

HOSEA  
Chapter Five  
6/7/20

This chapter continues to deal with the sin of the Northern Kingdom and the fact that judgement is coming upon them. God begins by condemning the leadership of the nation; the priests and the king.

**Verse 1** – *Hear this, priests! Pay attention, house of Israel! For the judgement applies to you because you have been a snare at Mizpah and a net spread out on Tabor.*

- Mizpah was in the Southwest section of the kingdom and Mt. Tabor was in the northeast section. In other words, the people were worshipping idols from one end of the kingdom to the other!
- He speaks to the representatives of the people – the priests and the king. In chapter four we saw “like people, like priest”. The priests who should have set the right example for the people; who should have rebuked their corrupt ways, had instead joined in the pagan worship and were equally corrupted.
- In our day, our spiritual and political leadership is not worthy of our emulation. Liberalism is predominant in theology, politics and our legal system.
- No longer is God’s word considered the final authority but an outdated ideology. Therefore, it is of no significance to the day.

**Verse 2** – *Rebels are deeply involved in slaughter; I will be a punishment for all of them.*

- God rebuked Israel for their brutality. They were guilty of murder, violence and warfare. God had given them laws and standards to live by but David Levy points out in his book *The Ruin and Restoration of Israel* that the consequences of Israel’s blatant rebellion against God was that it broke five of the ten commandments: *swearing (calling down curses on people), and lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery*. These are the third, ninth, sixth, eighth and seventh commandments.
- Iniquity and murder swept the land as *bloodshed followed bloodshed (4:3)*.
- All these sins flooded across Israel, contaminating everything in sight.

**Verse 3-4** – *I know Ephraim, you have acted promiscuously; Israel is defiled. <sup>4</sup>Their actions do not allow them to return to their God, for a spirit of promiscuity is among them, and they do not know the LORD.*

- Dr. McGee says Ephraim was God's pet name for Israel (the ten northern tribes). But, in fact, Ephraim was the very center of idolatry in the Northern Kingdom.
- The two golden calves set up by Jeroboam II were placed in Bethel and Samaria. Both of these places were in the tribe of Ephraim. Bethel was originally part of the tribe of Benjamin but the land was taken into the Northern Kingdom when Benjamin joined with Judah to form the Southern Kingdom.
- Although the calf worship, or worship of Baal, had been set up in the tribe of Ephraim, it had defiled all ten of the tribes and even eventually affected the Southern Kingdom.
- Their sin was that of people who knew God and chose to turn away to other gods. Their sin affected even the land and the animals.

**Verse 5** – *Israel's arrogance testifies against them. Both Israel and Ephraim stumble because of their wickedness; even Judah will stumble with them.*

- The King James says pride but the Holman uses the word arrogance and I think that gives us an accurate picture of their frame of mind. *Their arrogance testifies against them.* As a result, all ten tribes will go into captivity and Judah will follow suit.
- The Assyrians captured the Northern Kingdom and something over a hundred years later, Judah was taken into captivity by Babylon.

**Verse 6** – *They go with their flocks and herds to seek the LORD but do not find Him; he has withdrawn from them.*

- The people have deserted God but when trouble comes and they can't find a solution on their own, they will as a last resort turn to God. He is their last resource, but they will not find Him because He has withdrawn Himself from them. To me, that's the scariest thought in the world; to reach out to my God only to find He is gone!

**Verse 7** – *they betrayed the LORD; indeed, they gave birth to illegitimate children. Now the New Moon will devour them along with their fields.*

- *Illegitimate children or strange children* as the King James says, refers to children that have not been raised up in the knowledge of the LORD. In Deuteronomy God told them to continually teach their children His ways and His laws. They were to write it on their doorposts and teach it as they sat in their homes. Now He says “you have begotten illegitimate children and they don’t even know me.”

**Verse 8** – *Blow the horn in Gibeah, the trumpet in Ramah; raise the war cry in Beth-aven: After you, Benjamin!*

- Beth-aven is Bethel. All three cities mentioned belonged to the tribe of Benjamin in the south. They will be on military alert. *After thee O Benjamin*, the battle cry in the day of Joshua, will be reactivated.

**Verse 9** – *Ephraim will become a desolation on the day of punishment; I announce what is certain among the tribes of Israel.*

- God had not failed to warn the Northern Kingdom. He sent them Amos, Hosea and Micah to warn them.

**Verse 10** – *The princes of Judah are like those who move boundary markers; I will pour out My fury on them like water.*

- The Southern Kingdom and the Northern Kingdom could not agree on the boundaries of the two kingdoms. God sent His messengers to both kingdoms.

**Verse 11** – *Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgement, for he is determined to follow what is worthless.*

- Ephraim apparently gave themselves completely over to idol worship. *He is determined to follow what is worthless.*

**Verse 12** – *So I am like rot to Ephraim and like decay to the house of Judah.*

- Because God took His presence from Israel His judgement will eat away at His nation slowly but surely. At this point obviously Judah was showing signs of following Israel’s fate. Idol worship was becoming prominent in the Southern Kingdom as well. So, God sees the rot coming from both kingdoms which of course is the entire nation that *He* chose to be His spokesmen to the world.

**Verse 13** – *When Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah his wound, Ephraim went to Assyria and sent a delegation to the great king. But he cannot cure you or heal your wound.*

- *When Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah saw his wound.* As we just read Judah was delving into the same poisonous behavior as Israel, experiencing the same corruption as Israel. Assyria had come against Judah but did not take them into captivity. Apparently, that was not God's plan.
- But when Ephraim, who was in much worse shape spiritually than Judah, saw just how sick he was, went to the Assyrian King and asked for help. They thought they could count on him for help but in reality, he is the one who takes them into captivity. They appealed for help from the wrong one.

**Verse 14** – *For I am like a lion to Ephraim and like a young lion to the house of Judah. Yes, I will tear them to pieces and depart. I will carry them off, and no one can rescue them.*

- God told the Northern Kingdom that He was going to be a lion – He intended to destroy them.
- To the Southern Kingdom He was going to be just a lion cub. But what happens to a lion cub? He grows up and someday he'll be just as viscous as his papa was!
- This was a warning to the Southern Kingdom that someday judgment was coming to them as well.

**Verse 15** – *I will depart and return to My place until they recognize their guilt and seek My face; they will search for Me in their distress.*

- This verse speaks of a time in the future. God said He will go to His place (Heaven?) until they recognize their guilt and seek His face. I believe this speaks of the time at the mid-point of the tribulation when the Jews will see the Abomination of Desolation in the Temple.
- When the Antichrist demands that *all* bow down and worship his image, *then* the Jews will *know* he is not Messiah.
- God ends the verse and the chapter by saying, *they will search for me in their distress.*" They have been doing that for so many generations already.

Next week we see a call to repentance in chapter six. Have a good week, know that you are all loved and missed. Thank you for staying faithful to our lessons. I love all of you so much!