

Hosea 8:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.

Analysis

Unauthorized kingship and idols: 'They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.' Two indictments:

1. political—kings established *לֹא מִמְּנִי* (lo mimmenni, not from Me), princes without divine approval (*לֹא יִדְעָתִי*, lo yada'ti, I knew not)
2. religious—using wealth for idol-making leading to destruction.

This demonstrates that autonomous political and religious systems apart from divine authority ensure judgment. Human sovereignty must submit to divine sovereignty. Only Christ rules by divine right (Revelation 19:16), establishing legitimate authority.

Historical Context

From northern kingdom's inception under Jeroboam I (931 BC)—not Davidically legitimate—through violent succession of dynasties (Jeroboam's, Baasha's, Omri's, Jehu's), kings ruled 'not by God.' Political authority lacked divine sanction, contrasting with Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-16). The rapid turnover (especially post-Jeroboam II) demonstrated instability of human-established authority. Simultaneously, wealth (silver, gold) funded idol production rather than temple/tabernacle. Archaeological findings show metal idols and cult objects from

this period. The phrase 'that they may be cut off' (למען יכרת, lema'an yikkaret) indicates purpose: their idol-making ensures their destruction.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does establishing authority structures 'not by God' lead to instability and eventual collapse?
2. What modern parallels exist to using resources ('silver and gold') for creating idols—investing in what ultimately destroys?

Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 16:31 (Kingdom): And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel

the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

Hosea 13:2 (Creation): And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.

Hosea 2:8 (Parallel theme): For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.

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