

Hosea 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.

Analysis

Known to God: 'I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.' The emphatic אני (ani) אַנְּיָהָתִי אֶפְרַיִם (yada'ti Ephraim): 'I, I know Ephraim'—complete divine knowledge despite human attempts to hide sin. The verb יְדַעַּת (yada', 'know') indicates intimate, comprehensive knowledge—not mere awareness but full understanding of motives, actions, consequences. Israel's harlotry (spiritual adultery) and defilement (אַנְּוֹת, tame'—ceremonial/moral impurity) cannot be hidden from omniscient God. This echoes Psalm 139:1-4: 'O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.' The terrifying reality: all sin occurs in God's full view (Hebrews 4:13). Yet gospel hope: Christ bore our defilement, making us clean (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Historical Context

Ephraim's spiritual harlotry involved Baal worship conducted at hidden shrines, under trees, on mountain tops—attempts to conceal idolatry from public view while maintaining appearance of YHWH worship. The priests and leaders facilitated this deception. Yet God's omniscience penetrates all concealment. Archaeological discoveries of 8th century Israelite worship sites show syncretistic practices: YHWH worship mixed with Asherah poles, Baal imagery, fertility cult elements. What they thought hidden from YHWH (perhaps reasoning that Canaanite gods ruled Canaanite sites) was fully known. This demonstrates that secret sin is impossible—God sees all (Jeremiah 23:23-24).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does awareness of God's omniscient knowledge of all our thoughts and actions affect both conviction of sin and assurance of grace in Christ?
2. What does it mean that despite knowing us fully, God loved us enough to send Christ (Romans 5:8)?

Interlinear Text

עָתָה	כִּי	מִתְּחִילָה	בַּיּוֹם	לֹא	יִשְׁרָאֵל:	אַפְּכֶם	יְהִי עַתָּה	אָנִי
H6258	H3588	H4480	H3582	H3808	is not hid			
I know	Ephraim	and Israel						
H3045	H669	H3478						
הַזְּבִבְנִים	נִטְמָה	אַפְּכֶם	בַּיּוֹם	לֹא	יִשְׁרָאֵל:			
thou committest whoredom	Ephraim	is defiled	and Israel					
H2181	H669	H2930	H3478					

Additional Cross-References

Amos 3:2 (Parallel theme): You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.