

# Hosea 10 - Retribution for Israel's Sin; Israel's Coming War

## 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)
  - (C) Condemnation for general rebellion (10:1-14)

### Hosea 10

(C) Condemnation for general rebellion (10:1-14)

- 1 Israel is **aluxuriant vine**; He produces fruit for himself. The more his fruit, The more altars he made; The richer his land, The better he made the memorial stones.
  - 1 Israel is a luxuriant vine; He produces fruit for himself. The more his fruit, The more altars he made; The richer his land, The better he made the **sacred pillars**.
  - 1 "Israel, the overgrown vine, bears fruit like itself; the more fruitful they become, the more altars they build. The better the land, the more ornate the stone idols.
  - 1 Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.
  - "...a luxuriant vine" - Hosea compared Israel to a luxuriant vine; the people were enjoying great economic prosperity
    - God had planted Israel in Canaan like a vine, and had blessed it with fruitful prosperity (Cf. Ps 80:8-10; Jer 2:21; Ezek 19:10-11)
    - Yet the more God blessed Israel, the more the Israelites multiplied altars and sacred pillars to honor idols
    - They worshipped pagan gods in response to God's blessing
- 2 **Their heart is deceitful**; Now they must suffer for their guilt. The LORD will break down their altars *And* destroy their memorial stones.
  - 2 Their heart is faithless; Now they must bear their guilt. The Lord will break down their altars *And* destroy their **sacred pillars**.
  - 2 Their hearts are divided; from now on they are to be found guilty. God will tear down their altars, he will destroy their stone idols.
  - 2 Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.

- "Their heart is deceitful" - such behavior (v1) indicated a deceitful heart, for which the Israelites were guilty before God
- God would destroy the altars and pillar they had erected

### **Judgment on Israel's Political Symbol (King) (v3-8)**

**3** Certainly now they will say, "We have no king, For we do not revere the LORD. As for the king, what can he do for us?"

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**3** From now on they will say, 'We have no king, because we did not fear the LORD— and what would a king do for us?'

**3** For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us?

- When the Lord brought judgment and destruction, the people would realize that their self-appointed king had failed them; they would acknowledge that no human king could help them

— The northern kingdom never had even one good king

— In the aftermath of the calamity the people would recognize their own unfaithfulness as the basis for judgment

— Hoshea was Israel's last king before their exile; perhaps he was already on the throne when Hosea gave this prophecy

**4** They speak *mere* words, With worthless oaths they make covenants; And judgment sprouts like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field.

**4** They speak *mere* words, With worthless oaths they make covenants; And judgment sprouts like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field.

**4** Their word is falsely given as they make their agreements; so judgment springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of a field.

**4** They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.

- Israel swore falsely in making covenants, with one another and with other nations (Israel broke faith with Shalmaneser to make agreement with Egypt (2 Kings 17:4; Amos 5:7; 6:12))

— Their attitude toward fellow Israelites (including frequently taking each other to court) simply reflected their lack of loyalty to God

— They had abandoned any sanctity of their commitments; consequently, God's judgment was as inevitable as poisonous weeds growing up in the furrows of their fields and choking out their crops

5 The inhabitants of Samaria will fear For **the calf of Beth-aven**. Indeed, its people will mourn for it, And its idolatrous priests will cry out over it, Over its glory, since it has left it.

5 The inhabitants of Samaria will fear For the calf of Beth-aven. Indeed, its people will mourn for it, And its idolatrous priests will cry out over it, Over its glory, since it has departed from it.

5 "The residents of Samaria will be terrified because of the cows of Beth-aven. Its people will mourn over Beth-aven, along with the priests who will mourn its glory, because that glory has departed.

5 The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Beth-Aven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.

- "...the calf of Beth-Aven" - the calf-idol located in Beth Aven (i.e., Bethel; Cf. 4:15; 8:5) would be carried away by the victorious Assyrian army, causing great fear among its worshipers and the idolatrous priests

6 The thing itself will be brought to Assyria As a gift of tribute to **King Jareb**; Ephraim will be seized with shame, And Israel will be **ashamed** of its own plan.

6 The thing itself will be carried to Assyria As tribute to King Jareb; Ephraim will be seized with shame And Israel will be ashamed of its own counsel.

6 Indeed, that glory will be carried to Assyria— it will become a present for an avenging king. Ephraim will be disgraced, and Israel will become ashamed of its decision.

6 It shall be also carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

- The Assyrians would carry this golden calf to their land in honor of their king (Cf. 8:10)

— Israel would then feel "shame" because the Israelites had decided to trust in a foreign alliance with the Assyrians for their security (Cf. 5:13; 7:8-9,11; 8:9-10)

- "...King Jareb" - refers to Assyria's king (Cf. Hosea 8:10)

— The reference to the Assyrian army carrying off the idols of defeated foes is abundantly illustrated in neo-Assyrian literature and art

- "...ashamed" - the text is better translated, "Israel will be shamed of its own counsel" (Cf. KJV, NASB, NIV margin)

— The reference being to the nation's unwise political policy of courting Assyria's favor (Cf. 5:13; 7:8-9,11; 8:9-10)

7 Samaria will be destroyed *with* her king, Like a twig on the surface of the water.

7 Samaria will be cut off *with* her king Like a stick on the surface of the water.

7 Samaria's king will float away like driftwood on the surface of water.

7 As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water.

- Israel's king, as well as her calf-idol, would be removed in the coming invasion (Cf. v3,15)
- The nation would be floated away like foam or a twig floating on the waters, swept away by the current and brought to ruin
- They would be helpless, totally at the mercy of the Assyrians

8 Also **the high places** of Aven, the sin of Israel, will be destroyed; **Thorns and thistles** will grow on their altars; Then they will say to the mountains, "**Cover us!**" And to the hills, "**Fall on us!**"

8 Also the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, will be destroyed; Thorn and thistle will grow on their altars; Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" And to the hills, "Fall on us!"

8 Destroyed will be the high places of Aven, that are the sin of Israel. Both thorn and thistle will grow up over their altars. They will call out to the mountains, 'Cover us!' and to the hills, 'Fall on us!'

8 The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.

- "...the high places" - the reference to the destruction of the high places is ironic; when Israel entered the land the Lord commanded her to destroy these worship centers (Cf. Lev 26:30-31 Num 33:52; Deut 12:2-3)

— Since Israel did not obey, the Lord used the Assyrians to fulfill His command

- "...the thorn and the thistle" - the sites of idolatrous worship would be destroyed and the ruins overgrown with thorns and thistles (Cf. 9:6)

- "...Cover us!...Fall on us!" - in utter desperation the people would beg the mountains to fall on them (Joshua 10:16)

— Jesus made this same prediction in Luke 23:30

— A similar plea will be made by unbelievers in the Tribulation in response to the terror of God's wrath in the seal judgments (Rev 6:16)

### **Israel's Coming War**

9 Since the **days of Gibeah** you have sinned, Israel; There they stand! **Will the battle against the sons of injustice not overtake them in Gibeah?**

9 From the days of Gibeah you have sinned, O Israel; There they stand! Will not the battle against the sons of iniquity overtake them in Gibeah?

9 "From the time of Gibeah, you have sinned, Israel; There they took their stand; the battle at Gibeah could not subdue the lawless.

9 O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them.

- "...days of Gibeah" - again a reference to the shameful incident at Gibeah (Judges 19-20; Cf. Hosea 9:9; Is 1:10)

— The Israelites sinned consistently since the days of the atrocity at Gibeah

— "...Will the battle against the sons of injustice not overtake them in Gibeah? " - Hosea depicted Israel as warriors standing at Gibeah and asked (rhetorically) if the Lord's battle against them would not be victorious at this site of their early sinning

— How appropriate that judgment should "overtake" the city that had served as a pattern for Israel's sinful history!

10 When it is My desire, I will **discipline** them; And the peoples will be gathered against them When **they are bound for their double guilt**.

10 When it is My desire, I will chastise them; And the peoples will be gathered against them When they are bound for their double guilt.

10 When I'm ready, I will chasten them; and the people will gather against them, to imprison them for their two unrighteous acts."

10 It is in my desire that I should chastise them; and the people shall be gathered against them, when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows.

- "...discipline" - at the time of the Lord's choosing He would punish Israel by gathering the nations against her (Cf. 5:2)

- "...they are bound for their double guilt" - God would bind them as prisoners to their sin

— The imagery is that of plowing (v11) and Israel is pictured as yoked to her sin like a heifer

— "double guilt" - probably refers to their original guilt at Gibeah (v9) and the present guilt at Bethel (v5)

### **A Confirming Announcement of War**

11 Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh, And I passed over her lovely neck; I will harness Ephraim, **Judah** will plow, **Jacob** will harrow for himself.

11 Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh, But I will come over her fair neck *with a yoke*; I will harness Ephraim, Judah will plow, Jacob will harrow for himself.

11 "Ephraim, the well-trained heifer, loves to thresh grain, so I will spare her neck. I will turn Ephraim into a pack animal. Judah will pull the plow, and Jacob will turn up the fallow ground.

11 And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods.

- Hosea compared Israel to a heifer that enjoyed threshing...

- Threshing was a light task, made pleasant by the fact that the creature was free to eat (unmuzzled) as it pulled the threshing sledge over the gathered corn
- Threshing here corresponded to the service the Lord required within the covenant relationship
- Ephraim had abandoned this comparatively light service to instead be yoked to sin (v10)
- As punishment, God would yoke the people of both the northern and southern kingdoms to an enemy who would greatly restrict their movements and force them to do hard work
- Plowing refers to the hardship that would accompany the exile
- "...Judah" - southern kingdom
- "...Jacob" - northern kingdom

12 Sow for yourselves, *with a view to righteousness*; Harvest in accordance with **kindness**. Break up your **uncultivated ground**, For it is time to seek the LORD Until He comes and **rains righteousness** on you.

12 Sow with a view to righteousness, Reap in accordance with kindness; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD Until He comes to rain righteousness on you.

12 Sow in righteousness in your own interest, reap in gracious love, break up your own unprepared ground; It is now time to inquire of the LORD, until he comes to pour out righteousness for you.

12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

- A brief call to covenant loyalty is included here...
- Even in the midst of a message of condemnation and judgment, God held out the possibility of repentance and blessing (Cf. Is 1:18-20)
- "...kindness" - *hesed*, using agricultural imagery, He urged Israel to seek the Lord by cultivating righteousness (or justice) and reaping His unfailing love, mercy and loyalty
- "...uncultivated ground" - a figure for confessing sins and exposing them to God when they have remained unconfessed and under the surface of life for a long time
- "...rains righteousness" - these words compare God's future gift of righteousness (or just treatment in the form of deliverance; Cf. 2:19) to abundant rain (Cf. 6:3)
- This well-known verse is a good summary of what all of Israel's prophets appealed to God's people to do throughout their history

13 You have plowed wickedness, you have harvested injustice, You have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your way, in your many warriors,

13 You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped injustice, You have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your way, in your numerous warriors,

13 You have plowed evil; you have reaped unrighteousness; you have eaten the fruit of hypocrisy; because you trusted in your own direction, and in the number of your mighty forces.

13 Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.

- Instead of plowing righteousness and reaping kindness (v12), the Israelites had plowed wickedness and reaped injustice

— What a man soweth, so shall he reap (Gal 6:7-8; Cf. Ps 22:8; 2 Cor 9:6)

— Curse on the man that trusts in man (Jer 17:5). Rather than relying on the power of God, the nation had depended on her own military might

— The contrast between God's desires and Israel's response heightens her guilt

*Godless people cannot elect a righteous leader. If the people are liars, they will get a liar as a leader. If they are adulterers, they will get an adulterer. If they are thieves, that's the kind of leader they will have.* — J. Vernon McGee

14 An uproar will arise among your people, And all your fortresses will be destroyed, As **Shalman** destroyed **Beth-arbel** on the day of battle, *When* mothers were slaughtered with *their* children.

14 Therefore a tumult will arise among your people, And all your fortresses will be destroyed, As Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel on the day of battle, *When* mothers were dashed in pieces with *their* children.

14 Therefore a disaster will come upon your people, and all of your fortresses will be ruined. As Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel in wartime, mothers were dashed to pieces along with their children.

14 Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-Arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.

- Because the Israelites trusted in their own army, turmoil rather than tranquility would mark their life. Their fortresses would suffer destruction, rather than protecting the Israelites from destruction.

— Hosea compared this future loss to one in Israel's past, but what past event is uncertain  
— "...Shalman" - three possibilities:

(1) King Shalmaneser III, an Assyrian who conducted campaigns in the West in the 9th century

(2) King Salamanu, a Moabite ruler who was a contemporary of King Hoshea of Israel, whose name appears in a list of kings who paid tribute to the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III

- (3) Shalmaneser V, the Assyrian king who prepared the way for Israel's captivity by invading the land (Cf. 2 Kings 17:3-6)
  - "...Beth-arbel" - could refer to Arbela, 18 miles SE of the Sea of Galilee; also could refer to Mt. Arbel, two miles west of the sea
    - In either case, it was a bloody battle that the Israelites in Hosea's day remembered vividly; the enemy had slaughtered mothers and their children without mercy

15 So it will be done to you at Bethel because of your great wickedness. **At dawn** the king of Israel will be completely destroyed.

15 Thus it will be done to you at Bethel because of your great wickedness. At dawn the king of Israel will be completely cut off.

15 The same will happen to you, Bethel, because of your great evil— early one morning the king of Israel will be totally silenced."

15 So shall Bethel do unto you because of your great wickedness: in a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.

- Bethel, which here represents the nation as a whole, would experience a similar slaughter as in Beth-arbel (v14) because of her great sin (Cf. 4:15; Amos 7:10-17)
  - The Assyrians came, and overnight Israel was being transported to Assyria and a life of slavery (Cf. 10:3,7; 2 Kings 17:4-6)
  - After Hoshea, the Northern Kingdom would never know another king apart from the Davidic line; the royal office was completely abolished in the Northern Kingdom with the Assyrian captivity
  - "...at dawn" - the very beginning of the day of battle
  - Hoshea, Israel's king, was taken captive by Shalmaneser V before the actual siege of Samaria began