

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 אָנִי יָדַעְתִּי אֶפְרַיִם (ani yada'ti Ephraim): 'I, I know Ephraim'—complete divine knowledge despite human attempts to hide sin. The verb יָדַע (yada', 'know') indicates intimate, comprehensive knowledge—not mere awareness but full understanding of motives, actions, consequences. Israel's harlotry (spiritual adultery) and defilement (אָחֲזָה, 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

אָנִי יָדַעְתִּי אֶפְרַיִם וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא נִכְחַד מִמֶּנִּי כִּי עֲתָה
H589 I know Ephraim and Israel H3808 is not hid H4480 H3588 H6258
H3045 H669 H3478 H3582

הַזֵּנָה יָתְּ אֶפְרַיִם אֵת נִטְמָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל
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.