

Hosea 9:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.

Analysis

Ephraim smitten: 'Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.' Triple judgment: נִכָּה (nikkah, smitten/struck), root יָבֵשׁ (yavesh, dried up), לא יַעֲשׂוּ־פֶרִי (lo ya'asu-feri, no fruit). Even if bearing fruit, God will kill אֶת־מַחֲמַדֵּי בִטְנָם (et-machamaddei vitnam, beloved/desirable ones of womb). This describes comprehensive barrenness—covenant curses (Deuteronomy 28:18) executed. Without divine blessing, fruitlessness prevails. Only Christ restores fruitfulness (John 15:1-8).

Historical Context

The agricultural metaphor (smitten plant, dried root, no fruit) describes Ephraim's coming destruction. Assyrian conquest fulfillment: population killed or deported, land given to foreigners, northern tribes ceasing to exist as distinct entity. The phrase 'slay beloved fruit of womb' refers to children killed in warfare. Ancient Near Eastern warfare routinely targeted children to prevent future resistance. Archaeological evidence of mass graves from Assyrian campaigns confirms this horror. Deuteronomy threatened this curse (Deuteronomy 28:18,53-57). This demonstrated that covenant violation brings comprehensive judgment affecting every aspect of life—nothing escapes curse.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the metaphor of dried roots and no fruit describe comprehensive judgment affecting all life aspects?
2. What does Christ's promise to make us fruitful (John 15:5) teach about gospel reversing covenant curses?

Interlinear Text

הָכָה	אֶפְרַיִם	שָׁרֶשׁ	יָבֵשׁ	פֶּרִי	בְּלִי	יַעֲשׂוּן	גַּם
is smitten	Ephraim	their root	is dried up	no fruit	H1097	they shall bear	H1571
H5221	H669	H8328	H3001	H6529		H6213	
כִּי	יָלֵדוּן	וְהִמַּתִּי	מִחֲמַדִּי	בְּטֶנָּה:			
H3588	yea though they bring forth	yet will I slay	even the beloved	fruit of their womb			
	H3205	H4191	H4261	H990			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 5:24 (Parallel theme): Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Ezekiel 24:21 (Parallel theme): Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the

desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword.

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