

**Lesson 12: Israel – A Nation of Bloodshed!**

**Hosea 12:14 - 13:1**

1. Read Hosea 12:14-13:1

Israel's wrongs are further explained in this chapter. They face the judgment of God as the result of their actions—their violence and bloodshed.

- a. Focus on Hosea 12:14 and 13:1. Now, read Genesis 9:5-6; Leviticus 20:11-27 (“their blood will be on their own heads” describes guilt); 2 Kings 17:17; 21:6, 16; Psalm 106:38; Proverbs 6:17 and Acts 7:52.

- i. Define the shedding of innocent blood.

- ii. How were both Israel and Judah guilty of this very egregious sin?

- iii. How is America guilty of the same?

“The womb of the mother is a holy of holies where God is at work (Ps. 139:13-18). How tragic that we turn that womb into a tomb, that holy of holies into a holocaust.”—Warren Wiersbe

“Abortion is this generation’s slavery. People will look back in horror and disbelief and say, “they used to kill babies in the mother's womb?!”—unknown author

- iv. What did God promise to do based on verse 14? How might this apply to America?

Murder invites God’s capital punishment (12:14-13:1). We saw that much of Hosea 11:12-12:13 held together around the theme of Jacob’s proclivity for deception. Now Hosea 12:14 starts a section where the theme is not deceit but **violence**. Murder is a crime which has some unique aspects to it. It cannot be treated lightly. More than many sins it arouses God’s extreme vexation. A society which has become so violent that murder is treated lightly is in the terminal stages of decadence. Blood that is shed in violence ‘cries from the ground’ (Genesis 4:10). Under the Mosaic law there was no atonement for murder. It was a capital crime, and itself required execution. Today, it is alarming how, via television (keep in mind this book was published in 1996), toy guns, and computer games, our children are schooled from their earliest days to consider killing a light and easy thing. The move from fantasy to reality must surely not be

difficult. Yet from the earliest days of world history there has been something so sacred about man's being created as the image of God that murder is in a category all of its own.

(Read **Psalm 51:5**: from the moment of conception the forming human being (zygote) is created in the image of God! **It is a living soul** that is now forming a body!

**\*\* Zygote:** A zygote is the initial cell formed when a sperm fertilizes an egg during sexual reproduction...The zygote stage is brief but crucial, as it contains the complete genetic blueprint for a new individual and initiates the complex process of embryonic development.<sup>i)</sup>

Hosea traces the murderous society of his day back to the idolatry which began at Baal Peor (Numbers 25:3-5; Hosea 9:10). Baal Peor was the definitive occasion when Israel showed its eagerness for idolatry and with it came the seeds of murder and social decay of every kind. With regard to such matters God 'spoke to Ephraim terrifyingly'. Even before the events of Baal Peor God's voice had come amidst thunders and terrors condemning murder and idolatry with excruciating sternness.

At Baal, Israel died. It is not that the nation ceased to exist immediately. 'Death' is a process in Hebrew thinking. But a definitive decision in favor of idolatry was taken there which unless radically repudiated would destroy the nation. It never was repudiated. It was restrained during the days of David but surfaced again after David's death.<sup>ii</sup>

b. Reflect upon Michael Eaton's commentary above.

- i. What thoughts come to your mind, particularly related to the issue of abortion? Are your views changing in any way? Are you willing to share this with your group?
- ii. Is America guilty of the shedding of innocent blood? If yes, then how do you think God sees America today? What do you think is the remedy for our fallen moral collapse which, like Israel, we began as a nation under God (2 Peter 3:9)?

2. Read Hosea 13:2-11

a. Read 1 Kings 12:25-33 along with 2 Kings 17:7-23.

- i. What was so egregious about the sins of the Israelites as they were led by evil kings to sin more and more (v. 2)?

- ii. What do you think it means that Israel will be like ‘the morning mist,’ ‘the early dew,’ ‘like chaff swirling from a threshing floor,’ and like ‘smoke escaping through a window’?
- b. Focus on verses 4-6. Read Exodus 15:22-27 and 16:11-26. How did the Lord God provide for Israel as they wandered in the desert for forty years?
- i. What does this tell you about the character of God?
  - ii. Why should this matter to you? In other words, what does His character mean to you?
  - iii. When Ephraim was full, their heart was lifted up and they forgot Yahweh. Where else does this idea occur in Israel’s history (v. 6)?
  - iv. Read through Deuteronomy chapter 8. What specific warnings did Israel ignore?

God is offended when we forget his past mercies (13:4-6). The tragedy of Israel was that its sin was sin against all that God had done for them. Hosea puts before them God’s redemption and care (13:4, 5) in contrast to Israel’s forgetfulness (13:6). God reminds them of his name. God is ever to be remembered as ‘Yahweh’, the God who gave his name significance when he redeemed his people by the blood of the lamb. God reminds them of their redemption, specifically recalling Egypt. Can they not remember from their own history, the bondage they had been in, and their cries to God? Can they not remember how he stepped into their lives and within a short time had rescued them from oppression?...God reminds them of his requirement. After saving them he put before them his requirement that they should have no other gods before him. He alone had saved them...Why should they turn to the gods of the nations which had proved themselves weak and fallible and unable to give help in time of trouble?...God reminds them of his uniqueness. ‘There is no Savior except me’...God is Savior. He rescues us from the guilt and the pollution and even—partially now, totally in the end—from all the consequences of sin. Can anyone else or anything else do the same?...God reminds them of his faithfulness to them. ‘I cared for you in the wilderness, in the land of drought’...God’s very goodness to them was the occasion of their fall, ‘When I fed them they became self-satisfied’. When God is good to us, we have a habit of attributing what he does to luck or mere good fortune...God’s very goodness to us has a danger attached. We can take it for granted or misinterpret it. The goodness of God is designed to lead us into gratitude and responsiveness to God in the way we live! It is a symptom of human

wickedness that it can have the opposite effect. First came satisfaction, then came pride. Last came forgetfulness. Eventually all that God had done became a distant memory; Israel ceases to recall that they had been redeemed by blood and then taken to Sinai to worship God and receive his requirements.<sup>iii</sup>

- c. Read Hebrews 12:4-11. Focus on verses 7-11.
  - i. Due to Israel's rebellion against God in turning to other gods, what was called for on the part of God?
  - ii. Read 1 Samuel 8:4-22. What did the Israelites ask for? In so doing, what were they, in essence, implying about the God who had delivered them from bondage in Egypt, brought them through the Red Sea and given them a homeland?
  - iii. What was the end-result of all the kings in the history of both Israel and Judah (722 B.C. and 586 B.C.)? In other words, did they serve the nation of Israel well?

Years previously they had demanded a king having become dissatisfied with the kingship of Yahweh. God answered them and allowed them to experiment with kingship for more than three centuries. Now is it possible to ask what the result has been. The truth is that human kingship has destroyed them. God was, in his anger, giving them what they wanted when he gave Saul as king to their ancestors. Now God is taking the kingship away. After the fall of Samaria and, a century later, the fall of Jerusalem, that kind of kingship will never be allowed again. Kingship led to the domination of man-made ideas. The end result has been a society full of murder and idolatry, and a society programmed for self-destruction. They have forgotten what it was like to live dependent on God alone. They have only aroused God's anger. The supposed advantages of living in dependence upon human deliverers never materialized. Now they are helpless. There is only one thing they can do, and this is to throw themselves on God's mercy and live directly under his kingship once again. They will then re-experience his grace.<sup>iv</sup>

- d. From Eaton's commentary above, list some comparisons between the actions and behavior of Israel and that of our country, America.
- e. Read Hosea 13:12-16.

How will the terrible fate of verse 16 be brought about in Samaria?

## **Think/Grow/Live**

1. Israel abandoned Yahweh when they became full. Does affluence have a similar spiritual effect today?
2. How can we combat the effect that material abundance can have on the Church?
3. How does Paul speak about death in 1 Corinthians 15:50-58, compared to here in verse 14?
4. If wealth can cause pride and spiritual blindness, should it be considered a bad thing?
5. What is the appeal of New Age religions today and have you ever felt that appeal?
6. What 'gods' do we fashion ourselves today?

## **Prayer Points**

- Thank God that he provides for our needs.
- Ask God to help us keep our eyes on him in times of abundance and scarcity (Philippians 4: 10-13).
- Pray against all forms of idolatry that we face in modern society.

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<sup>i</sup> Accessed on December 29, 2024: Perplexity AI: What is a zygote? <https://www.perplexity.ai/search/list-the-ten-commandments-in-t-nZkJXyD2TTK.RFCGODNnMg>

<sup>ii</sup> Eaton, 182-183.

<sup>iii</sup> Eaton, 185-186.

<sup>iv</sup> Eaton,, 187-188.