

Hosea 9:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baal-peor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.

Analysis

God's nostalgic lament: 'I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.' The imagery recalls election's early joy: finding grapes in desert (unexpected delight) and first-ripe figs (choice fruit, highly prized). Israel's wilderness generation showed promise. But 'they went to Baalpeor' (Numbers 25:1-9), where they engaged in sexual immorality and idolatry with Moabite women, provoking plague that killed 24,000. 'Separated themselves unto that shame' (yinnazeru la-boshet)—consecrating themselves to shameful idols instead of YHWH. This pattern persisted: early promise followed by apostasy. The tragic trajectory: chosen for glory, descending into shame through idolatry.

Historical Context

The Baalpeor incident (Numbers 25, circa 1406 BC) occurred just before entering Canaan. Balaam's failed curses (Numbers 22-24) couldn't stop Israel, but he apparently counseled Moab to seduce them into idolatry (Numbers 31:16, Revelation 2:14). Sexual immorality and idol worship intertwined—Baal worship incorporated cult prostitution. God's jealous response (plague) demonstrated that covenant unfaithfulness provokes severe judgment. Hosea uses this historical

example to indict contemporary Israel: they've repeated the Baalpeor pattern throughout their history. Psalm 106:28-29 also recalls this shameful episode. The warning applies: those who begin well can fall into shameful apostasy if they don't guard their hearts. Paul warns: 'let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' (1 Corinthians 10:12).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does my current spiritual state compare to my 'first love' when I initially encountered God's grace?
2. What modern 'Baalpeors'—enticing compromises with the world—threaten to turn my devotion into shameful idolatry?

Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 11:13 (Parallel theme): For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal.

Hosea 4:14 (Parallel theme): I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall.

Ezekiel 20:8 (Parallel theme): But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

Hosea 2:15 (Parallel theme): And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

Micah 7:1 (Parallel theme): Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit.

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