

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes: Book of Hosea

4/19/17

Hosea Chapter 9 & 10

Chapter 9

Punishment for Israel – Verses 1-12

¹Do not rejoice, Israel; do not be jubilant like the other nations. For you have been unfaithful to your God; you love the wages of a prostitute at every threshing floor. ²Threshing floors and winepresses will not feed the people; the new wine will fail them. ³They will not remain in the LORD's land; Ephraim will return to Egypt and eat unclean food in Assyria. ⁴They will not pour out wine offerings to the LORD, nor will their sacrifices please him. Such sacrifices will be to them like the bread of mourners; all who eat them will be unclean. This food will be for themselves; it will not come into the temple of the LORD. ⁵What will you do on the day of your appointed festivals, on the feast days of the LORD? ⁶Even if they escape from destruction, Egypt will gather them, and Memphis will bury them. Their treasures of silver will be taken over by briars, and thorns will overrun their tents. ⁷The days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this. Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired person a maniac. ⁸The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman over Ephraim, yet snares await him on all his paths, and hostility in the house of his God. ⁹They have sunk deep into corruption, as in the days of Gibeah. God will remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins. ¹⁰"When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your ancestors, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree. But when they came to Baal Peor, they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved. ¹¹Ephraim's glory will fly away like a bird—no birth, no pregnancy, no conception. ¹²Even if they rear children, I will bereave them of every one. Woe to them when I turn away from them! ¹³I have seen Ephraim, like Tyre, planted in a pleasant place. But Ephraim will bring out their children to the slayer."¹⁴Give them, LORD what will you give them? Give them wombs that miscarry and breasts that are dry.

9:1 A threshing floor was a flat area, often built on a hilltop, where harvesters beat the wheat and separated it from the straw and chaff. At harvest time men would often stay overnight at the threshing floor to protect their grain, and prostitutes (perhaps "sacred" prostitutes) would visit there. At these same hilltop threshing floors, the people offered sacrifices in hope of gaining the favor of the false gods and receiving a rich harvest. Thus, these places also served as the pagan shrines or "high places."

9:6 Israel's leaders vacillated between alliances with Egypt and alliances with Assyria. Hosea was saying that both were wrong. Breaking an alliance with untrustworthy Assyria and fleeing for help to the equally untrustworthy Egypt would not forestall Israel's destruction. Their only real hope was to return to God.

9:7 By the time Israel began to experience the consequences of its sins, it was no longer listening to God's messengers. Refusing to hear the truth from prophets who spoke out so clearly about its sins, the nation did not hear God's warnings about what was soon to happen. We all listen and read selectively, focusing on what seems to support our present lifestyle and ignoring what demands a radical reordering of our priorities. In doing this, we are likely to miss the warnings we need most. Listen to people who think your approach is all wrong. Read articles that present viewpoints you would be unlikely to take. Ask yourself, "Is God speaking to me through these speakers and writers? Is there something I need to change?"

9:9 A couple had stopped to stay overnight in Gibeah when some wicked men gathered around the house and demanded that the man come out so they could have sex with him. Instead, the traveler gave them his concubine. They raped and abused her all night and then left her dead on the doorstep (Judges 19:14-30). That horrible act revealed the depths to which the people had sunk. Gibeah was destroyed for its evil (Judges 20:8-48), but Hosea said that the whole nation was now as evil as that city. Just as the city didn't escape punishment, neither would the nation.

9:10 Baal Peor was the god of Peor, a mountain in Moab. In Numbers 22, Balaam, a prophet, was hired by King Balak of Moab to curse the Israelites as they were coming through his land. The Moabites enticed the Israelites into sexual sin and Baal worship. Before long, the Israelites became as corrupt as the gods they worshiped. People can quickly take on the characteristics of whatever or whomever they love. What do you worship? Are you becoming more like God, or are you becoming more like someone or something else?

9:14 Hosea prayed this prayer when he foresaw the destruction that Israel's sins would bring (2 Kings 17:7-23). This vision of Israel's terrible fate moved him to pray that women would not get pregnant and that children would die as infants so they would not have to experience the tremendous suffering and pain that lay ahead.

The LORD's Judgment on Israel - Verses 15 - 17

¹⁵ "Because of all their wickedness in Gilgal, I hated them there. Because of their sinful deeds, I will drive them out of my house. I will no longer love them; all their leaders are rebellious. ¹⁶ Ephraim is blighted, their root is withered, they yield no fruit. Even if they bear children, I will slay their cherished offspring." ¹⁷ My God will reject them because they have not obeyed him; they will be wanderers among the nations.

9:15 At Gilgal, both the political and the religious failure of the nation began. Here idols and kings were substituted for God. Saul, the united nation's first king, was crowned at Gilgal (1 Samuel 11:15), but by Hosea's time, Baal worship flourished there (4:15; 12:11).

Chapter 10

Israel's Punishment - Verses 1 - 8

Israel was a spreading vine; he brought forth fruit for himself. As his fruit increased, he built more altars; as his land prospered, he adorned his sacred stones. ² Their heart is deceitful, and now they must bear their guilt. The LORD will demolish their altars and destroy their sacred stones. ³ Then they will say, "We have no king because we did not revere the LORD. But even if we had a king, what could he do for us?" ⁴ They make many promises, take false oaths and make agreements; therefore lawsuits spring up like poisonous weeds in a plowed field. ⁵ The people who live in Samaria fear for the calf-idol of Beth Aven. Its people will mourn over it, and so will its idolatrous priests, those who had rejoiced over its splendor, because it is taken from them into exile. ⁶ It will be carried to Assyria as tribute for the great king. Ephraim will be disgraced; Israel will be ashamed of its foreign alliances. ⁷ Samaria's king will be destroyed, swept away like a twig on the surface of the waters. ⁸ The high places of wickedness will be destroyed it is the sin of Israel. Thorns and thistles will grow up and cover their altars. Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the hills, "Fall on us!"

10:1 Israel prospered under Jeroboam II, gaining military and economic strength. But the more prosperous the nation became, the more love it lavished on idols. It seems as though the more God gives, the more we spend. We want bigger houses, better cars, and finer clothes. But the finest things the world offers line the pathway to destruction. As you prosper, consider where your money is going. Is it being used for God's purposes, or are you consuming it all on yourself?

10:4 God was angry with the people of Israel for their insincere promises to him, and in response he said that punishment would come. Because the people did not keep their word, there were many lawsuits. People break their promises, but God always keeps his. Are you remaining true to your promises, both to other people and to God? If not, ask God for forgiveness and help to get back on track. Then be careful about the promises you make. Never make a promise unless you are sure you can keep it.

10:5 Beth Aven means "house of wickedness," and it refers to Bethel ("house of God"), where false worship took place. If the Israelites' idols were really gods, they should have been able to protect the people. How ironic that the people were fearing for their gods' safety! For more information on this calf idol, see the notes on 3:4-5 and 8:5.

The LORD Pronounces Judgment on Israel - Verses 9 - 15

⁹ "Since the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, Israel, and there you have remained. Will not war again overtake the evildoers in Gibeah? ¹⁰ When I please, I will punish them; nations will be gathered against them to put them in bonds for their double sin. ¹¹ Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh; so I will put a yoke on her fair neck. I will drive Ephraim, Judah must plow, and Jacob must break up the ground. ¹² Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers his

righteousness on you. ¹³ But you have planted wickedness, you have reaped evil, you have eaten the fruit of deception. Because you have depended on your own strength and on your many warriors, ¹⁴ the roar of battle will rise against your people, so that all your fortresses will be devastated—as Shalman devastated Beth Arbel on the day of battle, when mothers were dashed to the ground with their children. ¹⁵ So will it happen to you, Bethel, because your wickedness is great. When that day dawns, the king of Israel will be completely destroyed.

10:12 Hosea repeatedly uses illustrations about fields and crops. Here he envisions a plowed field, earth that is ready to receive seeds. It is no longer stony and hard; it has been carefully prepared, and it is ready for planting. Is your life ready for God to work in it? You can break up the unplowed ground of your heart by acknowledging your sins and receiving God's forgiveness and guidance.

10:13 The Israelites were taken in by the lie that military power could keep them safe. Believers today are also capable of falling for lies. Those who want to lead others astray often follow these rules for effective lying: Make it big; keep it simple; repeat it often. Believers can avoid falling for lies by asking: (1) Am I believing this because there is personal gain in it for me? (2) Am I discounting important facts? (3) Does this conflict with a direct command of Scripture? (4) Are there any biblical parallels to the situation I'm facing that would help me know what to believe?

10:14 Some say Shalman was Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; others say Shalman was Salmanu, a Moabite king mentioned in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser. Shalman had invaded Gilead around 740 B.C. and destroyed the city of Beth Arbel, killing many people, including women and children. This kind of cruelty was not uncommon in ancient warfare. Hosea was saying that this also would be Israel's fate.

10:15 Because Israel had put its confidence in military might rather than in God, it would be destroyed by military power. Israel's king, who had led the people into idol worship, would be the first to fall. Divine judgment is sometimes swift, but it is always sure.