

Hosea 9:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They shall not dwell in the LORD'S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.

Analysis

Land forfeited: 'They shall not dwell in the LORD's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.' The הָרָצָה (erets YHWH, LORD's land)—promised land forfeited. Result: return to Egypt (bondage) and eating unclean (טָהֹרֶת, tame) in Assyria. This reverses Exodus deliverance and Torah provision. Covenant violation results in covenant blessings lost. Deuteronomy warned this consequence (Deuteronomy 28:64-68). Only through Christ do we inherit eternal land—new creation that cannot be forfeited (Hebrews 11:16, Revelation 21:1-4).

Historical Context

The land was YHWH's possession (Leviticus 25:23), granted to Israel conditionally (Deuteronomy 4:25-26). Exile from land represented ultimate covenant curse. 'Return to Egypt' occurred both literally (refugees fleeing to Egypt) and symbolically (Assyrian bondage resembling Egyptian slavery). Eating unclean in Assyria means loss of dietary laws governing covenant holiness—unable to maintain Torah observance in pagan lands. Archaeological evidence shows northern Israelite deportees resettled throughout Assyrian empire, losing cultural/religious distinctiveness. This demonstrated that land was gift, not entitlement—conditional on faithfulness. Israel's presumption on unconditional possession proved false.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does exile from 'LORD's land' demonstrate that covenant blessings are conditional on covenant faithfulness?
2. What does the New Testament promise of eternal inheritance teach about the superiority of Christ's covenant to Sinai covenant?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	יִשְׁבֶּה	בְּאֶרֶץ	יְהוָה	וְשַׁבַּב	אֶפְרַיִם
H3808	They shall not dwell	land	in the LORD'S	shall return	but Ephraim
	H3427	H776	H3068	H7725	H669
מִצְרַיִם	וּבְאָשָׁר	טַהֲרַת	וְאָכְלֻוּ:		
to Egypt	things in Assyria	unclean	and they shall eat		
H4714	H804	H2931	H398		

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 4:13 (References Lord): And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them.

Hosea 8:13 (References Lord): They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt.

Leviticus 25:23 (Parallel theme): The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.

Jeremiah 2:7 (Parallel theme): And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.

Jeremiah 16:18 (Parallel theme): And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcases of their detestable and abominable things.

Deuteronomy 4:26 (Parallel theme): I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.

Deuteronomy 28:63 (References Lord): And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

1 Kings 9:7 (Parallel theme): Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people:

Hosea 7:11 (References Egypt): Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.

2 Kings 17:6 (Parallel theme): In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.