

Lesson 8: Judgment Will Come!

Hosea 9:1-17

Hosea likely gave this prophecy during one of Israel's festivals. It may have been the harvest festival, when instead of crediting Yahweh with the harvest, the people thanked their idols. The people of Israel would be sorrowful because of their sin.

Israel's Sorrow!

Lost Inheritance

When we turn from God to empty and man-made religiosity, however traditional it may be, we lose our inheritance, we lose true worship, and we lose the experience of having our inward eyes enlightened (Ephesians 1:18). These are the themes of this section of Hosea (9:1-9).¹

Throughout the book of Hosea, the prophet has made hints and references toward Israel's future defeat at the hands of the Assyrians. That defeat would involve not only military slaughter and death but also captivity. The people would be removed from their covenantal home—the Promised Land—and relocated to foreign soil. This was an especially difficult consequence for the Israelites to imagine in light of their history.

Even so, Hosea made it clear that **exile was a certainty**. As we move into chapter 9, the prophet offers a more detailed look at what God's people would experience after being removed from their home: they would lose their joy, their land, their spiritual discernment, their birth rate (ability to maintain a population), and their connection with God.²

Read Hosea 9:1-9 **Loss of Inheritance, True Worship, and Insight (Wisdom)**

1. Read Proverbs 2:12-15 and Romans 1:32. The Israelites were, in essence, rejoicing and celebrating their wicked and godless lifestyles as they drifted further and further into pagan worship and idolatry. Can you give a contemporary example of this behavior?

Example: On September 11, 2007, when comedian Cathy Griffin won an Emmy at the Creative Arts Emmy Awards, as she accepted her statuette, she held it up and said, quite loudly, "A lot of people come up here and thank Jesus for this award. I want you to know that no one had less to do with this award than Jesus! S _____ it, Jesus. This award is my god now."

¹ Eaton, 136.

² Eaton, 136.

2. Along with verse 2, read Hosea 2:5 and 12, which state, “Their mother (Gomer = Israel) has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, ‘I will go after other lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink’ “I [God] will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers...”
 - a. Read Jeremiah 2:13. What or who was Israel looking to for her well-being and prosperity, which in essence, were broken cisterns?
 - b. What do we look to here in America for our well-being and prosperity, instead of to God?
 - c. Do you believe that Jeremiah would accuse Americans of digging “their own cisterns, broken cisterns, that cannot hold water?” Explain.
3. Focus on verses 3-6. For Israel (Ephraim), the result of sin was their coming captivity in Assyria, similar to their enslavement in Egypt before God delivered them!
 - a. Once in Assyria, why would the people of Israel no longer be able to “pour out wine offerings to the Lord” and why would “their sacrifices no longer please him” (v.3)?
Hint: consider where their place of worship was supposed to be (Deuteronomy 12:5; 2 Chronicles 3:1; Psalm 122:1-2).
 - b. Why would they be forced to eat unclean food (v. 3; Daniel 1:5, 8)?
 - c. Explain how Israel lost both its physical and spiritual inheritance. Is America facing a similar possibility? Explain your answer.

4. Focus on verses 7-8. The prophet Hosea, along with the prophet Amos (Amos 3:1-2; 4:1-3; 8:1-14), warned the Israelites of God's impending judgment.
 - a. According to Hosea 9:7b, how did both the leaders and the people view these two prophets?
 - b. What blinded them to the wisdom and insight that was being proclaimed by Hosea and Amos (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)?
 - c. Read Matthew 13:13-15. How does sin blind us spiritually (Proverbs 4:19; Ephesians 4:17-18)?
5. What was the great sin of the people of Gibeah (v. 9 cf. Judges 19)? What is the result of sin (James 1:13-15)? How does God view sin (Proverbs 6:16-19)? How should we view sin?

Now, in this section, the language changes dramatically to words that are tender and loving towards Israel but packed with judgment. It tells of Israel in earlier days and how Israel has responded to God's grace and love with disobedience and idolatry. According to the Mosaic covenant, God must punish them by destruction, but He will retain a remnant.

Israel's Humiliation

Read Hosea 9:10-17

6. Read Numbers 25. Here you will learn about the egregious sin the Israelites committed as they were seduced by the Moabites. This happened at a place called Shittim, which was their last encampment before entering the Promised Land.
 - a. In the beginning, how did God look upon the people of Israel (v. 10a; Deuteronomy 7:6-8)?

- b. What happened to the people of Israel at Baal-Peor (v. 10b; Numbers 25)?

- c. What was God’s response to their rebelliousness and disobedience (vv. 9, 11, 12 [Remember, they worshiped Baal, the god of fertility]; Numbers 25:4-9, 16-18)? What does this teach you about God (Consider the flood, Genesis 6:1-8; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 18:20-21; 19:12-13, 24-25; Hebrews 12:5-11)?

- d. Read Numbers 25:10-13. What does it mean to be zealous for the honor of God? Is God being honored in our country? Are you honoring God with your life? What can you do to honor God more each and every day?

- 7. Verse 13b states, “But Ephraim will bring out their children to the slayer.” This points to the most egregious sin any country, or any person can commit—the sacrifice of children. Now read the following texts to see just how deep in sin Israel fell: 2 Kings 23:10; Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5; Jeremiah 7:31; 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20-21.

What were the Israelites doing at the altar of Baal/Molech that was so egregious to God? What does this compare to in our nation? What must our nation do (2 Chronicles 7:14)? How can we individually respond to 2 Chronicles 7:14?

- 8. Verse 15 clearly reveals the wrath of God. Read John 3:36; Romans 1:18; 2:5; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:5-6; Revelation 19:15.
 - a. Define the wrath of God

 - b. What do you learn about the wrath of God from the above verses?

- c. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:10, John 3:16; Romans 5:9; 2 Peter 3:9. How does a man avoid the wrath of God? Have you taken these steps? If not, why not now?
9. Why can Hosea call God, “My God” in verse 17? Who does he put himself in contrast with? Why has God rejected the Israelites (cf. Deuteronomy 28:58-68)? What do we need to do in order to always be in fellowship with God (Psalm 66:18; Acts 3:19-20; 1 John 1:9)?

Because of Israel’s continued unfaithfulness, they must receive God’s punishment. All that they trusted in, all that they built to protect themselves, all these ‘broken cisterns’ will be destroyed. Nothing will save them; nothing can save them, except God alone.