲרֵי-צֵו, ho'il halakh 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 צֵו (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

עָשׂ וְיָקֹץ	אֶפְרַיִם יִמָּכֵר	וְיִשָּׁבֵר	בְּיָמֵי הַמִּשְׁפָּט	כִּי יִלְוֶה	הוּא יִלְוֶה
is oppressed	Ephraim	and broken	in judgment	H3588	because he willingly
H6231	H669	H7533	H4941		H2974
וַיֵּלֶךְ	אַחֲרֵי	צִוֵּי			
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 away:

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.

