

and he herded sheep to earn a wife for himself.]¹

13 [H12:14] By a prophet the Lord brought Israel up from Egypt,
and by a prophet they were preserved.

14 [H12:15] Ephraim has caused exasperation;²
so the Lord will punish him for his crimes
and will repay him for his disgrace.³

<CHAPTER 13>

4 *The inescapable doom of iniquitous Ephraim 13:1-6*
a Ephraim's idols 13:1-3

1 When Ephraim spoke, there was trembling (*or, awe*);
for Ephraim was looked up to in Israel;
but he increased his guilt though Baal worship and died.
(*or, When Ephraim spoke continuously,*
he (the prophet) bore it for Israel;
but when he (Israel) was guilty of Baal worship,
he (the prophet) died.)⁴

2 They still continued sinning,
and made cast images for themselves
using idols skillfully molded of silver,⁵
entirely designed in the imagination of artisans;
saying, 'Sacrifice to these, (*or, offer human sacrifice to these*).'⁶
How can people kiss calves?⁷

3 Therefore they will disappear like morning mist
or like the dew that quickly vanishes,⁸
like the chaff that swirls from the threshing floor
or like the smoke from a lattice window.

b Yahweh (the Lord) the shepherd of Ephraim 13:4-6

4 "I am the Lord your God
ever since the land of Egypt.
[*I am the Lord your God who established the heavens*
and created the earth;
whose hands created all the host of heaven,

1 This verse in brackets [] appears to be out of context. It would be better in combination with verses 4-6. Cf. Genesis 29:1-20.

2 In Hebrew poetry it seems that a portion of a line is missing, thus destroying the rhythmic form. No scholar has suggested words that are generally accepted as an emendation.

3 The meaning of this and the succeeding verse (13:1) is uncertain.

4 Grammatically the alternate translation is possible. It is a very difficult text and numerous emendations have been suggested, none of which have general acceptance.

5 Literally: "idols of their silver according to their understanding." LXX: *κατ' εικονα* which would suggest: "of their silver according to the form of idols" or "idols of silver according to their own plan."

6 So: LXX. Hebrew: "to these they say sacrifice of people."

7 Hebrew unclear. Literally: "men who sacrifice kiss." The rhythmic balance of the poetry makes this line difficult to translate.

8 Literally: "goes away early."

*and I did not show them to you
 in order that you might follow after them,
 and I brought you up from the land of Egypt.]*⁹
 You know no God but one,
 and I, alone, am your savior.
 5 It was I who looked after¹⁰ you in the wilderness (*or, desert*),
 in that arid land;
 6 but when they had been satisfied (*in the good land*)¹¹
 they were satiated and they became haughty;
 and therefore forgot me."
 (*or, As they fed (or, as I fed them) they became satiated
 and they became exalted with pride.*)

c Yahweh (the Lord) the destroyer of Ephraim 13:7-8

7 "Because of this I will become like a lion to you.
 I will lurk like a leopard along the path.
 8 Like a bear robbed of her cubs I will attack you.
 I will tear open your chest,¹²
 and I will devour you on the spot like a lion,
 just as a wild beast might mangle you."¹³

d Where now is your king? 13:9-11

9 "I will destroy you, O Israel;¹⁴
 Who can help you?¹⁵
 10 Where now is¹⁶ your king who can save you?¹⁷
 Where are your rulers to defend you;¹⁸
 those by whom you said,
 'Give me a king and rulers?'
 11 I have given you kings in my anger
 and I have removed them in my wrath."
 (*or, I have given you kings in my anger,
 and I have taken them away in my wrath.*)

5 The possibility of revival for Ephraim 13:12-14

9 Additional stichs found in LXX.

10 Literally: "I shepherded you."

11 So: emended. Hebrew: "according to their pastures."

12 Literally: "the enclosure of their heart."

13 Hebrew unclear.

14 Literally: "It (like the wild beast just referred to) has destroyed (or, will destroy) you O Israel; but in me is your helper."

LXX: "If I destroy you, O Israel, who will be your helper?"

15 Hebrew uncertain. So: LXX. Hebrew: "but in me is your help." Possibly: "because you are against me, your helper."

16 So: LXX, Syriac & Vulgate. Hebrew: "I will be."

17 A possible reference to king Hoshea, the last king of Israel, ca. 732-724 B. C. E. The name means: "Yahweh (the Lord) is savior." He was imprisoned at the onset of the siege of Samaria.

18 Hebrew uncertain. Emended to compare with the LXX.

12 "The guilt of Ephraim is carefully treasured;¹⁹
 his sin is kept on record (*or, stored in the archives*).
 13 The pangs of childbirth come for him,
 but he is a foolish child:
 he refuses to come forth,
 like a child that does not come out of the womb.²⁰
 14 Should I ransom you from the power of Sheol?²¹
 Should I redeem you from death?
 O death, where are²² your plagues?
 O Sheol, where is²³ your destruction?²⁴
 I do not feel compassion!"
 (*or, "Compassion is hidden from my eyes,
 because Ephraim causes separation among the brethren."*)

6 *Ephraim's doom 13:15-16 [H 13:15-14:1]*

15 Although he may flourish like the rushes,²⁵
 the east wind will come as a blast from the Lord.
 blowing across the wilderness;
 and his fountain will cease to flow,
 his spring will dry up;
 his treasury²⁶ will be plundered (*or, stripped*)
 of every precious thing.
 16 [H14:1] Samaria must be punished for her guilt,²⁷
 because she has rebelled against her God.
 Her people will perish by the sword
 (*or, And it will dry up his fountains
 and parch his spring;
 it will strip his treasury
 of every pleasant thing.*)
 Their infants will be dashed to pieces,
 and their pregnant women ripped open.

<CHAPTER 14>

19 Literally: "wrapped up (like a scroll)."

20 Hebrew uncertain. Literally: "at the place of the breaking forth of children."

21 Literally: "the hand of Sheol" (the abode of the dead).

22 So: LXX & Syriac. Hebrew: "I will be."

23 Cf. footnote 22.

24 LXX: "Come with your plagues, O death. Come with your destruction, O Sheol."

25 So: emended. Hebrew: "among the brothers."

26 LXX: "the land."

27 LXX: ἀφα υισθησεται.

III Call to repentance and promise for forgiveness and renewal 14:1-9 [H 14:2-10]

A Take with you words 14:1-3 [H 14:2-4]

- 1 [H14:2] O Israel, return to the Lord your God,
for you have collapsed because of your evil ways.
(*or, Your sins have caused your downfall.*)
- 2 [H14:3] Take your works of repentance with you
and return to the Lord.
Say to him:
"Take away all guilt (*or, forget all my guilt*);²⁸
Accept that which is good²⁹
and we will offer
the fruit³⁰ of our lips.³¹
- 3 [H14:4] Assyria will never save us,
nor will we ride war horses;³²
and we will never again say, 'Our god,'
to our own handiwork,
for it is only in you that the orphans find mercy (*or, compassion*)."³³

B The Lord's response 14:4-8 [H 14:5-9]

- 4 [H14:5] "I will heal their defection (*or, disloyalty*);
I will love them freely,
for my wrath has turned from them.
- 5 [H14:6] I will be like dew to Israel;
he will blossom like the lilies,
he will take root like the poplar³⁴ (*or, forest of Lebanon*);
- 6 [H14:7] his shoots will spread out;
his splendor will be like the olive tree's
and his fragrance like incense.³⁵
- 7 [H14:8] They will again live beneath my shadow,
and flourish as a garden.³⁶
They will blossom like the vine,
their fame will be like the wine of Lebanon."³⁷
- 8 [H14:9] Ephraim will say: 'What have I to do with idols?'
(*or, What more has Ephraim to do with idols?*)"³⁸

28 Some scholars would translate: "Say to him, all of you, "Take away iniquity." or "You will surely take away iniquity."

29 NEB: "accept our plea."

30 So: LXX & Syriac. Literally: "bulls." "So will we render our lips as (our) bulls."

31 I. e. praise and thanksgiving.

32 I. e. no longer will we trust an alliance with Egypt. A possible translation might be: "nor will we seek horses to ride."

33 Possibly "in whom the upright finds mercy" with a slight emendation.

34 So: emended. Hebrew: "Lebanon."

35 So: emended.

36 So: emended. Hebrew: "return, they will grow grain." A possible translation: "and grow grain in abundance."

37 A possible emendation: "Helbon;" A town mentioned in the apocraphal "The Lamentation for Tyre" famous for its wine, located southwest of Damascus. It is still an important wine region in Syria.

38 One LXX manuscript says: "The people of Israel will have"

(*God*) God will answer, 'I will look after you.'³⁹
(*Ephraim*) 'I am like an evergreen cypress.'
(*God*) 'Your fruit is provided by me.'
(*or: What more has Ephraim to do with idols?*
It was I who looked after him.
It was I who has been like an evergreen cypress.
your welfare comes from me.

Another alternative:

Ephraim: What do I have to do with idols?

God: I reply, I will look after you.

Ephraim: I am like an evergreen tree.

God: Your faithfulness comes from me.)

C Postscript 14:9 [H 14:10]⁴⁰

⁹[H14:10] Those who are wise understand these things;

Those who are prudent (*or, discerning*) know them;

for the paths of the Lord are right,

and the righteous walk in them,

while the transgressors (*or, sinners*) stumble on them.

³⁹ Hebrew unclear. Several emendations have been suggested but none is outstanding.

⁴⁰ Some scholars feel this is a later addition, after the manner of Wisdom literature. No manuscript evidence is extant that supports the theory. It is based entirely on internal evidence.