

Hosea 08 - God's Full Indictment of Israel; Reaping the Whirlwind

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

- (2) Israel's coming judgment due to her idolatry (Hosea 8:1–10:15)
 - (A) Condemnation for puppet kings and idols (8:1-14)

Hosea 8

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1 Put the trumpet to your lips! Like an eagle *the enemy comes against the house of the LORD*, Because they have violated My covenant And rebelled against My Law.

1 Put the trumpet to your lips! Like an eagle *the enemy comes against the house of the LORD*, Because they have transgressed My covenant And rebelled against My law.

1 "Sound the ram's horn! Like a vulture the enemy will come against the Temple of the LORD, because Israel violated my covenant, transgressing my Law.

1 Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.

- A note of alarm: a trumpet is blown to signal an impending battle or judgment (Cf. 5:8)
- The enemy (the Assyrians) was ready to swoop down on Israel like a powerful eagle (Cf. the covenant curse, Deut 28:49)
- "...the house of the LORD" - Israel (northern kingdom)
- Judgment begins at the House of the Lord (1 Peter 4:17)
- The reason for this judgment was Israel's transgression of Yahweh's covenant (the Mosaic Covenant), and the nation's rebellion against His (Mosaic) Law
- Historically, this was fulfilled in the invasion of Tiglath-Pileser III (734-733 BC) and the conquest of Shalmaneser in 722 BC (2 Kings 15:29; 17:1-6)

2 They cry out to Me, "My God, we of Israel know You!"

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2 They cry out to me, 'God, we of Israel acknowledge you.'

2 Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee.

- A last ditch pretense, which is prevalent today: people *claim* to know God—but they don't. Their transgressions and rebellion prove that they don't/didn't

- They forget that God is to be *obeyed* and they therefore must live their lives differently: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46) (Note: this is followed by the parable of the man who built his house on sand and suffered the loss of everything...)
- Their knowledge of Him was only historical and traditional (Cf. John 8:33)

- 3 Israel has rejected the good; **The enemy** will pursue him.
- 3 Israel has rejected the good; The enemy will pursue him.
- 3 "Israel has discarded what is good. The enemy will pursue them.
- 3 Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him.
- Israel made a pretense of devotion to the Lord, addressing Him as her own God and claiming to acknowledge His authority over her, yet, this profession was mere lip service (Cf. 4:1,6; 5:4)
- Her sinful actions spoke louder than her words
- In reality, she had rejected (cast off) what was good—the Lord's moral and ethical requirements (Cf. Amos 5:14-15; Micah 6:8)
- "...The enemy" - consequently an enemy would soon pursue her; this sudden judgment will fulfill another covenant curse (Cf. Deut 28:45)

Five Grounds for God's Judgment

- (1) The Breaking of God's Covenant (v3)
- (2) The Choice of Ungodly Kings (v4)
- (3) Idolatry (v5)
- (4) Alliances with the Ungodly Nations (v9-10)
- (5) False Altars (v11)

- 4 They have set up kings, **but not by Me**; They have appointed officials, but I did not know *it*. With their silver and gold they have made idols for themselves, So that they will be eliminated.
- 4 They have set up kings, but not by Me; They have appointed princes, but I did not know *it*. With their silver and gold they have made idols for themselves, That they might be cut off.
- 4 They set kings in place, but not by me. They established princes, whom I did not recognize. They crafted idols for themselves from their silver and gold; as a result, they will be destroyed.
- 4 They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.

- "...but not by Me" - they had appointed kings and other leaders without consulting the Lord
- Jeroboam led a rebellion, and the line of kings which he set up did not include men who turned to the living God
- This alludes to the series of palace revolts that plagued the Northern Kingdom after Jeroboam II's reign (Cf. 7:5-7)
- These kings never attempted in any way to bring the people into the worship of God. Instead, they all went into idolatry.

5 He has **rejected** *your calf, Samaria*, saying, "My anger burns against them!" How long will they be incapable of innocence?

5 He has rejected your calf, O Samaria, saying, "My anger burns against them!" How long will they be incapable of innocence?

5 Your calf, Samaria, has been thrown away. My anger is burning against them. How long until they become pure again?

5 Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocence?

- Bad leaders lead to bad religion, and vice versa
- "...your calf" - Israel had also made idols for themselves in direct violation of the 2nd commandment (Cf. Ex 20:4)
- The calf-idols were set up in Dan and Bethel; expressly forbidden by God's law (Ex 20:3-6; 34:17; Lev 19:4, et al; Cf. 1 Kings 12:28-31; Hosea 10:5)
- Ahab married Jezebel whose father was a priest in Sidon among the Phoenicians, worshipers of Baal
- Jezebel had transported to Israel several hundred prophets of Baal, and many Israelites became worshipers of Baal (Cf. 7:1; 10:7)
- "...Samaria" - Samaria had become the capital of Israel under Omri, the father of Ahab; it represents the whole Northern Kingdom
- "...rejected" - *zanach*, makes a striking wordplay with the same word in v3
- Israel had cast off what is good and turned to idols; the Lord responded appropriately by casting them off
- As Moses and Joshua had warned, the Lord's anger burned against the idolatry
- In despair the Lord asked, How long will they be committed to impurity? (Deut 11:17; Joshua 23:16)
- The words "cast off" [KJV] follow the LXX. However, the Hebrew is literally, "He has rejected your calf, O Samaria" [NASB]
- This third person reference to God within a divine speech is unusual, but is attested elsewhere (Cf. 1:7) "the LORD"; (2:22) "the LORD"; (4:6) "your God"; (4:10) "the LORD";

(4:12) "their God"; (8:13) "the LORD" and "He"

6 For from Israel comes even this! A craftsman made it, so it **is not God**; Assuredly, the calf of Samaria will be broken to pieces.

6 For from Israel is even this! A craftsman made it, so it is not God; Surely the calf of Samaria will be broken to pieces.

6 Because from Israel it was fashioned by craftsmen, it is not God; therefore Samaria's calf will be broken in pieces.

6 For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.

- From Israel, of all people, had come the pagan idol

- "...is not God" - how can the product of mere human craftsmanship be considered a god? (Cf. Is 40:18-20; 44:9-20)

— The words "it is not God" was a refutation of Jeroboam's declaration, "Here are your gods, O Israel" (1 Kings 12:28; Cf. Ex 32:4)

— The destruction of this image would demonstrate the futility of idolatry

7 For they sow wind And they **harvest a storm**. The standing grain has no kernels; **It yields no grain**. If it were to yield, **strangers would swallow it**.

7 For they sow the wind And they reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads; It yields no grain. Should it yield, strangers would swallow it up.

7 "Because they sow the wind, they will reap the wind storm. The plant has no stalk and its bud yields no grain. Even if there's a harvest, foreigners will gobble it up.

7 For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

- Farmers sow seed and reap grain, but Israel had sowed "the wind," something foolish and worthless (Cf. Job 7:7; Prov 11:29; Eccl 1:14,17): idolatry

- "...harvest a storm" - consequently, instead of reaping something beneficial and nourishing, they would reap a "whirlwind," something vain but also destructive

- "...it yields no grain" - the agricultural metaphor continues. Israel's crop would be worthless, containing only stalks without grain.

- "...strangers would swallow it" - even if she would produce grain, foreigners would take it away and the nation would not benefit from her labor

8 Israel has been swallowed up; They are now among the nations Like **a vessel in which no one delights**.

8 Israel is swallowed up; They are now among the nations Like a vessel in which no one delights.

8 Israel has been devoured; now they will live among the nations like a worthless container.
8 Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.

- Hosea looked ahead to the time of Israel's judgment
- Already Israel had been swallowed up by her foreign intrigues (Cf. 7:8-12), which was swiftly robbing the nation of its strength and identity as the Lord's people
 - They would be swallowed up by the nations; they would lose their sovereignty and their identity
 - "...a vessel in which no one delights" - is literally "a pot in which no one delights" (Cf. Jer 22:28; 48:38)
 - Israel had lost the reason for her existence

9 For they have gone up to Assyria, *Like a wild donkey* all alone; Ephraim has **paid fees for lovers**.

- 9 For they have gone up to Assyria, *Like a wild donkey* all alone; Ephraim has hired lovers.
- 9 "Because they went over to Assyria, they are like a wild donkey alone by itself. Ephraim has hired some lovers.
- 9 For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers.
 - Ephraim (Israel) had made treaties with Assyria to help protect her from enemies (Cf. 7:11); however, the Assyrians would turn and devour Israel
 - "...a wild donkey" - wild asses (donkeys) are notorious for their willfulness and being difficult to control (Cf. Jer 2:24); so was Israel
 - "...paid fees for lovers" - Ephraim was worse than a harlot in that she paid others to love her rather than receiving pay from them (Cf. 2:5; Jer 2:23-25)

10 Even though they pay *for allies* among the nations, I will gather them up now; And they will begin to diminish Because of the **king of officials**.

10 Even though they hire *allies* among the nations, Now I will gather them up; And they will begin to diminish Because of the burden of the king of princes.

10 Even though they sold themselves to the nations, I will gather them. They will mourn for a while for the burden they were to the king and princes.

10 Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes.

- Making allies among the pagan nations through treaties would not work; Yahweh Himself would gather them up to judge them
- "...king of officials" - the king of the Assyrian Empire; God's instrument of judgment
 - This was the very king whom the Israelites appealed to for protection (Cf. 10:6; Is 10:8)
 - This is also an OT allusion to the Antichrist; see [Allusions to the Antichrist](#)

- Despite their desperate attempts to preserve themselves, God's judgment was certain

11 Since Ephraim has multiplied altars for sin, They have become **altars of sinning** for him.

11 Since Ephraim has multiplied altars for sin, They have become altars of sinning for him.

11 "The more altars Ephraim builds for sin, the more altars there will be for sin.

11 Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.

- "...altars of sinning" - in rebellion, the Israelites had built many altars (Deut 12)

— They built them to offer many sin offerings, but since God had not authorized these altars they became places for sinning rather than places for worship

— More altars simply meant more sinning

Empty Ritualism

The people had built many altars for sin offerings, but these altars had become altars for sinning, as the religious acts conducted there were hypocritical. Observances of any kind are an offense to God when not combined with a wholehearted devotion to His commandments (Cf. 6:6; Is 1:11). So the Lord would not accept the sacrifices offered to Him. Instead He would punish her for her sins by sending her into exile.

12 Though I wrote for him ten thousand *precepts* of My Law, They are regarded as a strange thing.

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12 I prescribed great things from my Law for them, but they considered them profane.

12 I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.

- The Israelites treated the demands in the Mosaic Covenant as something foreign to their lives

— While treating God's laws as foreign, they had imported foreign idols and practices, and followed them

- They—and our nation as well—were ignorant of the Word of God; it is counted as "a strange thing"

— Biblical illiteracy today is at an all-time high, especially in the church

13 As for My sacrificial gifts, They sacrifice the **flesh** and eat *it*, *But* the LORD has taken no delight in them. Now He will remember their guilt, And punish *them* for their sins; They will **return to Egypt**.

13 As for My sacrificial gifts, They sacrifice the flesh and eat *it*, *But* the LORD has taken no delight in them. Now He will remember their iniquity, And punish *them* for their sins; They

will return to Egypt.

13 They offer me meat from the sacrifices of my offerings, and they eat from it, but the LORD does not accept them. He will now remember their transgression and pay them back for their sins; to Egypt they will return.

13 They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt.

- They offered the sacrifices prescribed in the Law, but the Lord looked at them as only meat; they had no sacrificial value to Him
- "...flesh" - *basar*, meat; it's in the emphatic position before the verb, meaning God regarded the sacrifices as nothing more than meat
- He took no delight in these sacrifices because the people mixed them with rebellion
- "...return to Egypt" - when the Babylonians subsequently conquered Assyria, many from the Northern Kingdom joined the captives from Judah
- We know from the Book of Jeremiah that many of the people went to Egypt. That may be what is alluded to here
- Josephus wrote that the Roman general Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD, sent many Jews as prisoners to the Egyptian mines
- Alternatively, Egypt is used as an idiom of bondage...

Egypt

Egypt stands here as a symbol for the place of future exile and bondage (Cf. 9:3; 11:5; Deut 28:68). This highlights the appropriateness of God's judgment: in the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, Israel had experienced God's grace; having spurned that grace, she would return to slavery.

14 For Israel **has forgotten his Maker** and built palaces; And Judah has multiplied fortified cities, But I will send a fire on its cities, and **it will consume its palatial buildings**.

14 For Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces; And Judah has multiplied fortified cities, But I will send a fire on its cities that it may consume its palatial dwellings.

14 "Israel has neglected its maker in building palaces. Judah has multiplied its fortified cities, but I will send fire to their cities, and it will consume their fortresses."

14 For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.

- "...has forgotten his Maker" - this tells the tale: "Israel hath forgotten his Maker"
- Instead of continuing to trust and obey Him, the people had put their confidence in their own ability to provide for themselves

- This attitude of self-reliance manifested itself in building palaces and fortified cities as places of protection
- “forgotten” - *shakach*, to forget, ignore, wither; to cease to care; better translated “neglect”
- “...it will consume its palatial buildings” - the Lord would destroy (by fire) these sources of false security, fulfilling a covenant curse (Cf. Deut 28:52)
- God’s judgment came through the Assyrians: Sennacherib “attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them” (2 Kings 18:13)
- It is our inescapable knowledge of God coupled with our unreasonable rejection of that knowledge that makes us guilty before Him (Rom 1:18-20)
- A final illustration of the nation’s unfaithfulness was her attempts at self-sufficiency; Judah is also included in the indictment at this point