

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes: Book of Hosea

4/12/17

Hosea Chapter 7 & 8

Conspiracy in the Palace - Verses 1-7

¹ whenever I would heal Israel, the sins of Ephraim are exposed and the crimes of Samaria revealed. They practice deceit, thieves break into houses, bandits rob in the streets; ² but they do not realize that I remember all their evil deeds. Their sins engulf them; they are always before me. ³ "They delight the king with their wickedness, the princes with their lies. ⁴ They are all adulterers, burning like an oven whose fire the baker need not stir from the kneading of the dough till it rises. ⁵ On the day of the festival of our king the princes become inflamed with wine, and he joins hands with the mockers. ⁶ Their hearts are like an oven; they approach him with intrigue. Their passion smolders all night; in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire. ⁷ All of them are hot as an oven; they devour their rulers. All their kings fall, and none of them calls on me.

7:1-2 God sees and knows everything. Like Israel, we often forget this. Thoughts like "No one will ever know," or "No one is watching" may tempt us to try to get away with sin. If you are facing difficult temptations, you will be less likely to give in if you remind yourself that God is watching. When faced with the opportunity to sin, remember that God sees everything.

7:6 "Their hearts are like an oven" refers to the lust for power and intrigue that was burning in these leaders' hearts. Three Israelite kings were assassinated during Hosea's lifetime—Zechariah, Shallum, and Pekahiah (2 Kings 15:8-26). The kings' foreign relations and domestic lives were ruined because they ignored God and his Word.

7:8 The people of Israel had intermarried with foreign people and had picked up their evil ways. When we spend a lot of time with unbelievers, either professionally or socially, we can easily pick up their attitudes and begin to imitate their actions. When you work, live, or play with unbelievers, beware of the influence they may have on you. Instead of drifting into bad habits, see if you can have a positive influence and point these people to God.

Israel and the Nations - Verses 8-16

⁸ "Ephraim mixes with the nations; Ephraim is a flat loaf not turned over. ⁹ Foreigners sap his strength, but he does not realize it. His hair is sprinkled with gray, but he does not notice. ¹⁰ Israel's arrogance testifies against him, but despite all this he does not return to the LORD his God or search for him. ¹¹ "Ephraim is like a dove, easily deceived and senseless—now calling to Egypt, now turning to Assyria. ¹² When they go, I will throw my net over them; I will pull them down like the birds in the sky. When I hear

them flocking together, I will catch them. ¹³ Woe to them, because they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, because they have rebelled against me! I long to redeem them but they speak about me falsely. ¹⁴ They do not cry out to me from their hearts but wail on their beds. They slash themselves, appealing to their gods for grain and new wine, but they turn away from me. ¹⁵ I trained them and strengthened their arms, but they plot evil against me. ¹⁶ They do not turn to the Most High; they are like a faulty bow. Their leaders will fall by the sword because of their insolent words. For this they will be ridiculed in the land of Egypt.

7:10 Arrogance or pride keeps a person from turning to God because it won't acknowledge the need of help from anyone, human or divine. Pride intensifies all our other sins because we cannot repent of any of them without first giving up our pride.

7:11 Israel's King Menahem had paid Assyria to support him in power (2 Kings 15:19-20); King Hoshea turned against Assyria and went to Egypt for help (2 Kings 17:4). Israel's kings went back and forth, allying themselves with different nations when they should have allied themselves with God.

7:16 A crooked or faulty bow is unreliable. Its arrows miss the target, and its owner would be quite vulnerable in battle. Life without God is as unreliable as a warped bow. Without God's direction, our thoughts are filled with lust, cheating, selfishness, and deceit. As long as we are warped by sin, we will never reach our true potential. People look everywhere except to God for happiness and fulfillment, pursuing possessions, activities, and relationships. In reality, only God can truly satisfy the deep longings of the soul. Look first to heaven, to the Most High God. He will meet your spiritual needs, not all your materialistic wants.

Chapter 8

Israel to Reap the Whirlwind - Verses 1-14

¹ "Put the trumpet to your lips! An eagle is over the house of the LORD because the people have broken my covenant and rebelled against my law. ² Israel cries out to me, 'Our God, we acknowledge you!' ³ But Israel has rejected what is good; an enemy will pursue him. ⁴ They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold they make idols for themselves to their own destruction. ⁵ Samaria, throw out your calf-idol! My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of purity? ⁶ They are from Israel! This calf—a metalworker has made it; it is not God. It will be broken in pieces, that calf of Samaria. ⁷ "They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. The stalk has no head; it will produce no flour. Were it to yield grain, foreigners would swallow it up. ⁸ Israel is swallowed up; now she is among the nations like something no one wants. ⁹ For they have gone up to Assyria like a wild donkey wandering alone. Ephraim has sold herself to lovers. ¹⁰ Although they have sold themselves among the nations, I will now gather them together. They will begin to waste away under the oppression of the mighty king. ¹¹ "Though Ephraim built

many altars for sin offerings, these have become altars for sinning. ¹² I wrote for them the many things of my law, but they regarded them as something foreign. ¹³ Though they offer sacrifices as gifts to me, and though they eat the meat, the LORD is not pleased with them. Now he will remember their wickedness and punish their sins: They will return to Egypt. ¹⁴ Israel has forgotten their Maker and built palaces; Judah has fortified many towns. But I will send fire on their cities that will consume their fortresses."

8:1-4 "An eagle is over the house of the LORD" refers to Assyria coming to attack Israel and take the people into captivity (2 Kings 15:28-29). The people would call to God, but it would be too late because they had stubbornly refused to give up their idols. We, like Israel, often call on God to ease our pain without wanting him to change our behavior. And we, like Israel, may repent after it is too late to avoid the painful consequences of sin.

8:5 Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom, and sometimes it stands for the whole kingdom of Israel. Jeroboam I had set up worship of calf idols at Bethel and Dan and had encouraged the people to worship them (1 Kings 12:25-33). Thus, the people were worshiping the image of a created animal rather than the Creator.

8:7 Crop yield is the result of good seed planted in good soil and given the proper proportions of sunlight, moisture, and fertilizer. A single seed can produce multiple fruit in good conditions. Israel, however, had sown its spiritual seed to the wind—it had invested itself in activities without substance. Like the wind that comes and goes, its idolatry and foreign alliances offered no protection. In seeking self-preservation apart from God, it had brought about its own destruction. Like a forceful whirlwind, God's judgment would come upon Israel by means of the Assyrians. When we seek security in anything except God, we expose ourselves to great danger. Without God there is no lasting security.

8:11 The altars that were supposed to remove sin were actually increasing sin through their misuse in worshiping Baal.

8:12 Though the laws were written for them, the people of Israel acted as if those laws didn't apply to them. It is easy to listen to a sermon and think of all the people we know who should be listening, or to read the Bible and think of those who should do what the passage teaches. The Israelites did this constantly, applying God's laws to others but not to themselves. This is just another way to deflect God's will and avoid making needed changes. As you think of others who need to apply what you are hearing or reading, check to see if the same application could fit you. Apply the lessons to your own life first because often our own faults are the very first ones we see in others.

8:13 The people's sacrifices had become mere ritual, and God refused to accept them. We have rituals, too—attending church, observing a regular quiet time, celebrating Christian holidays, praying before meals. Rituals give us security in a changing world. Because they are repeated often, they can drive God's lessons deep within us. But rituals can be abused. Beware if you find yourself observing a religious ritual for any of the following reasons: (1) to gain community approval, (2) to avoid the risks of doing something different, (3) to make

thought unnecessary, (4) to substitute for personal relationships, (5) to make up for bad behavior, (6) to earn God's favor. We should not reject the rituals of our worship, but we must be careful with them. Think about why you do them. Focus on God, and perform every act with sincere devotion.

8:13 In Egypt, the Israelites had been slaves (Exodus 1:11). The people would not literally return to Egypt, but they would return to slavery—this time scattered throughout the Assyrian Empire.

8:14 Israel had placed its confidence in military strength, strong defenses, and economic stability, just as nations do today. But because of the people's inner moral decay, their apparent sources of strength were inadequate. There is a tendency in many nations toward removing all traces of God from daily life. But if a nation forgets its Maker, its strengths may prove worthless when put to the test.