

# Hosea 5:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.

## Analysis

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Divine judgment as consuming disease: 'Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.' God Himself becomes disease: עַע (ash, moth) eating fabric, רָקָב (raqav, rottenness/decay) corrupting wood. These images depict slow, hidden destruction—not sudden catastrophe but gradual decay. The moth larvae consume from within; rot weakens structural integrity invisibly. Similarly, God's judgment works gradually through historical processes—declining prosperity, political instability, moral corruption—until collapse becomes inevitable. This demonstrates that divine judgment isn't always dramatic intervention but often withdrawal allowing natural consequences. Only Christ halts spiritual decay, making all things new (2 Corinthians 5:17, Revelation 21:5).

## Historical Context

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The moth and rottenness imagery perfectly describes Israel and Judah's decline. Northern Israel's final decades (753-722 BC) saw gradual disintegration: political assassinations, lost territories, economic decline, vassal status to Assyria, final destruction. Judah similarly experienced slow decay: Assyrian vassalage (Ahaz), Babylonian vassalage (Jehoiakim), eventual destruction (586 BC). Archaeological evidence shows declining economic conditions, reduced populations, deteriorating infrastructure through these periods. The imagery warns that judgment already underway may not appear dramatic initially but will certainly culminate in catastrophe. Church history shows similar patterns: denominations experiencing slow doctrinal and moral decline eventually lose all vitality.

## Related Passages

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

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does recognizing God's judgment in gradual cultural and moral decay rather than only sudden catastrophe affect our cultural engagement?
2. What spiritual 'moths' and 'rot' gradually consume Christian faithfulness from within, and how do we address them?

## Interlinear Text

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לֹבֶן יְהוּדָה:	לְאַפְתָּה בְּ	כַּעַשׂ יְמִינָה	וְכַעַשׂ בְּ	לְבַת יְהוּדָה:
H589      as a moth	H6211      Therefore will I be unto Ephraim	H669      as rottenness	H7538      and to the house	H1004

of Judah  
H3063

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 51:8** (Parallel theme): For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

**Job 13:28** (Parallel theme): And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that is moth eaten.