

Hosea 8:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him.

Analysis

Casting off good: 'Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him.' The verb נָזַח (zanach, cast off/reject) applies to טוֹב (tov, good/the good)—God Himself, His law, covenant relationship. Having rejected good, enemy pursues (רָדַף, radaf—chase, hunt). This demonstrates moral cause and effect: rejecting God's goodness invites judgment. Romans 1:28 similarly describes God giving over those who reject knowledge of Him. The good—Torah, covenant, God's presence—protected Israel; rejecting protection invites predators. Only Christ, the Good Shepherd, protects His sheep from enemy pursuit (John 10:11-14, 27-28).

Historical Context

Israel's progressive rejection of 'good' manifested in spurning prophetic warnings (Amos 7:10-13), violating Torah, maintaining idolatry, pursuing foreign alliances rather than trusting God. Each 'good' thing God provided—law, land, covenant, prophets, prosperity—they cast off. The result: enemy pursuit. Assyria's campaigns against Israel were relentless: Tiglath-Pileser III (734-732 BC) took northern territories, Shalmaneser V besieged Samaria (725-722 BC), Sargon II completed conquest (722 BC). Once rejected divine protection, historical enemies prevailed. This demonstrates that God's law, far from burdensome restriction, is protective covenant. Rejecting it ensures vulnerability.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What 'good' things from God do people today 'cast off,' and what consequences follow?
2. How does understanding God's law as protective covenant rather than arbitrary restriction change our view of obedience?

Interlinear Text

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| זָנַח | יִשְׂרָאֵל | טוֹב | אֹיֵב | יִרְדְּפוּ: |
| hath cast off | Israel | the thing that is good | the enemy | shall pursue |
| H2186 | H3478 | H2896 | H341 | H7291 |

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 3:66 (Parallel theme): Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the LORD.