

Hosea 13 Commentary

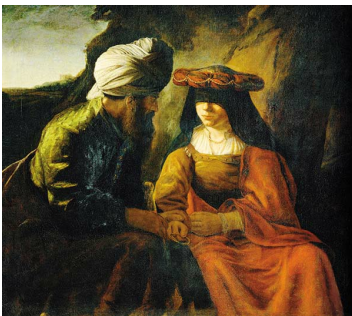
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Hosea's Unconditional Love for Gomer



Source: ESV Global Study Bible

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Hosea 13:1 When Ephraim spoke, there was trembling. He exalted himself in Israel, But through Baal he did wrong and died.

- Ephraim: 1Sa 15:17 Pr 18:12 Isa 66:2 Lu 14:11
- exalted: Nu 2:18-21 10:22 13:8,16 27:16-23 Jos 3:7 1Ki 12:25
- offended: Ho 11:2 1Ki 16:29-33 18:18,19 2Ki 17:16-18
- died: Ge 2:17 Ro 5:12 2Co 5:14

When Ephraim spoke, there was trembling. He exalted himself in Israel, But through Baal he did wrong and died(spiritually)

Matthew Henry - While Ephraim kept up a holy fear of God, and worshipped Him in that fear, so long he was very considerable. When Ephraim forsook God, and followed idolatry, he sunk. Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves, in token of their adoration of them, affection for them, and obedience to them; but the Lord will not give his glory to another, and therefore all that worship images shall be confounded. No solid, lasting comfort, is to be expected any where but in God. God not only took care of the Israelites in the wilderness, he put them in possession of Canaan, a good land; but worldly prosperity, when it feeds men's pride, makes them forgetful of God. Therefore the Lord would meet them in just vengeance, as the most terrible beast that inhabited their forests. Abused goodness calls for greater severity.

Hosea 13:2 And now they sin more and more, And make for themselves molten images, Idols skillfully made from their silver, All of them the work of craftsmen. They say of them, "Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!"

- now: Nu 32:14 2Ch 28:13 33:23 Isa 1:5 30:1 Ro 2:5 2Ti 3:13
- sin more and more: Heb. add to sin
- have made: Ho 2:8 8:4 10:1 Ps 115:4-8 Isa 46:6 Jer 10:4 Hab 2:18,19
- according: Ho 11:6 Ps 135:17,18 Isa 44:17-20 45:20 46:8 Jer 10:8 Ro 1:22-25
- the men that sacrifice: or, the sacrificers of men
- kiss: 1Sa 10:1 1Ki 19:18 Ps 2:12 Ro 11:4

And now they sin more and more, And make for themselves molten images, Idols skillfully made from their silver, All of them the work of craftsmen.

They say of them, "Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves"What a tragic picture of spiritual deception! Instead of worshiping the living God, the people expressed devotion by kissing golden calves, a customary act of homage and allegiance to an idol (cf. 1Ki 19:18). Such behavior appears utterly irrational, but that is precisely what happens when people exchange the truth of God for the lie (Ro 1:25). Having rejected God's truth, God gave them over to futile thinking, darkened minds, and hardened hearts (Ro 1:21-28; Eph. 4:17-19). The result was not only the absurdity of kissing lifeless idols but, ultimately, even sacrificing their own children to false gods (cf. Ps. 106:37-38; Jer. 19:5). This is the devastating progression of idolatry from believing a lie which leads to spiritual blindness, moral insanity, and ever-deepening bondage to sin.

THOUGHT - MARK IT DOWN - Whatever replaces God as the object of our devotion will eventually shape our thinking, control our affections, and determine our destiny. Has anything replaced God as the King of your heart? If so, identify it, confess and repent, for there is nothing more beautiful than the Name of Jesus!

Hosea 13:3 Therefore they will be like the morning cloud And like dew which soon disappears, Like chaff which is blown away from the threshing floor And like smoke from a chimney.

- as the morning: Ho 6:4
- as the chaff: Ps 1:4 68:2 83:12-17 Isa 17:13 41:15,16 Da 2:35

Therefore they will be like the morning cloud And like dew which soon disappears, Like chaff which is blown away from the threshing floor And like smoke from a chimney

Hosea 13:4 Yet I have been the LORD your God Since the land of Egypt; And you were not to know any god except Me, For there is no savior besides Me.

- I am: Ho 12:9 Ex 20:2 Ps 81:9,10 Isa 43:3,10 44:6-8
- for: Isa 43:11-13 45:21,22 Ac 4:12

Related Passages:

Isaiah 45:21-22 "Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me. 22"Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Yet I have been the LORD your God Since the land of Egypt; And you were not to know any god except Me, For there is no savior besides Me - The LORD reminds Israel of His unique covenant relationship with them, which began when He redeemed them from slavery in Egypt. From the Exodus onward, He alone had been their God, Protector, Provider, and Savior. Therefore, they were to acknowledge no other god, for every idol and every false refuge was powerless to save. Throughout Hosea, the prophet contrasts the futility of trusting in foreign alliances (Hos. 5:13; 7:11; 8:9-10; 14:3), military strength (Hos. 8:14; 10:13), and material prosperity (Hos. 9:6; 12:8) with the security found in trusting the LORD alone (Hos. 6:1-3; 10:12; 14:8). God's declaration, "**there is no Savior besides Me,**" affirms His absolute uniqueness and anticipates Isaiah's repeated proclamation that "I am the LORD, and there is no other" (Isa. 44:6; 45:5-6, 20-22). The lesson is timeless: God's people are always tempted to place their confidence in human resources rather than in Him, but true deliverance belongs to the Lord alone (cf. Ps. 20:7; Jonah 2:9).

Henry Morris - There is no true God but the Creator, and there is no Savior but that same Creator. Israel was reminded here--as we should be today--that the only God who is real is both Creator and Savior. No other imagined deity or force of nature can accomplish either creation or salvation.

Hosea 13:5 I cared for you in the wilderness, In the land of drought.

- know: Ex 2:25 Ps 1:6 31:7 142:3 Na 1:7 1Co 8:3 Ga 4:9
- in the wilderness: De 2:7 8:15 32:10 Jer 2:2,6
- great drought: Heb. droughts, Ps 63:1

I cared for you in the wilderness, In the land of drought

Hosea 13:6 As they had their pasture, they became satisfied, And being satisfied, their heart became proud; Therefore they forgot Me.

- to: Ho 10:1 De 8:12-14 32:13-15 Ne 9:25,26,35 Jer 2:31
- therefore: Ho 8:4 De 6:10-12 32:18 Ps 10:4 Isa 17:10 Jer 2:32

As they had their pasture, they became satisfied, And being satisfied, their heart became proud; Therefore they forgot Me.

Hosea 13:7 So I will be like a lion to them; Like a leopard I will lie in wait by the wayside.

- Ho 5:14 Isa 42:13 Jer 5:6 La 3:10 Am 1:2 3:4,8

So I will be like a lion to them; Like a leopard I will lie in wait by the wayside.

Ryrie - 13:7-8 God, who had been the protector of Israel in the wilderness (vv. 5-6), would become her destroyer. Like a lion He would devour; like a leopard He would lie in wait, or lurk, suddenly springing on an unprepared people; and like a bear His judgment would be ferocious.

Hosea 13:8 I will encounter them like a bear robbed of her cubs, And I will tear open their chests; There I will also devour them like a lioness, As a wild beast would tear them.

- as a: 2Sa 17:8 Pr 17:12 Am 9:1-3
- wild beast: Heb. beast of the field, Ps 80:13 Isa 5:29 56:9 Jer 12:9

I will encounter them like a bear robbed of her cubs, And I will tear open their chests; There I will also devour them like a lioness, As a wild beast would tear them

Hosea 13:9 It is your destruction, O Israel, That you are against Me, against your help.

- thou: Ho 14:1 2Ki 17:7-17 Pr 6:32 8:36 Isa 3:9,11 Jer 2:17,19 4:18 5:25 Mal 1:9
- but: Ho 13:4 De 33:26 Ps 33:20 46:1 121:1,2 146:5 Eph 1:3-5 Tit 3:3-7
- is thine help: Heb. in thy help

It is your destruction, O Israel, That you are against Me, against your help

Greek =Contrast with 1 Sa 7:12! How far we can go from God when we don't have men like godly Samuel around.

Matthew Henry - Verses 9-16. Israel had destroyed himself by his rebellion; but he could not save himself, his help was from the Lord only. This may well be applied to the case of spiritual redemption, from that lost state into which all have fallen by wilful sins. God often gives in displeasure what we sinfully desire. It is the happiness of the saints, that, whether God gives or takes away, all is in love. But it is the misery of the wicked, that, whether God gives or takes away, it is all in wrath, nothing is comfortable. Except sinners repent and believe the gospel, anguish will soon come upon them. The prophecy of the ruin of Israel as a nation, also showed there would be a merciful and powerful interposition of God, to save a remnant of them. Yet this was but a shadow of the ransom of the true Israel, by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He will destroy death and the grave. The Lord would not repent of his purpose and promise. Yet, in the mean time, Israel would be desolated for her sins. Without fruitfulness in good works, springing from the Holy Spirit, all other fruitfulness will be found as empty as the uncertain riches of the world. The wrath of God will wither its branches, its sprigs shall be dried up, it shall come to nothing. Woes, more terrible than any from the most cruel warfare, shall fall on those who rebel against God. From such miseries, and from sin, the cause of them, may the Lord deliver us.

Hosea 13:10 Where now is your king That he may save you in all your cities, And your judges of whom you requested, "Give me a king and princes"?

- I will be thy king: or, Where is thy king, "King Hosea being then in prison, 2 Ki 17:4." Ps 10:16 44:4 47:6,7 74:12 89:18 149:2 Isa 33:22 43:15 Jer 8:19 Zec 14:9 Joh 1:49

- where: Ho 13:4 10:3 De 32:37-39 Jer 2:28
- thy judges: Ho 8:4 Jud 2:16-18 1Sa 8:5,6,19,20 12:11,12 1Ki 12:20

Where now is your king That he may save you in all your cities, And your judges of whom you requested, “Give me a king and princes”

Hosea 13:11 I gave you a king in My anger And took him away in My wrath.

- Ho 10:3 1Sa 8:7-9 10:19 12:13 15:22,23 16:1 31:1-7 1Ki 12:15,16,26-32 14:7-16 2Ki 17:1-4 Pr 28:2

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

Hosea 13:12 The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; His sin is stored up.

- De 32:34,35 Job 14:17 21:19 Ro 2:5

The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; His sin is stored up. These vivid metaphors portray Israel's guilt as being carefully wrapped up and securely stored away before God. Nothing had been overlooked or forgotten. Though judgment had been delayed, every act of rebellion remained on God's record, awaiting the appointed time of reckoning. The imagery is that of a debt preserved for future payment or a legal record kept until the day of judgment. Israel may have imagined that her sins had been forgotten because punishment was not immediate, but God had simply reserved them for the proper time (cf. Deut. 32:34-35; Rom. 2:5). This verse underscores the sobering truth that unconfessed and unforgiven sin never disappears on its own—it remains until God, in His grace, forgives it or, in His justice, judges it. For the believer, this highlights the immeasurable blessing that, through Christ, our sins are not merely stored away but are completely forgiven, removed, and remembered no more (Ps. 103:12; Isa. 43:25; Col. 2:13-14).

Hosea 13:13 The pains of childbirth come upon him; He is not a wise son, For it is not the time that he should delay at the opening of the womb.

- sorrows: Ps 48:6 Isa 13:8 21:3 Jer 4:31 13:21 22:23 30:6 49:24 Mic 4:9,10 1Th 5:3
- an: Pr 22:3 Ac 24:25
- for he: 2Ki 19:3 Isa 26:17 37:3 Ac 16:29-34 2Co 6:2 Heb 3:7,8
- long: Heb. a time

The pains of childbirth come upon him; He is not a wise son, For it is not the time that he should delay at the opening of the womb Hosea compares Ephraim to a child who foolishly refuses to be born. In ancient childbirth, a baby that lingered in the birth canal endangered both its own life and that of its mother. Thus, Israel is pictured as an unwise son who stubbornly delays at the very moment when decisive action is required. Rather than responding to God's discipline with repentance and entering into a new life of covenant obedience, Ephraim resisted and remained in rebellion. What should have been the painful but life-giving process of repentance instead became the pathway to judgment and death. The metaphor vividly portrays Israel's tragic folly: the nation stood at the threshold of deliverance but refused to embrace it. Wisdom would have led them to humble themselves before the LORD; instead, their persistent resistance brought about the very destruction God had warned them would come.

Hosea 13:14 Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death? O Death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion will be hidden from My sight.

- ransom: Ho 6:2 Job 19:25-27 33:24 Ps 16:10 30:3 49:15 71:20 86:13 Isa 25:8 Eze 37:11-14 Ro 11:15
- power: Heb. hand
- O death: Isa 26:19 1Co 15:21,22,52-57 2Co 5:4 Php 3:21 1Th 4:14 Rev 20:13 21:4
- repentance: Nu 23:19 1Sa 15:29 Jer 15:6 Mal 3:6 Ro 11:29 Jas 1:17

Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death? O Death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion will be hidden from My sight. In the immediate context, these rhetorical questions anticipate a negative answer: "Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? No. Shall I redeem them from death? No." Because of Ephraim's persistent rebellion, the LORD calls upon Death and Sheol to unleash their full destructive power. The taunt, "O Death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, where is your sting?" is not a cry of triumph but a summons for judgment, declaring that God's compassion will no longer delay the execution of His righteous sentence. Yet under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul cites this passage in 1 Corinthians 15:54-55, applying it in a fuller redemptive sense to Christ's victory over death through His resurrection. What was originally a declaration of judgment against unrepentant Israel becomes, in light of the completed work of Christ, a triumphant celebration that death has been conquered for all who belong to Him. Thus, the same God who justly judges sin also provides complete victory over death through His Son.

Henry Morris - power of the grave. This is one of the Old Testament promises of future bodily resurrection (Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2).

BSB - Regarding the interpretation of the "grave," cf. Matt. 11:23, note. Paul states that this passage will find its ultimate fulfillment on resurrection day (1 Cor. 15:55).

Hosea 13:15 Though he flourishes among the reeds, An east wind will come, The wind of the LORD coming up from the wilderness; And his fountain will become dry And his spring will be dried up; It will plunder his treasury of every precious article.

- he be: Ge 41:52 48:19 49:22 De 33:17
- an east: Ho 4:19 Ps 1:4 Isa 17:13 41:16 Jer 4:11 Eze 17:10 19:12
- his spring: Ho 9:11 Job 18:16 Ps 109:13 Isa 14:21
- pleasant vessels: Heb. vessels of desire, Da 11:8 Na 2:9

Though he flourishes among the reeds, An east wind will come, The wind of the LORD coming up from the wilderness; And his fountain will become dry And his spring will be dried up; It will plunder his treasury of every precious article.

Hosea 13:16 Samaria will be held guilty, For she has rebelled against her God. They will fall by the sword, Their little ones will be dashed in pieces, And their pregnant women will be ripped open.

- Samaria: Fulfilled, 2Ki 17:6,18 19:9-11 Isa 7:8,9 8:4 17:3 Am 3:9-15 4:1 6:1-8 9:1 Mic 1:4 6:16
- their infants: Ho 10:14,15 2Ki 8:12 15:16 Ps 137:8,9 Isa 13:16 Am 1:13 Na 3:10

Samaria will be held guilty, For she has rebelled against her God. They will fall by the sword, Their little ones will be dashed in pieces, And their pregnant women will be ripped open. Israel would suffer these terrible atrocities (see also 2 Kings 15:16).