

Hosea 9:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.

Analysis

Glory departed like bird: 'As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.' The כָּבֹד (kavod, glory)—honor, splendor, prosperity—flies away כְּעֵזֶב (ka'of, like bird), taking מִלְּדָה עִמּוֹתֶן וּמִתְּהִירָה (milledah umibeten umeheryaon, from birth and from womb and from conception). This describes total demographic collapse: no births, miscarriages, infertility—covenant blessings (Deuteronomy 28:4,11) reversed. Population growth, sign of blessing, becomes depletion—sign of curse. Only Christ restores fruitfulness, multiplying spiritual children (John 15:5, Galatians 4:27).

Historical Context

Archaeological and historical evidence shows Assyrian conquest devastated northern Israel's population through killing, deportation, and importing foreigners (2 Kings 17:6,24). The region never recovered demographically as Israelite population. 'Glory' (prosperity, population, power) that characterized Jeroboam II era (territorial expansion, economic growth) vanished swiftly—within 30 years from his death to kingdom's end. The bird imagery suggests sudden, irreversible departure. The triple phrase (birth/womb/conception) working backward emphasizes totality: not merely infant mortality but inability to conceive at all. Deuteronomy covenant curses specifically threatened this (Deuteronomy 28:18). This demonstrated that covenant blessing includes fertility; curse brings barrenness.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does demographic collapse ('glory fly away like bird') demonstrate comprehensive covenant curse?
2. What does the New Testament promise of spiritual fruitfulness teach about Christ reversing covenant curses?

Interlinear Text

As for Ephraim	like a bird	shall fly away	their glory	from the birth
H669	H5775	H5774	H3519	H3205
וְאַפְתָּרֵם כְּאָבֶן יְנַפְּעֶה מִכְבָּרֶת הַמְּלִיכָּה				
and from the womb	and from the conception			
H990	H2032			

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:18 (Parallel theme): Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Hosea 10:5 (Glory): 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.

Hosea 9:14 (Parallel theme): Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.

Hosea 4:7 (Glory): As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.

