

HOSEA
Chapter Four
May 24, 2020

The emphasis changes a bit in chapter four. From this point on in the book of Hosea we will not be seeing much about the private and personal life of the prophet. Beginning actually with the two closing verses of chapter three, the private life of Hosea fades into the background, and the emphasis is now upon the Lord and the faithless nation of Israel which has been playing the harlot.

We have left the section of the book that is personal, and in chapter 4-14 we will be dealing with that which is prophetic.

Chapter three ended with the statement that Israel should abide many days without an image or teraphim, etc.... Now, in chapter three God presents His case against Israel. Out of the heartbreaking experience in his own home, Hosea now comes to speak to the nation – and he knows how God feels about them.

Everything that has been said up to now has been in the way of generalization. God has said, “They have sinned. They have played the harlot and been unfaithful to Me.” Now God is going to spell out certain charges. The message of chapter four is that Israel is guilty of lawlessness, immorality, ignorance of God’s word, and Idolatry.

This chapter can compare with the first chapter of Isaiah in which Isaiah speaks to the Southern Kingdom, spelling out God’s charges against that nation.

Verse 1 *Hear the word of the LORD, people of Israel, for the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land: There is no truth, no faithful love, and no knowledge of God in the land!* He says three things here, there is no truth, no love (mercy) and no knowledge of God in the land.

- The people had become brainwashed through their idolatry. The more deeply they delved into pagan worship, the further from God and from His word they strayed. Over time they forgot the scriptures or worse mingled them with pagan rituals until they were ignorant of God’s words and His ways. There was plenty of religion in the land but no knowledge of the word of God. I have to say it sounds an awful lot like America today.

Verse 2 *Cursing, lying, murder, stealing, and adultery are rampant; one act of bloodshed follows another.*

- If you’ll notice the sins listed, you’ll see they were breaking the Ten Commandments. Dr. McGee points out here that the Church is not under the Ten Commandments today, but in them God expressed His will.
- Since through the Ten commandments God expressed His will, they are a pattern for the laws of every nation.

- The Nation Israel, which He chose and dealt with, furnishes a pattern to the other nations of the world.
- Our own laws have been patterned after the Ten Commandments. At least until liberal legislation manages to turn each one topsy-turvy so that what should be wrong is considered right and what should be right is considered wrong.
- The point is that in spite of how many Bibles and churches there are in America, the country as a whole is ignorant of God's word. We are just as guilty as Israel was in the 700's BC.
- But Israel was not following the pattern themselves. They were, *cursing, lying, murdering, stealing and committing adultery. One act of bloodshed follows another.* Sounds like our 6 o'clock news.

Verse 3 *For this reason the land mourns, and everyone who lives in it languishes, along with the wild animals and the birds of the sky; even the fish of the sea disappear.*

- When God judges a nation, the land itself is involved, even the beasts, and fowls suffer because of the sin of man.
- Here's another poke in America's eye! What we (humans) have done to our own land is horrendous. Our air, soil, and water have all been polluted. We fill the earth and the oceans with vile chemicals that *never* break down while we sit with fingers crossed, hoping that the whole mess doesn't dissolve right into the ground. The Bible says, "If we do these things in the green wood, what will happen in the dry?" (*Luke 23:31 my paraphrase*).
- For this reason, the land mourns, and the people, animals and birds suffer.

Verse 4 *But let no one dispute; let no one argue, for My case is against you priests.*

- The priest of that day was not doing his duty. He was not warning the people. Therefore, God raised up the prophets.

Verse 5 *You will stumble by day; the prophet will also stumble with you by night. And I will destroy your mother.*

- The lesson here is a solemn one. Someone once said that evil never dies of old age. Sin unjudged among the people of God becomes like a fretting, cancerous sore, ever working and extending its ramification until the whole mass becomes defiled. The people will stumble and the prophets will stumble and God said, "I will destroy your mother." That is, God will destroy the nation.

Verse 6 *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will reject you from serving as My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your sons.*

- A very familiar and well-known verse is verse six, *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.* The background of their sin was a lack of knowledge of God's word.
- They were no longer studying the Scriptures or discussing them. However, they were constantly reminded of other gods because they were so prominent in the land at that time.
- God said, *Because you have rejected knowledge, I will reject you from serving as My priest.*

- Because they have gone through such a long, sordid history of departing from the Lord, they have now come to a time of judgement.
- God has proved His case against them; in the beginning of the chapter He listed their sins – they have broken the Ten Commandments. Therefore, He hands down His decision. He is going to judge them.

Verse 7 *The more they multiplied, the more they sinned against Me. I will change their honor into disgrace.*

- God had promised Abraham that He would bless the nation by multiplying them, and the nation did increase, but all that did was bring more sinners into the world.
- God said; *Therefore, I will change their honor into disgrace.*
- Now, the *Glory* of Israel was the Temple with the Shekinah glory upon it. His visible presence with the nation, and His definite leading of them as witnesses of Him to the other nations.
- Remember, all the nations of the world were pagan except Israel and she had become as pagan as the world to which they were supposed to bring the truth.
- That was their glory, and God is saying “I will remove My glory from you. I will remove My blessing from you and I will judge you by letting the enemy come upon you and take you into captivity.”
- The enemy will then be able to brag about how they overcame Israel’s God, bringing shame on them all.

Verse 8 *They feed on the sin of My people; they have an appetite for their transgressions.*

- The people not only sinned without any remorse, they liked to brag about it.

Verse 9 *The same judgement will happen to both people and priests. I will punish them for their ways and repay them for their deeds.*

- The priests were corrupted and made like the sinning people, not vice versa. The priests should have taught the people God’s ways. Instead the priests had sunk to the level of the people. But God said he would punish them for their ways and repay them for their deeds. The King James says “reward” them, meaning they will get what they have coming to them.

Verse 10 *They will eat but not be satisfied; they will be promiscuous but not multiply; for they have abandoned their devotion to the LORD.*

- *They will eat and not be satisfied.* Dr. McGee speaks of famine in the land here but I think it means that nothing satisfies them. We spend so much money on delicacies and don’t get enough for our money. We’re still hungry!
- *They will be promiscuous but not increase.* This makes me think of abortion – a quick way to rid yourself of an unwanted pregnancy.

Verse 11 *Promiscuity, wine and new wine take away one’s understanding.*

- In the Northern Kingdom they had sin galore. They put up two golden calves to replace God and practiced Baal worship. Alcohol goes hand in hand with pagan worship and ritual.

We will stop here so it doesn’t get too long. We will pick it up at verse 12 next week.