

Return of the King

Scripture Reading — Hosea 13:9-14

*“I will deliver them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death.”
Hosea 13:14 —*

The history of Israel is summarized by the failure of its monarchy. From the beginning, Israel’s desire for a king represented the rejection of God as their King (1 Samuel 8:7). And over the years, wickedness characterized most of Israel’s rulers, with disastrous economic, political, and spiritual results.

In today’s reading, God asks the people a rhetorical question. “Where is your king, that he may save you?” The tragic answer is that there is no earthly king powerful enough to undo the consequences of centuries- long disobedience. Israel will be defenseless in the face of God’s coming judgment.

But all is not lost. God’s punishment is compared to the pain a woman feels when her child is born. Like childbirth, God’s judgment will be intense and difficult. But the pain will eventually be replaced by the joy of new birth.

Jesus said that for his followers his death would be like the pain of a woman giving birth (John 16:21), but the pain of the cross would be overcome by the joy of resurrected life. Jesus shares his victory with us, and Paul notes this by quoting from Hosea when he describes Jesus’ triumph (1 Corinthians 15:55). Jesus is our true King, given not in anger, but in love. In him the darkness of death is replaced by the light of life.

Prayer

Lord, sometimes our priorities are all mixed up, and we don’t give you, our King, our total allegiance. Help us to serve you in all we do. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

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