

Hosea 05 - Impending Judgment on Israel and Judah

II. Wayward nation and faithful God (Hosea 4:1–14:9)

- (1) Israel's adulterous unfaithfulness (Hosea 4:1–7:16)
 - (D) Sins of people, priests, and king (5:1-7)
 - (E) Coming Assyrian destruction of Judah and Ephraim (5:8-15)

Hosea 5

(D) Sins of people, priests, and king (5:1-7)

1 Hear this, you priests! Pay attention, house of Israel! Listen, *you of* the house of the king! For the judgment *applies* to you, Because you have been a trap at **Mizpah**, And a net spread out on **Tabor**.

1 Hear this, O priests! Give heed, O house of Israel! Listen, O house of the king! For the judgment applies to you, For you have been a snare at Mizpah And a net spread out on Tabor.

1 "Hear this, priests, pay attention, house of Israel, listen, royal family! For judgment is coming your way, because you have been a trap to Mizpah, a snare spread out on Mount Tabor.

1 Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.

- Hosea called on the Israelite priests, the entire population of Israel, and the royal household, to hear this message from Yahweh

- We don't know for sure who the king was at this time, but it was possibly Zechariah or Menahem

- "...Mizpah...Tabor" - Mizpah was in the SW section of the Northern Kingdom; Tabor was in the NE section. It's like saying "from California to Maine," encompassing all of the Northern Kingdom

- They could have also been locations of important worship sites in the north

- The point is, the leadership was corrupting the people everywhere

Contemporary Leadership

Unfortunately, our political and spiritual leadership, too, is hardly worth emulation. We get the leaders we deserve. [Contrast recent presidents vs. our Founding Fathers...] Our

pulpits are often no better...

- 2 And the rebels have gone deep in depravity, But I will discipline all of them.
- 2 The revolters have gone deep in depravity, But I will chastise all of them.
- 2 The rebels are deep into their slaughter; I am punishing them all.
- 2 And the revolters are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all.
 - Those who revolted against Yahweh's covenant had gone deep into depravity, as though they waded through carnage

- 3 **I know Ephraim**, and Israel is not hidden from Me; Because now, Ephraim, you have been unfaithful, Israel has defiled itself.
- 3 I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from Me; For now, O Ephraim, you have played the harlot, Israel has defiled itself.
- 3 I know Ephraim, and Israel cannot hide from me, since you, Ephraim, have been acting like a prostitute, defiling Israel.
- 3 I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.
 - "I know Ephraim" - God is omniscient; He (alone) knew what was happening, He did not fall into a trap as the Israelites did
 - Ephraim had played the harlot against her husband, the Lord, and defiled herself by doing so
 - Hosea may have referred to Ephraim here because they were the largest tribe in the Northern Kingdom, and was foremost in idolatry
 - The first golden calf was set up by Jeroboam at Beth-el; later, a second one was set up in Samaria, the capital
 - It was the priests' responsibility to distinguish between clean and unclean (Lev 10:10), but they had failed in their duties, so Israel defiled herself
 - Cf. Rev 7, where it is included, yet not by name: Joseph minus Manasseh = Ephraim. Dan is excluded explicitly; Ephraim slips in without note

- 4 Their deeds will not allow them To return to their God. For a spirit of infidelity is within them, And they do not know the LORD.
- 4 Their deeds will not allow them To return to their God. For a spirit of harlotry is within them, And they do not know the LORD.
- 4 "Their actions hinder them from turning to their God, because a spirit of fornication is in their midst, and the LORD they do not know.

4 They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD.

- Their idolatrous practices ensnared them to the point that they could not return to their real God; they were addicted to sin, thus they did not acknowledge Yahweh

5 Moreover, the pride of Israel testifies against him, And Israel and Ephraim stumble in their wrongdoing; Judah also has stumbled with them.

5 Moreover, the pride of Israel testifies against him, And Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity; Judah also has stumbled with them.

5 The arrogance of Israel testifies against him; therefore Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their iniquity, and Judah with them.

5 And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them.

- The arrogance of the Israelites evidenced their guilt and caused them to stumble as they pursued iniquity (Cf. Prov 16:18)

— With their proud noses high in the air, they frequently stumbled as they walked

— Judah had also stumbled in some of the same sins

6 They will go with their flocks and herds To seek the LORD, but they will not find *Him*; He has withdrawn from them.

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6 They will go with their flocks and herds to seek the LORD, but they will not find him; he has withdrawn from them.

6 They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them.

- Set aside...for awhile (Cf. Luke 19:42; Rom 11:25); because they have withdrawn from the Lord, He must withdraw from them

— Holiness makes fellowship with God possible, while sin and hypocrisy rule it out

— Light refused results in darkness (Deut 32:20; Matt 6:23)

To them He is like a spare tire which they have on hand but are always hoping they won't have to use. Or He is like a life insurance policy or a fire extinguisher—you hope you never have to use them but they are there just in case the emergency arises. [J.V. McGee]

7 They have dealt treacherously with the LORD, For they have given birth to **illegitimate children**. Now the new moon will devour them with their land.

- 7 They have dealt treacherously against the LORD, For they have borne illegitimate children. Now the new moon will devour them with their land.
- 7 They have been unfaithful to the LORD, having raised unbelieving children. In the coming month they will be devoured, along with their fields.
- 7 They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions.
- They had "dealt treacherously" against the Lord by being unfaithful to their natural and covenant responsibilities to Him
 - They were like an unfaithful wife who gave birth to illegitimate children
 - There were probably many illegitimate children who were the products of the Israelites' mingling with temple prostitutes, who populated the Northern Kingdom
 - "...illegitimate children" - strange to God; the people did not raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Cf. Deut 6:4-9ff)
 - The Word of God was to be taught *in their homes*—not Sunday School

(E) Coming Assyrian destruction of Judah and Ephraim (5:8-15)

- 8** Blow the **horn** in Gibeah, **And the trumpet** in Ramah. Sound an alarm at Beth-aven: "Behind you, Benjamin!"
- 8** Blow the horn in Gibeah, The trumpet in Ramah. Sound an alarm at Beth-aven: "Behind you, Benjamin!"
- 8 "Sound the trumpet in Gibeah, and the alarm in Ramah. Cry out at Beth-aven Go out, Benjamin!"
- 8 Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud at Bethaven, after thee, O Benjamin.
- Gibeah, Ramah, and Bethaven are all cities of Benjamin, part of the Southern Kingdom, adjacent to the Northern Kingdom
 - The blowing of trumpets in cities announced the coming of an invader
 - "...horn" - *shofar*, ram's horn
 - "...trumpet" - *hatzotzerah*, a standard warning to alert the people to gather behind the city walls and prepare for battle

Syro-Ephramite War

The historical battle for which they were to prepare was the Syro-Ephramite War (735-733 BC), in which the alliance of Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel captured certain Benjaminite border towns, such as Gibeah, Ramah, and Bethel (or Bethaven) (Cf. 4:15; 2 Kings 16:5; Is 7:1-9)

This prompted King Ahaz of Judah to seek the aid of Assyria, the nation that then used Ahaz's request to sweep down upon Syria (734 BC) and Israel (722 BC). Heartened by the

aid received from Assyria, the people of Judah, using the old war cry "Behind you, Benjamin" (Cf. Judges 5:14), recaptured Gilgal, Ramah, and Bethel (v8). [Source: T. Miles Bennett, *Hosea: Prophet of God's Love*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids MI, 1975, pp.65-66.]

To prevent any of the participants in that intrigue from regarding themselves as being in charge of their own destiny, the Lord reminds them that it is He who declares what is sure (v9) following...

9 Ephraim will become a desolation in the day of rebuke; Among the tribes of Israel I make known what is trustworthy.

9 Ephraim will become a desolation in the day of rebuke; Among the tribes of Israel I declare what is sure.

9 Ephraim will be desolate when it is rebuked. I have made known among the tribes of Israel what will surely come about.

9 Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be.

- God had not failed to warn them. He always warns in advance—and always with the opportunity for repentance

— The consequence for their sins was that Ephraim would "be desolate"

— The Lord promised that this would surely happen (Cf. Lev 26:32-35)

10 The leaders of Judah have become like those who **displace a boundary marker**; On them I will pour out My anger like water.

10 The princes of Judah have become like those who move a boundary; On them I will pour out My wrath like water.

10 The princes of Judah have become like those who move boundary markers: I will pour out my anger on them like water.

10 The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

- The leaders of Judah had also broken covenant with the Lord (Cf. Is 5:8; Micah 2:1-2), as those who move boundary markers

— Judah had re-annexed Benjamite territory, violating the terms of the Mosaic Covenant regarding tribal allotments

— The boundaries that the leaders of Judah had moved were not just physical, but also spiritual: they moved the boundaries between right and wrong, true and false religion, and the true God and idols

- "...displace a boundary marker" - reminding Judah that its retaliatory attack upon Ephraim (v8) is like the crime of moving a boundary line, forbidden under penalty of divine curse

(Deut 19:14; 27:17; Cf. 1 Kings 15:22)

"...I will pour out My anger" - wrath, from a root meaning "to run over" is spoken of as "poured"

Severe judgments are announced to Judah, of which the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser and Sennacherib were the instruments. However, no ruin or lasting devastation is predicted, as was the case with the kingdom of Israel, which was destroyed by the Assyrians.

Boundaries

The individual who had the temerity to remove his neighbor's landmark was not only guilty of a great sin, but opened to a grievous curse.

Thou shall not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance;" — Deut 19:14

Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark. — Deut 27:17

The removal of the landmark characterized the conduct of men entirely regardless of the rights of others: "...and meddle not with them that are given to change..." — Prov 24:21

11 Ephraim is oppressed, broken by judgment, Because he was determined to follow *man's* command.

11 Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment, Because he was determined to follow *man's* command.

11 Ephraim is crushed, broken by judgment, because he willingly pursued idols.

11 Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment.

- Ephraim, on the other hand, would experience crushing judgment by an enemy invader because he determined to follow false gods rather than divine commands (Cf. Deut 4:3; 6:14; 8:19; 28:14; Jer 2:5)

— When the knowledge of the true and Living God is refused, false gods inevitably fill the vacuum (Rom 1:22-23)

The Gods We Worship...

We become like the gods we worship! (Ps 115:4-8; 135:15-18). Are stone idols cold, unresponsive, impersonal? If you worship them, you will become cold, unresponsive, impersonal. Is the world materialistic, harsh and unforgiving? If you worship the world you will become materialistic, harsh, and unforgiving. If you worship Christ, you will become like Him!

12 Therefore I am **like a moth** to Ephraim, And **like rottenness** to the house of Judah.

12 Therefore I am like a moth to Ephraim And like rottenness to the house of Judah.

12 Therefore I will consume Ephraim like a moth, and the house of Judah as rottenness consumes.

12 Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.

- "...like a moth" - moths do two things: (1) They distract us, and (2) they can destroy an entire wardrobe surprisingly quickly

— Like "a moth to Ephraim," their political fabric will be destroyed, slowly but surely, as a moth eats cloth or as rot causes wood and flesh to decay

- "...like rottenness" - like the woodworm which gnaws away wood

Our Heritage

Our own foundations are being removed in every imaginable way in our nation today. Try to find some founding father's history in our Museum of American History of the Smithsonian...How many of our school children can identify what made our American heritage unique?

13 When Ephraim saw his sickness, And Judah his sore, Ephraim then went to Assyria And sent word to **King Jareb**. But he is unable to heal you, Or to cure you of your sore.

13 When Ephraim saw his sickness, And Judah his wound, Then Ephraim went to Assyria And sent to King Jareb. But he is unable to heal you, Or to cure you of your wound.

13 When Ephraim examined his illness and Judah his injury, then Ephraim went to Assyria, and inquired of the great king; but he could not cure you nor heal your injury.

13 When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

- Both Israel and Judah appealed to the king of Assyria for help, but he was unable to save them

— King Ahaz of Judah did this (2 Kings 16:5-9); King Menahem (2 Kings 15:19-21) and King Hoshea of Israel (Cf. 2 Kings 17:3) did the same

— They resorted to the wrong remedies: foreign alliances rather than the Lord (they will make the same mistake again: Dan 9:27)

— Rather than assisting, the Assyrians attacked both nations

- "...King Jareb" - "warrior king"; could be an epithet for Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria, with whom both Israel and Judah made alliances

14 For I *will be like a lion* to Ephraim And like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, yes I, will tear to pieces and go away, I will carry away, and there will be no one to rescue.

14 For I *will be* like a lion to Ephraim And like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear to pieces and go away, I will carry away, and there will be none to deliver.

14 Therefore I will be like a lion to Ephraim, and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I—even I—will tear them to pieces, and then I will leave. I will take them away, and there will be no rescue.

14 For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.

- It will be Yahweh, not the Assyrians, who was ultimately responsible for the discipline of these kingdoms

- "...like a lion" - another figure of speech. As a lion, He would tear them to pieces and carry them away in judgment, and there would be no one who could deliver them

Israel fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC after two previous Assyrian invasions (in 743 and 734-32 BC). Judah escaped Assyria in 701 BC, due to King Hezekiah's trust in the Lord, but Babylon finally fulfilled this prophecy to her in 586 BC.

"It Could Never Happen Here"

This was the cry in Eastern Europe, doubting that Communism would ever take over, and this is the presumption that pervades our own country regarding God's judgment. It is the slogan of a fool in ignorance of God's nature and His commitments. We, too, live in a declining culture, and God's judgment appears overdue. He, again, may use our enemies as His mechanism of judgment. Our only hope is national repentance.

Basis for the Second Coming

15 **I will go away and return to My place** Until they acknowledge their **guilt** and seek My face; In their **distress** they will search for Me.

15 I will go away and return to My place Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.

15 "I will leave and go back to my place until they admit their offense and seek my face. When affliction comes to them, they will eagerly seek me."

15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.

- As a lion returns to its lair, Yahweh would go back to "His place" and leave His people until they bore their punishment and sought His forgiveness

- This is a remarkable verse (*the implications of which is missed by many commentators!*)

- The One speaking throughout this chapter is God Himself

- "I will go away and return to My place" - implying that He must have *left it* in order to "return"!

- This implies that God will be involved in two coming!
- “He came unto His own but His own received Him not” (John 1:11)
- “place” - God’s place is heaven; He left there, and returned to the right hand of the Father (Ps 110:1)
- He will stay there...until... “they acknowledge their offence and seek my face”
- “...guilt” - or “offence”; singular and specific
- Many label the “offence” as His crucifixion, but that was done by Gentile, not Jewish, hands. He was condemned and sentenced by a Gentile judge, and beaten and crucified by Gentile soldiers.
- *This establishes a prerequisite for the Second Coming of Christ!* Israel must repent and acknowledge their rejection of their Messiah before He can return to them (Cf. Lev 26:40-42; Jer 3:11-18; Zech 12:10; Matt 23:37-39)
- See note: **The Basis for the Second Coming** in Lev 26:40-42.
- Note: In Lev 26:42, the order of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is reversed. Is this seen from the future, looking back? (Cf. Rev 13:2 vs. Dan 7, et al.)
- “...distress” - the Great Tribulation was so labeled by Jesus Himself, by quoting Dan 12:1 (quoted in Matt 24:22)