

Pastor Grady Covin
The Mission
March 10, 2026

Hosea 13

If you have your Bible, again we're in the book of Hosea, and tonight we'll be looking at chapter 13.

**13:1, When Ephraim spoke, trembling,
He exalted himself in Israel;
But when he offended through Baal worship, he died.**

**2 Now they sin more and more,
And have made for themselves molded images,
Idols of their silver, according to their skill;
All of it is the work of craftsmen.**

**They say of them,
“Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!”**

**3 Therefore they shall be like the morning cloud
And like the early dew that passes away,
Like chaff blown off from a threshing floor
And like smoke from a chimney.**

**4 “Yet I am the Lord your God
Ever since the land of Egypt,
And you shall know no God but Me;
For there is no savior besides Me.**

**5 I knew you in the wilderness,
In the land of great drought.**

**6 When they had pasture, they were filled;
They were filled and their heart was exalted;
Therefore they forgot Me.**

**7 “So I will be to them like a lion;
Like a leopard by the road I will lurk;**

**8 I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs;
I will tear open their rib cage,
And there I will devour them like a lion.
The wild beast shall tear them.**

**9 “O Israel, you are destroyed,
But your help is from Me.**

**10 I will be your King;
Where is any other,
That he may save you in all your cities?
And your judges to whom you said,
‘Give me a king and princes’?**

**11 I gave you a king in My anger,
And took him away in My wrath.**

**12 “The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up;
His sin is stored up.**

**13 The sorrows of a woman in childbirth shall come upon
him. He is an unwise son,
For he should not stay long where children are born.**

**14 “I will ransom them from the power of the grave;
I will redeem them from death.
O Death, I will be your plagues!**

O Grave, I will be your destruction!

Pity is hidden from My eyes.”

**15 Though he is fruitful among his brethren,
An east wind shall come;
The wind of the Lord shall come up from the wilderness.
Then his spring shall become dry,
And his fountain shall be dried up.
He shall plunder the treasury of every desirable prize.**

**16 Samaria is held guilty,
For she has rebelled against her God.
They shall fall by the sword,
Their infants shall be dashed in pieces,
And their women with child ripped open.**

Let's pray.

So we're coming to the end of the book of Hosea and Hosea in this chapter is more less finishing up the work of being the covenant prosecutor.

Back then, that was the primary job of the prophets. It wasn't necessarily to tell the future; they weren't fortune tellers; but they were there called by God to explain to the people, how God would react to them, in regard to how they dealt with the covenant.

If they obeyed the covenant, then blessing would come upon them. But if they disobeyed the covenant, then God's judgment would come. And so the prophet would come, and he would lay out God's case against the people.

And in this chapter, that's what he has done and he relays to them the truth that God has finally declared them guilty and then he shows them what their sentence will be.

So he's wrapping it all up. And then in the next chapter, he's going to give them one last thing. He's going to tell them where their hope can be found.

But here in this chapter, his main point is that God, after all the evidence has been presented, God has found them guilty.

And so he starts off in verse one by saying this.

13:1, When Ephraim spoke, trembling, He exalted himself in Israel;

Remember, again Ephraim is the largest tribe in the north, and so Hosea has been using Ephraim, the largest tribe, as one name for the entirety of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Not only because it was the predominant tribe, but also because it was the tribe from which Jeroboam, the king, had come from. And that all started, if you'll remember, when they broke away from the sons of David and the kingdom split.

And so he says, **he spoke trembling.**

And the idea here is that there was a time when Ephraim was exalted. There was a time when he was powerful and when Ephraim spoke, the people trembled. But then something happened to him?

He says, **But when he offended through Baal worship, he died.**

So this is the verdict being passed down by the judge. This is the death sentence that God is passing down to Ephraim and to the northern kingdom.

God had blessed them originally, but because they had turned from him and started worshiping the Baals, and because they had continued in their sin, and wouldn't turn from their evil ways and repent, God has no

choice but to pass down this sentence upon them, which is the death of that kingdom.

Now, they weren't dead yet. And so at this moment, they were still a nation. They still hadn't been conquered by the Assyrians at this point, but it was coming. And so it was as if they were on death row, awaiting their death date.

And so God declares Ephraim judicially dead. It's very similar to when Adam and Eve died spiritually. When they sinned, God had said, the day that you eat of the tree, you will die. Well, did they actually die physically that day?

No, technically they were still living. But they did die spiritually, in that they were forever separated from God, and as long as they lived on this earth they lived under this sentence of death.

And so that's what has come here. God is wrapping up his case against his people, and especially the Northern Kingdom. And he has declared the death sentence upon Ephraim because of their false worship.

And then he goes forth and he points out their sin. And in verse 2 he says,

**2 Now they sin more and more,
And have made for themselves molded images,
Idols of their silver, according to their skill;
All of it is the work of craftsmen.**

He says they've turned from me and they've become idolaters just like all the other nations round about them. And they were warned not to do that. The first commandment, says you're to worship no other gods. The second commandment said you're to make no graven images. But it's not just that they fell into it every once in a while. This was now the norm for

the entire Northern Kingdom. They were using all their skills, and all of their resources to make these golden calves so they could worship them.

They were obsessed with these false gods, and instead of worshipping the one true God, the one who had brought them out of Egypt, and into a covenant with himself, and the One who had loved them, and the One who had betrothed himself to them, and the One who had cared for them, they chose these golden calves.

Then he says, **They say of them, “Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!”**

In other words, they were giving their entire devotion to these golden calves. And that was the great sin of the North. We read that earlier in the book, when it said that every single king, from Jeroboam on, had turned to the worship of these golden calves. And they were still doing it. They were kissing these false gods. And giving their reverence, and their worship to these golden calves instead of to the one true and living God.

And it says, therefore, because they are living in idolatry, the death sentence will come. And in verse 3,

**3 Therefore they shall be like the morning cloud
And like the early dew that passes away,
Like chaff blown off from a threshing floor
And like smoke from a chimney.**

Four different pictures of how they will be judged. It'll be like the morning dew. It's there in the morning, but by noon it's gone; it's burned up. It'll be like the chaff when the winds blow. They'll be there one minute and gone the next. Or like the smoke from a chimney that gets blown away by the wind and eventually is no more.

And he's saying, even though you've been my people and you'll be my people forever, you're going to be like all these things for awhile. You're going to lose everything.

Then he says in verse 4,

4 “Yet I am the Lord your God Ever since the land of Egypt, And you shall know no God but Me; For there is no savior besides Me.

He reminds them, he says, I'm the God who made a covenant with you. I adopted you and I brought you out of Egypt and I brought you to myself. And you were supposed to have no other gods before me.

But just like Hosea's wife, Gomer, the harlot, who kept running away from her husband, and going after other men, you went after other gods. And he's reminding them that they were to give their love to no one else; only to God alone.

And then He reminds them that there's no other Savior besides Him. In other words, there's only One way to salvation and that's through Him. These other gods, they have nothing to offer them, just like the world has nothing to offer a Christian.

What could the world possibly give us, that God can't give better?

He says,

5 I knew you in the wilderness, In the land of great drought.

God was with them in the wilderness, just Him and them and there He provided for them. But what did they do?

Verse 6,

6 When they had pasture, they were filled; They were filled and their heart was exalted; Therefore they forgot Me.

Instead of giving thanks that God took care of them, when they finally did come into the promised land and when they had their own land that God had given to them, they forgot about Him, and they turned away from him, which is exactly what he predicted they would do way back in the book of Deuteronomy.

Instead of being thankful for all the mercy and grace he had showed them, and all the provisions he had poured out upon them, when they became rich and wealthy and had everything they needed, they turned from Him.

And how many times do we see that today? When people are in need, they cling to Jesus. But when Jesus provides for their needs and brings them out of a difficult time, and they have what they need, then they forget all about Him. And they give thanks to the gods of this world, and they leave the church, and they leave God, and they go and serve the gods of this world instead.

And so in verse 7 & 8 God says,

**7 “So I will be to them like a lion;
Like a leopard by the road I will lurk;
8 I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs;
I will tear open their rib cage,
And there I will devour them like a lion.
The wild beast shall tear them.**

No longer will I be like the shepherd of Israel who protects His sheep from the lion and from the leopard and from the bear and from all these things that could destroy them.

But because the sheep have grown fat and gone out on their

own, and because they didn't want His protection, He Himself becomes like the wild animals that seek to destroy them.

He comes now, not to shepherd the people, but rather like a ravenous animal to destroy them, because of their sin. Because they would not hold fast to Him, and because they were ungrateful. He would have saved them, just like he said, because He alone is their Savior. But now, because they have rebelled, He now becomes their destroyer.

That's what he tells them in verse 9. He says,

9 “O Israel, you are destroyed, But your help is from Me.

10 I will be your King; Where is any other, That he may save you in all your cities? And your judges to whom you said, 'Give me a king and princes'?

11 I gave you a king in My anger, And took him away in My wrath.

12 “The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; His sin is stored up.

So he says Israel, you're destroyed. It could be translated, you've destroyed yourself, or you're your own destroyer, because of your sin. By turning from me, you've destroyed yourselves.

He says, I was your deliverer. I was your helper. But you kept turning from me. I would help you as your king. And you needed me as a king. You didn't need another king.

And then he asks them. Are these kings that you have now, can they save you? These judges and these princes that you have now, can they save you?

He's like, no. He's like, why do you even have any? They can't do anything for you.

And he's referring back to the first time Israel asked for a king, when they wanted to be like the rest of the nations. And they cried out to Samuel, and they said, "Give us a king like all the other nations round us!".

Well, at the time, Israel had a king. God was their king. And when Samuel got angry at the people for asking, God told Samuel, He said, "Don't be angry. They haven't rejected you as their judge, they've rejected me as their king!"

And then later on when the northern and southern kingdoms split, Israel chose Jeroboam as their king instead of one from the line of David. And so God in his wrath and in his anger, gave them that king. And then he kept giving them kings in the northern kingdom, and everyone of them were wicked. There was not one good king in the whole of the northern kingdom.

And then in his wrath, he had been taking those kings away one by one. And if you read the history during this time, you'll find one king after another being murdered. One evil king after another was murdered by the next one.

And so He says, I gave you a king. That's what you wanted in rejecting me. But I also took away these kings to show you that there is no king really, but me. I'm the only one who could deliver you. But you keep rejecting me and seeking the help of men.

And again, is this not a picture of many today who profess to be Christians, who profess Christ as their Lord and Savior, and they follow Him for awhile, but they get distracted by the things of this world and they turn back to their old ways and they forget about God and go back to trusting in the things of this world that can't possibly give them what they're really longing for.

This is the seed in the parable of the sower that was sown among the thorns and when it tried to grow, it was choked out by the thorns and the weeds.

And then he comes up with this odd saying in verse 13.

13 The sorrows of a woman in childbirth shall come upon him. He is an unwise son, For he should not stay long where children are born.

So he starts off with the idea of a pregnant woman who's ready to deliver. And she's in pain, but she's not focusing on her pain, she's looking forward to the relief and to the joy that's about to come when the child is born.

But then he turns to the idea of a child who is unwise. In the Hebrew, it means a foolish son. And what he's describing is a child, when it's time to be born, the child won't leave the womb.

And what happens if the child won't leave the womb during childbirth? Well, eventually both the mother and the child will both die.

And he says, Israel, that's a picture of you. I've brought you to the point where you should have been born into a new life; to a point where you should be willing to repent.

And you see the pains of my judgment that's about to come upon you. And it should drive you to repentance, to be born new as a nation. But you refuse to be born. And because you have refused to be born, you're going to die.

Just like a child who stays in the womb too long and refuses to be born, you're going to die. And he's referring to Israel as both the woman and the child, because both will die. When the judgment of God comes, everything is going to be destroyed. The people and the nation are going to die.

And then in verse 14, he says,

14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be your clings. O grave, I will be your destruction. Pity is hidden from my eyes.

So here, the whole mood changes now. It goes from talking about the destruction, and the sentence of death upon a nation, to God saying, He will be the destroyer of death itself. He will destroy death.

Now, when he says, that pity is hidden from His eyes, he's not talking about not showing pity himself. He's not painting the picture of a God who has no pity.

What he's saying is that, there's no sorrow before His eyes from the people. In other words, there's no repentance He can see among the people.

And so His judgment is going to come, and destruction is going to come, but a remnant will be saved. Even though Israel is about to be totally destroyed, God has a plan to rescue His elect from the grave.

And we that would come ultimately come by way of Jesus when came to this earth to save the church, and in the end, when Jesus comes again, and a remnant of Jews will be saved at His second coming.

And so even though Israel is under the death sentence in the here and now, God will still deliver his elect in time. He will bring them back from the dead and cause them to be born again.

This is very similar to what happened in the book of Ezekiel, where Ezekiel is told to go and preach to the dry bones. And he sees the dead bones in the valley, and he preaches, and all these dead skeletons come together and receive a new life. And God is reminding them, that they can't thwart the purposes of God. God will always have a people.

And though they have sinned, and are under the penalty of death in the here and now, God can and God will redeem His true people, even from the grave.

And then He goes back to their judgment, and in verse 15 he says,

15 Though he is fruitful among his brethren, An east wind shall come; The wind of the Lord shall come up from the wilderness. Then his spring shall become dry, And his fountain shall be dried up. He shall plunder the treasury of every desirable prize.

This idea of fruitful is a play on the name of Ephraim. The name Ephraim, in the Hebrew, means to be fruitful. And Israel was told, in the blessing under Jacob, that he would be very fruitful. But now this fruitful Ephraim is under a death sentence, and he's about to be all dried up.

When the east wind comes, and we talked about that before; of how the east winds coming from the east have blown over the desert. And when the wind blows from **that** direction, it brings dryness. And it's scorching hot, and it destroys everything in sight.

And that's what he's saying. Ephraim or Israel, even though you were fruitful, because you have chosen to turn from Me, and to live in sin, you're going to be dried up. You're going to lose everything.

The Assyrians are going to come, and we know from history that they did come, and they plundered everything, and they destroyed everything, and then they took the few people who were left away into exile.

And then the last verse, verse 16.

16 Samaria is held guilty, For she has rebelled against her God. They shall fall by the sword, Their infants shall be dashed in pieces, And their women with child ripped open.

Remember, Samaria is the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. And so now, speaking of the whole nation under the capital, He declares them guilty.

Remember, that's how this section started. It started with the death penalty.

Well, now God has finished his case. And he's declaring the northern kingdom of Samaria, of Israel, or Ephraim, as guilty. There's no pleading out. There's no defense. God has tried Israel, and she's been found guilty of rebelling against God, and refusing to repent.

And so she will fall by the sword. Their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child will be ripped up. And this is exactly what happened in 722 B.C. when the Assyrians came in, and like savages they wiped them all out, and then took what was left into captivity. They ruthlessly slaughtered their women and children. And that was the end of the northern kingdom.

But thank God that wasn't the end of the story. In fact, the story continues even today. But God hasn't changed. And He's still a jealous God, and He's still a Holy God, and though we can't live a life good enough to please Him in our own strength; thank God He's made a way for us to be saved. And through Jesus Christ, and because of what He did on Calvary to pay for our sins, we do have a way to be saved. And that way is for the Jew and the Gentile alike.

And all He wants is from us is to be willing to humble ourselves, and to admit our sin and to admit our inability to save ourself, and then confess our sin, and repent of our sin, and be willing to follow Him wherever He leads. He was Israel's only hope, and He's our only hope. Amen.