

## HOSEA

### Chapter Six

6/14/20

In chapter five, God pronounced judgement on Israel (the Northern Kingdom). The opening verses of chapter six connects intimately with the previous chapter. The rest of the chapter is another appeal to the inner hearts of both Ephraim (Israel/the Northern Kingdom) and Judah (the southern Kingdom). God also said He would allow Israel to be torn to pieces and carried away by their enemies into captivity.

But it was never God's intention to use judgement to *destroy* Israel but to bring the nation to repentance.

The same is true for us. When we sin it sometimes gets us into trouble, God will sometimes allow that, not to punish us but to make us recognize our sin and repent of it. When we do, peace and fellowship are restored; and that is what He had promised Israel but they didn't listen until *after* God said He would judge them now.

**Verse 1** – *Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn us, and He will heal us; He has wounded us and He will bind up our wounds.*

- Realizing the hopeless condition of the nation a cry went up *Come, let us return to the LORD.*
- As is so often the case the people finally realized that if they were to survive, only the Great Physician Himself could heal their deadly wound *He has wounded us and He will bind up our wounds.*
- Although their repentance appeared genuine it was actually superficial.
- The Bible does not speak of them confessing their sin and turning from practicing paganism, immorality and murder.
- They had lived for so long worshipping false gods, and no doubt blending Godly worship into their pagan worship that in actuality they were no longer able to be sincere in their worship. This was evidenced by their unchanged lifestyle.
- Israel was sure that once they returned to God all would be well. The problem lay, I think, in the definition of "return to the God".

**Verse 2** – *He will revive us after two days, and on the third day He will raise us up so we can live in His presence.*

- There are numerous opinions regarding the meaning of *two days, and on the third day...*
- First of all, it is a Hebrew phrase that refers to an expected swift and certain recovery from judgement. Therefore, many explanations have surfaced as a result. There were four different ones mentioned in David Levy's Book. I won't take the space to discuss them, it would take too much space. Each of them sounds good on the surface but after careful examination, there are flaws in each one. The most popular explanation is that the phrase two days means that after 2000 years (a day being as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day 2 Peter 3:8). At Christ's second coming, Israel (all of them) will be given spiritual life. *On the third day He will raise us up* refers to the 12 tribes being restored to the land at the beginning of Christ's 1000-year reign on Earth. As I said there are flaws in each one if you examine them carefully in light of Scripture.

- Verse two has nothing to do with a 2000-year time period but simply sets forth Israel's expectation of being swiftly restored to its former state once it returns to God.
- It's much like the phrase used in Revelation that speaks of Christ coming quickly. It doesn't mean He's coming soon – it means that once the action starts it will play out very quick.

**Verse 3** – *Let us strive to know the LORD. His appearance is as sure as the dawn. He will come to us like the rain, like the spring showers that water the land.*

- The Israelites had lost all context of spirituality and their idea of spiritual renewal was shallow. They thought if they simply acknowledged Him that He would restore them. They said, *let us strive to know the LORD. His appearance is as sure as the dawn. He will come to us as the rain, like the spring showers that water the land.* What confidence they had, what arrogance! Their words were empty and God knew it. He requires true repentance. That involves a contrite heart, confession, forsaking or repentance and a changed conduct.
- How many times have I asked God to forgive something I knew I would do again and again! That's not repentance, that's conviction; and being sorry for something you are going to continue to do just isn't enough. God wants *true* repentance and that means turning around and going the opposite direction.

**Verse 4** – *What am I going to do with you, Ephraim? What am I going to do with you, Judah? Your loyalty is like the morning mist and like the early dew that vanishes.*

- God had tried everything to entice Israel and Judah away from idolatry, to bring them to repentance and to commit to Him but to no avail. If severe punishment would not bring them to repentance, what more could be done?
- How many times have you said that to your own recalcitrant child – “what am I going to do with you?!” That's exactly how God felt about His child Israel.
- God asked the question to draw Israel's attention to its lack of love and piety towards Him. They thought of themselves as religious but they had no knowledge of God.

**Verse 5** – *This is why I have used the prophets to cut them down; I have killed them with the words of My mouth. My judgement strikes like lightning.*

- God used the prophet's words as a knife to carve away the immortal practices of both Kingdoms, hoping they would see the shape they were supposed to look like. However, the prophet's words fell on deaf ears and the nation did no repent so God's judgement fell on them like a flash of lightning.
- **Verse 6** – *For I desire loyalty and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.*
- Hosea warned Israel and Judah that God cannot be bought or appeased with sacrifices and offering when the heart is full of misdeeds.
- Just as God told Samuel in 1 Sam 15:22-23, that He desired obedience over sacrifice. Rebellion is as witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. (paraphrased)
- Sacrifice and offerings steeped in sin was and is an abomination to God. Who do we think we are fooling? God? And *they* didn't fool God either with their overconfident boast that all they had to do was “return to the LORD and all would be well.”

**Verse 7-9** – <sup>7</sup> *But they, like Adam, have violated the covenant; there they have betrayed Me.* <sup>8</sup> *Gilead is a city of evildoers, tracked with bloody footprints.* <sup>9</sup> *Like robbers who wait in ambush for someone, a band of priest murders on the road to Shechem. They commit atrocities.*

- In the following verses, God uses similes and metaphors to illustrate the gross paganism, immorality and murderous action of the Northern Kingdom.
- Adam – Like Adam, Israel forfeited the blessings of its covenant relationship by disobeying God.
- Gilead – Not Gilead itself but the city of Ramoth Gilead, which had become a rendezvous for wicked men. Originally it had been one of the cities of refuge but was now known as a city of cut-throats.
- Shechem – Another city of refuge, had become an area where “*bands of robbers lie in wait for a man and the company of priests murder* (the King James says, by consent) *they commit atrocities*. This has been a rendering of verses from 3 different Bibles. Collectively they say it all. Anyway, Shechem lay to the north of Jerusalem and was located on the main road that pilgrims used to travel to Jerusalem for the feast-days.
- Priests from Israel, steeped in Baal worship would way-lay them on the road and relieve them of their valuables. If they put up a fight they were usually killed. This was a no-nonsense business of pure profit for the priests and their highwaymen. Furthermore, they committed the vilest acts of sexual deviance, incest, cult prostitution and adultery.
- The chapter closes with God’s condemnation of both kingdoms. Hosea says...
- **Verse 10-11** – *I have seen something horrible in the house of Israel: Ephraim’s promiscuity is there’; Israel is defiled. A harvest is also appointed for you, Judah. When I return My people from captivity.*
- Ephraim, if you remember, was the major tribe of Israel (NK) that practiced harlotry/idolatry. God said, *leave Ephraim alone* and *Ephraim is determined to follow what is worthless*.
- Religious prostitution connected with fertility rites found in Baal-worship had spread from Ephraim throughout all Israel and even into Judah. Thus, Judah as well would not escape judgment. *Also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed for you.*
- Judah was guilty of the same sins and would reap the same harvest.
- But God is not finished with Israel, He said He will return *the captives of my people* (v 11)
- One day God will restore both kingdoms and as one nation they will have one heart and one mind and they will be God’s people and He will be their God.
- This will come to ultimate fruition at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.
- We must always remember that true repentance takes place when we feel the awesome, convicting power of the Holy Spirit deep in our soul and realize that we have sinned against Almighty God.
- Truly repentant sinners will not only confess and forsake their evil ways but will be a living testimony to the world of God’s faithfulness and great mercy.
- Next week chapter seven

Note: Pastor informed me last night in the council meeting that we can begin our Sunday school class again on June 21st. So, mark your calendars and those of you who feel comfortable

returning to class please do so. We will probably be few in number at the beginning but that is fine. I will continue to type our lessons and post them on the website for those of you who cannot yet return. I'm so excited to get back to class!!