

Hosea 8:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?

Analysis

Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?' Ironical reversal: Israel thought they possessed the calf-idol, but the calf 'cast them off' - rejected/abandoned them. Powerless idols can't help, only harm. 'Mine anger kindled' announces divine wrath. 'How long ere they attain innocency?' expresses longing for their repentance. This demonstrates idolatry's futility and God's patience. The calf (Jeroboam's golden calves) couldn't save, only provoke divine anger. Yet God desires their innocence (restoration). Christ provides both: removes idols and grants innocence through His righteousness.

Historical Context

Jeroboam I's golden calves at Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:28-30) became northern kingdom's defining sin. For 200+ years they maintained this idolatry despite prophetic warnings. Assyria destroyed these shrines (2 Kings 17:24-33). The irony: they trusted calves for protection, but calves 'cast them off' - abandoning them to judgment. This demonstrates idolatry's universal pattern: trusted things fail when needed most. Only true God saves; all substitutes disappoint.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What idols have I trusted that will ultimately 'cast me off' - prove powerless when I need them?
2. How does God's longing question ('how long?') demonstrate both His anger at sin and desire for repentance?

Interlinear Text

הָטַח	עֵגֶלָּךְ	שָׁמֶר וְ	חָכָה	אֶפֶּי	בְּ	עַד
hath cast	Thy calf	O Samaria	is kindled	thee off mine anger	H0	H5704
H2186	H5695	H8111	H2734	H639		
מֵתֵי	לֹא	יִכָּלֵוּ	נִקְיִין:			
H4970	against them	how long will it be ere	they attain	to innocency		
	H3808	H3201	H5356			

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 10:5 (Parallel theme): The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Beth-aven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.

Jeremiah 13:27 (Parallel theme): I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?

Proverbs 1:22 (Parallel theme): How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?