

Hosea 5:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.

Analysis

God as predator: 'For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.' The escalation from moth/rottenness (v.12) to lion (שָׁחַל, shachal) and young lion (כֶּפִּיר, kefir) intensifies judgment imagery. God Himself becomes devouring predator. The emphatic repetition אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי (anokhi anokhi, 'I, even I') stresses divine agency—not Assyria but YHWH Himself executing judgment through historical means. The progression—tear (טָרַף, taraph), depart, carry off, none rescues—depicts complete, irreversible destruction. This terrifying image shows that fighting against God ensures defeat. Yet paradoxically, Christ is also Lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5) who conquers through self-sacrifice, not devouring others but being devoured for others.

Historical Context

Lion imagery for God appears throughout Scripture (Job 10:16, Lamentations 3:10, Amos 1:2, 3:8). As creator of all, God stands above all creatures, able to use any image to describe His actions. The historical fulfillment came through Assyria (for Israel) and Babylon (for Judah)—nations God explicitly calls 'my servant' (Jeremiah 25:9, 27:6, 43:10). God's sovereignty means He orchestrates historical events to accomplish covenant purposes. The completeness of destruction ('none shall rescue') proved accurate: no alliance, military effort, or political scheme prevented northern kingdom's obliteration. This demonstrates that opposing divine purposes

ensures defeat, but submitting to divine discipline (even painful) leads ultimately to restoration.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the terrifying image of God as lion demonstrate the seriousness of covenant violation and divine holiness?
2. What is the relationship between God executing judgment (as lion) and Christ bearing judgment (as Lamb of God)?

Interlinear Text

כִּי י	אֲנֹכִי י	כַּשׁ חֵל	לְאֶפְרַיִם י	וְכַפֹּף יר		
H3588	H595	as a lion	For I will be unto Ephraim	and as a young lion		
		H7826	H669	H3715		
לְבֵית	יְהוּדָה ה	אֲנִי י	אֶטְרֹף	וְאֵלַי ה	אֶשׁ א	
to the house	of Judah	H589	H589	I even I will tear	H1980	I will take away
H1004	H3063			H2963		H5375
וְאֵין י	מִצִּיל:					
H369	and none shall rescue					
	H5337					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 7:2 (Parallel theme): Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.

Micah 5:8 (Parallel theme): And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.

Psalms 50:22 (Parallel theme): Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.

Isaiah 5:29 (Parallel theme): Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it.

Amos 2:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, neither shall the mighty deliver himself: