

Hosea 5:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound,
then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet
could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

Analysis

Failed alliances: 'When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.' Recognizing illness ('לָקַח, choli) and wound ('מָזָר, mazor), Israel sought help from Assyria and 'king Jareb' (likely title meaning 'great king' or possibly Jareb is scornful name meaning 'contender'). But political alliances cannot heal spiritual diseases. Human solutions fail for divine problems. Isaiah similarly condemns trusting Egypt rather than God (Isaiah 30:1-3, 31:1-3). Only Christ heals our spiritual wounds (Isaiah 53:5, 1 Peter 2:24). The irony: seeking help from eventual destroyer—Assyria would annihilate northern Israel.

Historical Context

Historically, both Israel and Judah sought Assyrian help. Menahem paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kings 15:19-20). Pekah allied with Syria against Assyria (2 Kings 15:37). Hoshea initially rebelled then submitted (2 Kings 17:3-4). Ahaz of Judah appealed to Assyria against Syria-Israel coalition (2 Kings 16:7-9). Each alliance proved disastrous: Assyria exacted tribute, demanded vassalage, eventually destroyed northern kingdom entirely. This demonstrates that political machinations cannot solve problems rooted in spiritual unfaithfulness. Only returning to God brings healing. Church history parallels: seeking worldly power and political alliances rather than spiritual reformation inevitably weakens the church.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 – Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Why do people persistently seek human solutions for spiritual problems, and what does this reveal about unbelief?
2. How does seeking healing from 'Assyria' (worldly powers) rather than God compound rather than solve problems?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּרְא	אֶת אַפְכָּם	סְלִוָּה	וַיְהִזְבַּח	אֶת	מִזּוֹרָה	וְלֹא
saw	Ephraim	H853	his sickness	and Judah	H853	saw his wound
H7200	H669		H2483	H3063		H4205

וְהַיְה֙ יְהוָה־אֱלֹהִים Ephraim	H413	אֲלֹהֵי־אַשְׁר־יְשַׁלְּחָנָה to the Assyrian	H804	וְשָׁלַחַנָּה and sent	H7971	אֶל־מֶלֶךְ־אֶלְהָיָה to king	H4428	מֶלֶךְ־יְהוָה־יְהוָה Jareb	H1931
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ל	א	יָכַל	לְרַפֵּא	לְכַם	וְלֹא	הִגְבַּה	מִקְרָא	מִזְרָח
H3808	yet could	he not heal	H0	H3808	you nor cure	H4480	saw his wound	
H3201		H7495			H1455			H4205

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 7:11 (Parallel theme): Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.

Hosea 12:1 (Parallel theme): Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt.

Hosea 10:6 (Kingdom): It shall be also carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

Jeremiah 30:12 (Parallel theme): For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous.

Hosea 8:9 (Parallel theme): For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers.

2 Kings 15:19 (Kingdom): And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand.