

Hosea 09 - The Penalty for Ingratitude; The Insanity of Paganism

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)

(B) Condemnation for religious harlotry (9:1-17)

Hosea 9

(B) Condemnation for religious harlotry (9:1-17)

1 Do not rejoice, Israel, with jubilation like the nations! For you have been unfaithful, abandoning your God. You have loved the earnings of *unfaithfulness* on every threshing floor.

1 Do not rejoice, O Israel, with exultation like the nations! For you have played the harlot, forsaking your God. You have loved *harlots'* earnings on every threshing floor.

1 "Don't celebrate, Israel, like other nations would rejoice, because you left your God by committing fornication, loving the profit you gained on all of the threshing floors.

1 Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor.

- At every threshing floor Israel had erroneously attributed the prosperity of her harvests to Baal (Cf. 2:5)

— She had become an adulteress, offering worship to Baal and receiving from Baal the wages of a prostitute

— Those "wages" were wheat (at the threshing floor), vines and figs (2:12), and food, water, wool, linen, oil, and drink (2:5)

— That is, Israel believed that by prostituting herself in worship of Baal that Baal in turn blessed her crops and gave her other necessities of life

2 Threshing floor and wine press will not feed them, And the new wine will fail them.

2 Threshing floor and wine press will not feed them, And the new wine will fail them.

2 Neither threshing floor nor winepress will sustain them, and the new wine will disappoint her.

2 The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her.

- The plentiful harvests were about to end (Cf. 2:9-12)

— In fulfillment of several of the covenant curses (Cf. Deut 28:30,38-42,51), the Lord would take away her grain and wine (Cf. 2:9; 7:14)

— Blessings abused are blessings withdrawn (Deut 30:17-18); Israel's unfaithfulness had precluded further blessing

3 They will not remain in the LORD'S land, But Ephraim will return to **Egypt**, And in Assyria they will eat **unclean food**.

3 They will not remain in the LORD's land, But Ephraim will return to Egypt, And in Assyria they will eat unclean food.

3 They will not live in the LORD's land— Ephraim will return to Egypt, and they will eat unclean food in Assyria.

3 They shall not dwell in the LORD'S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.

- Moses had commanded them never to return to Egypt, which represents bondage (Ex 20:2)

— This judgment would be accomplished ultimately through invasion and exile

— The land belonged to the Lord (Cf. Ex 15:17; Lev 25:23), who was responsible for its fertility (Cf. Deut 11:10-12)

— When the people attributed the produce of the land to Baal, they forfeited the blessing of living on it in peace and prosperity (Deut 11:8-21)

- "...Egypt" - again mentioned as a symbol of the place of exile (Cf. 7:16; 8:13; 11:5) because it was the original place of Israel's captivity (Deut 28:68)

— Assyria would be the actual location (2 Kings 17:6)

- "...unclean food" - in an unclean land, Israel would be (Cf. Amos 7:17) forced to eat ceremonially unclean food (Cf. Ezek 4:13) rather than the fruits of God's blessing

— The punishment fit the crime: Israel had become defiled by her sin; it's appropriate that she eat defiled food in a defiled land (Cf. 5:3; 6:10)

— Israel had proved herself unworthy of the freedom she had enjoyed in the land

4 They will not pour out drink offerings of wine to the LORD, Nor will their sacrifices please Him. *Their bread will be* to them like mourners' bread; All who eat it will be defiled, Because their bread will be for themselves *alone*; It will not enter the house of the LORD.

4 They will not pour out drink offerings of wine to the LORD, Their sacrifices will not please Him. *Their bread will be* like mourners' bread; All who eat of it will be defiled, For their bread will be for themselves *alone*; It will not enter the house of the LORD.

4 They won't present wine offerings to the LORD, nor will they please him. Their sacrifices will seem like food for mourners— everyone who eats them will become unclean; none of them will enter the Temple of the LORD.

4 They shall not offer wine offerings to the LORD, neither shall they be pleasing unto him: their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be

polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the LORD.

- Wine offerings to cease (Ex 29:38-41); wine also used with burnt offerings (Num 28:3-9) and peace offerings also (Num 15:8-10)

— Sacrifices offered in a foreign land would not be acceptable to the Lord. They would have the same effect on a worshiper as bread eaten by mourners, who made everything they touched ceremonially unclean because they had contacted a dead body (Cf. Num 19:14-15,22)

— Such bread was not fit for use in worship

- In exile, opportunity for legitimate worship to the Lord would end

— Again the punishment fitted the crime: it was appropriate since Israel's Levitical worship had been corrupted by hypocrisy (Cf. 6:6; 8:11-13)

— A nation that refused to conduct its formal worship in the proper spirit would be denied its privilege of worship

5 What will you do on the day of the appointed festival And on the day of the feast of the LORD?

5 What will you do on the day of the appointed festival And on the day of the feast of the LORD?

5 "What will you do on the designated holiday, when the LORD's festival comes?

5 What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the LORD?

- The Israelites would have nothing to offer the Lord when their annual feasts rolled around. Their typical offerings would be unacceptable while they were in exile.

— Some suggest that the Feast of Tabernacles is specifically in view (Cf. Lev 23:39)

6 For behold, they will be gone because of destruction; **Egypt** will gather them together, **Memphis** will bury them. Weeds will take possession of their treasures of silver; Thorns *will be* in their tents.

6 For behold, they will go because of destruction; Egypt will gather them up, Memphis will bury them. Weeds will take over their treasures of silver; Thorns *will be* in their tents.

6 Look! They have gone away because of the destruction— Egypt will gather them up, and Memphis will bury them. Weeds will overgrow their inheritance, and thorns will grow in their tents.

6 For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles.

- Destruction would sweep over the land (Cf. Hosea 7:13; 10:14). Those who happened to escape the sword of the invading army would face exile.

- "...Egypt...Memphis" - as two undertakers, they would bury the exiles

- Memphis, about 20 mi S of modern Cairo, their capital at the time, was also famous as a burial place
- Here it may symbolize the ultimate destination of the exiles—a foreign graveyard
- Few would ever return to their homeland (Cf. Jer 44:1-14)
- Meanwhile back in Israel, the exiles' possessions (treasures of silver) and homes (tents) would lie in ruins and would be overgrown by briars and thorns (10:8; Cf. Deut 28:36-46)

7 The days of punishment have come, The days of retribution have come; Let Israel know *this!* **The prophet is a fool**, The inspired person is insane, Because of the grossness of your wrongdoing, And *because your hostility* is so great.

7 The days of punishment have come, The days of retribution have come; Let Israel know *this!* The prophet is a fool, The inspired man is demented, Because of the grossness of your iniquity, And *because your hostility* is so great.

7 The time for your judgment has now come; payday is here— and Israel knows it. The prophet is a fool, and the spiritual man is insane. Because of your great sin, the hatred against you is great.

7 The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.

- Israel knew that the days of her punishment and God's retribution were imminent because the nation's iniquity was far and its hostility to the Lord was great.

- "...the prophet is a fool" - another reason for judgment was that the Israelites had regarded the prophets whom the Lord had sent to them as demented fools (Cf. 2 Kings 9:11; Jer 29:26-27)

— This is similar to what was encountered by Amos: when he came preaching against Israel, he was met at Bethel by Amaziah, the official head of the Northern Kingdom's religious establishment, who regarded his words as treachery, and who arranged his dismissal (Amos 7:10-13)

— Even the Lord Himself was similarly accused of being demon-possessed by those who disagreed with His teaching (John 7:20)

- "...hostility" - refers to intense animosity, such as Esau felt toward Jacob after Esau had been cheated of the paternal blessing (Gen 27:41, "held a grudge")

— Also used in v8

— The ungodly disregard God: they disobey Him when His will is made known to them; they despise Him when He chastens and judges them

Israel would not know their judgment by believing it; now, Hosea says, they will know it by feeling it.

As is typical of our human behavior, when we cannot acknowledge our guilt we may react towards our accusers with anger. Hosea's critics answered sharply not because they thought he was wrong but because, deep down, they knew he was right.

8 **Ephraim was a watchman** with my God, a prophet; Yet the snare of a bird catcher is in all his ways, *And there is only hostility in the house of his God.*

8 Ephraim was a watchman with my God, a prophet; Yet the snare of a bird catcher is in all his ways, *And there is only hostility in the house of his God.*

8 While Ephraim stands watch with my God, the prophet has snares set that will trap his ways, and hostility lodges in the Temple of his God.

8 The watchman of Ephraim was with my God: but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God.

- "Ephraim was a watchman" - a watchman was responsible for warning a city of an approaching enemy (Cf. Ezek 33:6)

— In the same way God's prophets were to warn the people of coming judgment on sin (Cf. Jer 6:17; Ezek 3:17; 33:7-9)

- "...the house of his God" - refers to the land of Israel (8:1; 9:15)

— The irony of the situation is that Israel tried to ensnare the prophets God had placed as watchmen over the nation

9 They are deeply depraved As in the **days of Gibeah**; He will remember their guilt, He will punish their sins.

9 They have gone deep in depravity As in the days of Gibeah; He will remember their iniquity, He will punish their sins.

9 They have corrupted themselves deeply, as did Gibeah in its day. Therefore God will remember their lawlessness, and he will pay them back for their sins.

9 They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.

- "...the days of Gibeah" - Cf. 10:9; Judges 19-21

Gibeah

Gibeah was a town occupied by the tribe of Benjamin and it had become a symbol from the terrible deeds done there. During the days of the Judges, a Levite, traveling and unable to reach home sought shelter for himself and his concubine. A band of depraved youth gathered outside his host's house and desired homosexual relations with his guest (similar to the situation with the angelic visitors in Sodom, Gen 19).

The host delivered the concubine instead. She was used all night and left on the doorstep dead. The Levite took her body home, cut it into twelve pieces, and sent the parts to each

of the tribes of Israel. The shock succeeded: the sin resulted in war in Israel as the other tribes rallied and attacked the people of Benjamin and almost wiped them out (all but 600, Cf. Judges 19-21). War would come again, and God would almost entirely obliterate all the Israelites for their sins.

The atrocities—and the near wipe out of the Tribe of Benjamin—were indicative of the low point in the morality of the people of the times. On that occasion it was said, "Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt" (Judges 19:30). *But Hosea announces that that benchmark of history was now rivaled by Israel's blatant sins against the Lord.*

Israel's Humiliation

10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first season. *But* they came to Baal-peor and devoted themselves to shame, And they became as detestable as that which they loved.

10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first season. *But* they came to Baal-peor and devoted themselves to shame, And they became as detestable as that which they loved.

10 "I found Israel, as one finds grapes in the wilderness; Your ancestors seemed to me like the fruit gleaned from a fig tree's first harvest. When they went to **Baal-peor**, they devoted themselves to that filth, and they became loathsome, like what they loved.

10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.

- In the early days of Israel's history in the wilderness, the Lord took great delight in His people, like a person rejoices when they find grapes in the desert or the first figs of the season (Cf. Song 2:13; Is 28:4; Jer 24:2; Micah 7:1)

- "...Baal-peor" - when the Israelites came to Baal-peor, they worshipped Baal and committed ritual sex with the Moabite and Midianite women (Num 25), they became as detestable to *Yahweh* as the idols they loved

— The first instance of Baal worship in Israel's history set the pattern of Israel's idolatry that followed in the land, and resulted in her present judgment

— In Hosea's day Israel had also defiled herself by making Baal her lover and, like the generation at Peor, they too had engaged in fertility rites (Cf. 4:13-14)

11 As for **Ephraim**, their glory will fly away like a bird— No birth, no pregnancy, and no conception!

11 As for Ephraim, their glory will fly away like a bird— No birth, no pregnancy and no conception!

11 The glory of Ephraim will fly away like a bird— no birth, no pregnancy, not even a conception.

11 As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.

- "...Ephraim" - the glory of the Ephraimites, their numerous children, would fly away like a bird, quickly and irretrievably

— There would be few births, pregnancies or even conceptions

— Because the Ephraimites looked to Baal for the blessing of human fertility, Yahweh would without it in judgment. Ephraim, the "doubly fruitful" would become complete fruitless.

12 Though they bring up their children, Yet I will bereave them of their children until not a person is left. Yes, woe to them indeed when I depart from them!

12 Though they bring up their children, Yet I will bereave them until not a man is left. Yes, woe to them indeed when I depart from them!

12 Even if they rear their children, I will, in turn, make them childless— in fact, woe to them when I turn away from them!

12 Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!

- Most of the children born would die prematurely

— Appropriately many of those who had tried to secure fertility through Baal worship would become sterile and barren (Cf. 4:10 and, in contrast, Deut 7:14)

13 Ephraim, as I have seen, Is planted in a pasture like Tyre; But Ephraim is going to bring out his children for slaughter.

13 Ephraim, as I have seen, Is planted in a pleasant meadow like Tyre; But Ephraim will bring out his children for slaughter.

13 Ephraim, as I see it, is like Tyre, planted in a comfortable place; Ephraim will bear children but they will be executed."

13 Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer.

- God saw that Ephraim had been fertile in the past, comparable to the prosperity of Tyre

— However in the future, Ephraim's sons would become prey to the enemy, similar to those in Tyre

14 Give to them, LORD—what will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dried-up breasts.

14 Give them, O LORD—what will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.

14 Give them, LORD— What will you give? You will give them a womb that miscarries and dry breasts.

14 Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.

- Hosea here is calling down God's judgment on Israel; he has become both the announcer of judgment and the imprecator of judgment upon Israel (Cf. v17)

Sin never dies a natural death; it must be thoroughly *judged*. Like leaven, it is stopped by fire—by "judgment," self-judgment or God's judgment; for sin ever works on until it is judged. When indulged in by an individual, or permitted in a company, it continues working, though often imperceptibly, until it is judged, either in oneself, or by God's people, or by God Himself.

Expulsion from the Land

15 All their evil is at **Gilgal**; Indeed, I came to **hate** them there! Because of the wickedness of their deeds **I will drive them out of My house!** I will no longer love them; All their leaders are rebels.

15 All their evil is at Gilgal; Indeed, I came to hate them there! Because of the wickedness of their deeds **I will drive them out of My house!** I will **love** them no more; All their princes are rebels.

15 "All of their wickedness started in Gilgal, because I began to hate them there. Because of the wickedness of their behavior, I will drive them from my Temple. I will not love them anymore; all their leaders are rebels.

15 All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolters.

"...Gilgal" - Gilgal stood for both the historic rebellion against God in the establishment of a human monarchy (1 Sam 11:14-15; Cf. 8:7; Hosea 3:4; 7:3-7; 8:4; 10:3,7,15) and the current spiritual rebellion in the shrine to Baal (4:15; Amos 4:4; 5:5; Cf. Hosea 12:4)

— Hosea views God as acting in history, thus historical events and the geographical sites where the occurred become vehicles for divine truth

— The events of the Exodus from Egypt spoke volumes about God, as did the events that took place in the wilderness (v10) and Gilgal

— To Hosea, God's response to the people at those places forever remains as truth about the nature of God

— "...hate" - covenant terminology meaning that God "opposed" them; this is not describing God's personal emotion toward them

- "...I will drive them out of My house!" - God would drive Israel out of the land, just as He had expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden, and the Canaanites from the land, because they had sinned and adopted the ways of sinners

- "...love" - choose to bless; God would no longer choose to bless Israel because all their leaders rebelled against Him

16 Ephraim is stricken, their **root is dried up**, They will produce no fruit. Even though they give birth to children, I will put to death the precious ones of their womb.

16 Ephraim is stricken, their root is dried up, They will bear no fruit. Even though they bear children, I will slay the precious ones of their womb.

16 Ephraim is blighted; its roots shriveled. It can bear no fruit. Even if they bear children, I will kill their cherished offspring.

16 Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.

- "...root is dried up" - no hope for the future because of widespread sterility and infant mortality (v11-14); also refers to agricultural unfruitfulness and animal infertility

— Ephraim, once a symbol of fruitfulness, would be compared to a withered plant incapable of bearing fruit

— Miscarriages in the womb would be a judgment from God

17 **My** God will reject them Because they have **not listened to Him**; And they will be **wanderers** among the nations.

17 My God will cast them away Because they have not listened to Him; And they will be wanderers among the nations.

17 "My God will reject them, because they did not obey him, and they will become wanderers among the nations."

17 My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

- "My" - Hosea speaks now in the 1st person, proclaiming God's judgment on Israel (Cf. v14)

— Because of her disobedience Israel would be rejected by God (Cf. 4:6)

— "...not listened to Him" - they were non-responsive to Him (Cf. Deut 28:62-64)

— "...wanderers" - *nadad*, translates the same Hebrew word "strayed" in 7:13

— In exile, Israel's people would become wanderers among the nations, in the same way Cain wandered the earth (Gen 4:12)

— Again the punishment fit the crime. Those who willfully strayed from the path of covenant loyalty were condemned to wander aimlessly among those outside the covenant (foreign nations).

