

#### Read Hosea 5:1-7

There are many connections between 4:4-19 and 5:1-7. Some commentators put the two sections within one unit. Yet the summons ('Hear this, O priests...') suggests that a sub-section starts here, and the further summons in 5:8 suggests that it ends at 5:7. Hosea has moved from the priests (in 4:4, 4, 9) to the people (4:12) and to the communities mentioned in 4:15, but the priests have not been forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

The withdrawal of God's protection involved the exile of Israel from their land. No weapon formed against them could prosper so long as they walked with The Almighty; however, sin severed them from his care and cut them adrift to be swept before the storm of the invader.

1. To whom was God's pronouncement of guilt addressed (v. 1 – these are all the leaders of Israel)?
  - a. Verse 1 (paraphrased): You (the spiritual and political leaders of Israel) have become a snare at Mizpah and a net spread out on Tabor (Mizpah and Tabor were likely places of idol worship). How did these leaders become a snare or a net (trap) for the people?
  - b. What particular sins enslaved the priests and the people (vv. 2-3)?

Entanglement in sin can be so severe that it leads to spiritual enslavement. Hosea emphasizes their being enmeshed in the trap and snare of sinful ways...Here in Hosea 5, we have an entanglement in sin and depravity that goes [very deep]. [The nation] was two hundred years old. It had involved at least one serious decline and partial restoration. The nation had sunk to a low level in the days of Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 16:29-33) in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, but God had sent Elijah (1 Kings 17-19) and Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2-13) to rescue them. He had arranged for Hazael to distress them and for Jehu to violently purge the nation of Ahab's cult (1 Kings 19:17). Despite Jehu's harshness, the opening events of his reign had provided an opportunity for change; Ahab's idolatry had been savagely exterminated...Yet the nation had still persisted in idolatry. Now, it seems that they are sinking as low as they had gone in the days of Ahab. 'The rebels have gone deep in depravity' (5:2).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eaton, 80.

<sup>2</sup> Eaton, 82.

2. Read Hebrews 12:1-3 along with Colossians 3:1-8. Today, many Christian men are entangled in sin.
  - a. How does a believer become unentangled from sin and begin to live a more holy life (1 John 1:9; Acts 3:19; Romans 6:18; 8:37; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 15:57; 1 John 4:4)?
  - b. Have you experienced victory over a particular sin that has entangled you (Hebrews 12:1; Galatians 5:1)? Do you feel free to share how you overcame this stronghold of sin with your group?
  
3. Due to Israel's unfaithfulness and depravity, what would God withdraw from the nation (v. 6-7; Isaiah 1:1-4, 10-15; 29:13; Amos 5:21-23; Galatians 6:7-8)?
  - a. Do you believe that America is at risk of losing God's protection and the blessings of our country? Explain your answer.
  - b. How should we pray for our nation (2 Chronicles 7:13-14; 1 Kings 8:33-61 –an incredible prayer of repentance by King Solomon)?

God says, 'I am a chastisement (discipline, punishment) to them all.' He is about to plunge the nation into a severe chastisement that will last for centuries. Only a few individual believers will remain. God has taken note of Ephraim (Israel) and how the nation has turned to 'lovers' in the form of the Baals. The nation has been seriously defiled, and God's action will be severe (5:3)...

The chastisement takes the form of God's withdrawal. Israel's sin will lead to a serious fall; the Assyrians will soon be arriving. Then, something similar will happen to the Judeans; in their case, the Babylonians will prove to be the agent of chastisement.

At such a time, they might seek God, but it will be too late to bring about a change. No response will come from God. They have reached a point where there is no remedy at that precise moment. They will later be invited to return to God (Hosea 14:1-9), but at this point, they are not even called to repentance. On the contrary, if they seek God, he will take no notice.

A person or a nation undergoing advanced chastening is at the mercy of God's timing. Not even repentance will necessarily lead to immediate restoration. Any hope of restoration is found not in an immediate avoidance of chastening but rather in the discipline of going through chastening (Hebrews 12:5-11)...

As far as historical facts are concerned, Israel did not recover at this point. The Assyrians arrived; Israel lost its identity and became an Assyrian province. Only in the gospel of Jesus would there come some measure of restoration for ‘Samaria’ (as it would be called), and a greater measure of restoration for Israel is still in the future...

Was there any hope at all? Yes, in two ways. Those who heeded Hosea’s message would be exempt in their own lives. In their relationship with God, they would know his salvation. Though a community may have ‘lost its first love’, the invitation remains open ‘if any one person hears my voice, I shall open the door and will eat a meal with him, and he—the individual—will enjoy a meal with me’ (see Revelation 3:20)<sup>3</sup>

### **Read Hosea 5:8-15**

4. Why would the sound of battle be heard among God’s people (v. 8-9; Numbers 10:9; 1 Chronicles 5:25-26; see below)? God’s warnings often include predictions. What prediction was made, and how certain was it?

Nearly 20 years later, about 722 BC, the capital city, Samaria, was overtaken by the Assyrians under Shalmaneser V. After first forcing tribute payments, Shalmaneser later laid siege to the city when it refused to pay. Following a three-year siege, 2 Kings 17:5-6 notes that “in the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.” And in 701 BC, the Assyrians marched south into Judah; however, they were unable to capture Jerusalem due to the Lord’s intervention (2 Chronicles 32:22).<sup>4</sup>

5. Read Deuteronomy 19:14; 27:17 and Proverbs 22:28; 23:10.
  - a. What does God’s charge against Judah mean? “Judah’s leaders are like those who move boundary lines (v. 10).”

Remove a landmark: Boundaries, marked by stones, could be easily moved at night. Moving them was tantamount to stealing land from a neighbor. Worse, Judah’s leaders were moving spiritual lines established by God.<sup>5</sup>

- b. Read 2 Kings 21:1-16. Like the leaders of Judah, how have America’s leaders, both in government and the church, moved the spiritual/moral lines established by God?

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<sup>3</sup> Eaton, 83- 84.

<sup>4</sup> *When and how was Israel conquered by the Assyrians?* <https://www.gotquestions.org/Israel-conquered-by-Assyria.html>; accessed May 5, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> MacArthur, 67.

6. How had the process of judgment against Israel already started (v. 11-12)?
7. Who did Israel turn to in their time of need (v.13 - 2 Kings 15:19-20; 16:1-9; 17:3)?
8. Who was ultimately responsible for Israel's punishment (v. 14)?

But God can be like a roaring lion. He is about to bring suffering, destruction, and ruin upon the land of Israel. Rushing to Assyria is not the answer when God is determined to make Israel confront the consequences of many years of accumulated rebellion.

The wrath of God is not God losing his temper. There is no loss of control when God is angry (as in human anger, generally). It is never an 'explosion'; it is never unpredictable; it is never without warning. It is one of God's perfections.

It is roused by the rejection of love. It is roused by sin, especially the sin of idolatry (see Deuteronomy 6:14ff; Joshua 23:16).

God's anger is his purposeful reaction to sin and evil, by means of which He wishes to express His revulsion and call people to repentance. 'Let me alone,' says God, '...that my wrath may burn hot...' (Exodus 32:10). God's anger is purposeful; it is a decision.

God's anger is a *re-action*. It is not inherent and spontaneous, as is His love. Love in God is eternal. But wrath is never spontaneous. He *becomes* angry; He *is* love. God's anger is holy anger. It burns when His holiness and His righteous ways are scorned. God's anger is injured love. We remember Hosea's marriage. Hosea could take very strong action against his wife. But it was holy anger, loving anger, the anger that arises as a consequence of unfaithfulness. It is only when we resist God's love that God's anger becomes final, destructive, and disastrous for us.

This was Israel's problem. Not Assyria, not Egypt, not its internal chaos. Those matters were simply the symptoms of a deeper sickness, alienation from God. God was displeased with them.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Eaton, 95-96.

9. **Key Verse:** “I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress earnestly seek me” Hosea 5:15
- a. What was the ultimate purpose of the Lord’s judgment/wrath on His people (Hebrews 12:10-11)?
  - b. What should they have done (1 Kings 8:26-51 — Solomon’s prayer for Israel)?
  - c. What should we do when chastised/disciplined by God (Acts 3:19-20)?

### **Read Hosea 6:1-3: A Call to Repentance!**

Hosea 6:1-3 picks up on the last thought of Hosea 5:13-15. The only hope for Israel is to turn to God...God always leaves a remnant. And the time may come when Yahweh will work among the people again. Hosea has hopes that a spiritual awakening will come. Although Israel has sunk deeply in sin, Hosea has not given up on her. His great love for his wife led him to persist in striving to hold her affections, no matter what she did. He had spent years of his life trying to retain Gomer’s affection and get loving responsiveness from her. God is like that, too! God is persisting with Israel no matter how deeply entrenched in sin she may be. So, the prediction in Hosea 5:15 is transposed into a plea in 6:1-3.<sup>7</sup>

10. Read 2 Peter 3:9 along with Hosea 6:6; Psalm 51:16-17; Isaiah 29:13, and Amos 5:21-23. God wanted his people to return to him. However, He did not want them to return to their former religious ceremonies and traditions. Michal Eaton writes, “It is possible to have what one can call ‘religiosity’ in one’s life—even Christian religiosity or evangelical religiosity or Pentecostal religiosity—without having God!”<sup>8</sup>
- a. Instead of what, to whom should they return (v. 1)?
  - b. Read Luke 4:17- 19, where Jesus is reading from Isaiah 61:1-2. What did the Lord promise to do for them?
  - c. According to verses 2-3, how long would their ‘resurrection’ take, and what would this avail them of (John 3:16; 10:10)?

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<sup>7</sup> Eaton, 97.

<sup>8</sup> Eaton, 98.

11. In addition to repenting, what else should they do according to verse 3 (Matthew 7:21-23; Romans 10:9-10)?
  
12. How will the Lord respond when we repent and acknowledge Him in faith (v. 4; John 14:16, 18; Acts 3:19-20)? Have you come to Jesus in faith? If not, why not now?

### **Think/Grow/Live**

13. Have you been unfaithful to your lover, Christ (5:3)?
  
14. Have you gone for help away from God to some unholy alliance, just like the Assyrian King Jareb, whose alliance Israel sought (5:13)?
  
15. Do you need to repent, turn to Jesus, and acknowledge to someone else that He is your Lord and Savior? Have you ever done this? If not, why not now?

### **Prayer Points**

Ask God to reveal things in your life that offend him or the sin you have been hiding, repent and put it away, and experience the wonder of his love, protection, and power afresh. God is ready to restore you and draw you to Himself!