

The Word of the Lord to Hosea

Lesson 3

Hosea 6:1 – 8:14

Press On To Know the Lord

Hosea 6:¹ "Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn *us*, but He will heal us; He has wounded *us*, but He will bandage us. ²"He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him. ³"So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth."

The Lord did not leave Israel or Judah without hope for their nations as He proclaimed the coming judgment upon them. They did not understand that it would take more than 2,500 years for the Lord to return the land to them. ²⁴ Both Israel and Judah will one day be healed of their sin, but not until they return to the Lord. Hosea called the people to know the Lord, to literally chase after the Lord with a newfound love and devotion. At that time, they would not chase after Him because their sin of idolatry was too great. If they had pursued Him, He would have accepted them and He would have poured out His blessing on them. ²⁵

Hosea 6:4, 9:1 and 11:8 explain in greater detail the Lord's case against Israel and Judah. Each section begins with a direct appeal.

Appeal One

Hosea 6:⁴ What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your loyalty is like a morning cloud and like the dew which goes away early.

Appeal Two

Hosea 9:¹ Do not rejoice, O Israel, with exultation like the nations! For you have played the harlot, forsaking your God. You have loved *harlots'* earnings on every threshing floor.

Appeal Three

Hosea 11:⁸ How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart is turned over within Me, all My compassions are kindled.

The first two appeals retrace the reasons for the coming judgment; the last appeal looks into the future when the Lord will save His people.

²⁴ The people might have thought the healing would be within the week after the fall, but history records that from the fall of the Southern Kingdom, 2,554 years transpired before Israel owned its land again. For the Northern Kingdom it would be 2,670 years.²⁴ Because the Lord was delivering this message through Hosea but not in Hosea's own words, perhaps Peter's message sheds light on why the deliverance did not occur in three actual days.

2 Peter 3:⁸ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

History records that Israel was deeded its land grant by the United Nations in May of 1948. The actual circumstances that brought about the transfer of the land began in the late 1800's with the rise of Germany and ultimate conflicts of both World Wars I and II. It makes no difference whether this prophecy was speaking about the fall of the Northern Kingdom or the Southern Kingdom; the Lord arranged the circumstances and restored the Promised Land to Israel in the middle of His third day.

²⁵ The rains were a sign of the Lord's blessings. Deuteronomy 11:13-15

The Case Expanded – Appeal One

Hosea 6: ⁴ What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your loyalty is like a morning cloud and like the dew which goes away early. ⁵ Therefore I have hewn *them* in pieces by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth; and the judgments on you are *like* the light that goes forth. ⁶ For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. ⁷ But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant; there they have dealt treacherously against Me. ⁸ Gilead is a city of wrongdoers, tracked with bloody *footprints*. ⁹ And as raiders wait for a man, so a band of priests murder on the way to Shechem; surely they have committed crime. ¹⁰ In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing; Ephraim's harlotry is there, Israel has defiled itself. ¹¹ Also, O Judah, there is a harvest appointed for you, when I restore the fortunes of My people.

Neither Israel nor Judah could be trusted. The people had rejected every priest and prophet sent to deliver the Lord's true message. At times they seem to be faithful, but that faith evaporates like the morning fog. The prophet's words proclaimed the coming destruction as if it had already happened. Approximately 50 years after the prophecy, every word was fulfilled. The people of the Northern Kingdom were slain, 90% of them in sudden death and destruction. Why? It was clear to the Lord who knew the hearts of the people that many were not loyal to his covenant demands. The people were loyal to their household idols rather than God. Therefore, none of the rituals meant anything to the Lord. ²⁶ There was no difference between the people of the Northern Kingdom and Adam; both blatantly transgressed God's instruction and both blatantly acted wickedly toward Him.

Gilead was a district in the northern portion of Israel on the east side of the Jordan River. The streets in her cities were streaked with blood from the sandals of Joab as indicated in 1st Kings.

1 Kings 2:⁵ "Now you also know what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner, and to Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed; he also shed the blood of war in peace. And he put the blood of war on his belt about his waist, and on his sandals on his feet.

In the days of Joshua's leadership, Ramoth Gilead and Shechem were designated as two of the six cities of refuge.²⁷ People who had committed murder could run to any of these cities and find asylum, thus forgoing the possibility of ruthless bloodshed in the tribal areas. The murderer could face a proper court of justice within these cities under the guidance of the priests stationed there. But the priests in these two towns were corrupt. They led the people to commit the worst sins of incest, prostitution, rape and adultery, all horrible sins in the sight of the Lord. Jeremiah referred to them as rotten figs in his prophecy.²⁸ Just as there was an appointed time for harvest every year, there was an appointed time of judgment for Israel and Judah. Both judgments would be thorough, but the Lord will ultimately heal both of the wounds He will inflict.

²⁶ 1 Samuel 15:22; Isaiah 1:11-20; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8

²⁷ Joshua 20:1-2, 7-8

²⁸ Jeremiah 29:17

Healing When

Hosea 7:¹ When I would heal Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim is uncovered, and the evil deeds of Samaria, for they deal falsely; the thief enters in, bandits raid outside, ² and they do not consider in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness. Now their deeds are all around them; they are before My face. ³ With their wickedness they make the king glad, and the princes with their lies. ⁴ They are all adulterers, like an oven heated by the baker who ceases to stir up *the fire* from the kneading of the dough until it is leavened. ⁵ On the day of our king, the princes became sick with the heat of wine; he stretched out his hand with scoffers, ⁶ for their hearts are like an oven as they approach their plotting; their anger smolders all night, in the morning it burns like a flaming fire. ⁷ All of them are hot like an oven, and they consume their rulers; all their kings have fallen. None of them calls on Me. ⁸ Ephraim mixes himself with the nations; Ephraim has become a cake not turned. ⁹ Strangers devour his strength, yet he does not know *it*; Gray hairs also are sprinkled on him, yet he does not know *it*. ¹⁰ Though the pride of Israel testifies against him, yet they have not returned to the Lord their God, nor have they sought Him, for all this. ¹¹ So Ephraim has become like a silly dove, without sense; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria. ¹² When they go, I will spread My net over them; I will bring them down like the birds of the sky. I will chastise them in accordance with the proclamation to their assembly. ¹³ Woe to them, for they have strayed from Me! Destruction is theirs, for they have rebelled against Me! I would redeem them, but they speak lies against Me. ¹⁴ And they do not cry to Me from their heart when they wail on their beds; for the sake of grain and new wine they assemble themselves, they turn away from Me. ¹⁵ Although I trained *and* strengthened their arms, yet they devise evil against Me. ¹⁶ They turn, *but* not upward, they are like a deceitful bow; their princes will fall by the sword because of the insolence of their tongue. This *will be* their derision in the land of Egypt.

Between the years of 752 BC and 732 BC, four northern kings were assassinated.²⁹ Hosea chapter 7 describes how the murderers carried out their work. On the special days when the kings were preoccupied by a banquet or party, the princes, who were the mockers in this passage, became drunk. They plotted against the king because their hateful passions were baking in their hearts and, as a result, the king was killed and a new one sat on the throne.

The Northern Kingdom made alliances with Egypt and Assyria, seeking help and strength from them instead of calling on the Lord. The foreign policy proved disastrous for the kingdom, causing her to lose political independence. Both Egypt and Assyria required a tax for their help and it drained the kingdom.³⁰ Israel would not repent and turn to the Lord. Instead, she submitted to her foreign superiors. King Hoshea refused to pay the tribute to Assyria and Tiglath-Pileser went to collect the money. The king of Israel reached out to Egypt for help but it was too late. The Northern Kingdom did not survive the attack. Like a naive dove fluttering here and there, the king led the people to seek help from every direction except from the Lord Who saw everything and never forgot their deeds. Surely they knew! At one time Israel knew how to defend herself for the Lord had taught her how to fight, but now she was like a deceitful bow – unreliable in battle for the Lord. The fall of the Northern Kingdom came because the people boasted about their trust in Egypt instead of the Lord. They trusted Egypt to rescue them.³¹

²⁹ 2 Kings 15

³⁰ 2 Kings 15:19-20; 17:3

³¹ 2 Kings 17:4

Forgotten Maker

Hosea 8:¹ Put the trumpet to your lips! Like an eagle *the enemy comes* against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed My covenant and rebelled against My law. ² They cry out to Me, "My God, we of Israel know You!" ³ Israel has rejected the good; the enemy will pursue him. ⁴ They have set up kings, but not by Me; They have appointed princes, but I did not know *it*. With their silver and gold they have made idols for themselves, that they might be cut off. ⁵ He has rejected your calf, O Samaria, *saying*, "My anger burns against them!" How long will they be incapable of innocence? ⁶ For from Israel is even this! A craftsman made it, so it is not God; surely the calf of Samaria will be broken to pieces. ⁷ For they sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads; it yields no grain. Should it yield, strangers would swallow it up. ⁸ Israel is swallowed up; they are now among the nations like a vessel in which no one delights. ⁹ For they have gone up to Assyria, *like a wild donkey all alone*; Ephraim has hired lovers. ¹⁰ Even though they hire *allies* among the nations, now I will gather them up; and they will begin to diminish Because of the burden of the king of princes. ¹¹ Since Ephraim has multiplied altars for sin, they have become altars of sinning for him. ¹² Though I wrote for him ten thousand *precepts* of My law, they are regarded as a strange thing. ¹³ As for My sacrificial gifts, they sacrifice the flesh and eat *it*, but the Lord has taken no delight in them. Now He will remember their iniquity, and punish *them* for their sins; they will return to Egypt. ¹⁴ For Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces; and Judah has multiplied fortified cities, but I will send a fire on its cities that it may consume its palatial dwellings.

The Northern Kingdom had forgotten her Maker. The enemy was at the door of the kingdom ready to strike. The last kings of the kingdom were serving without the blessing of God. ³² The Israelites knew what they were doing as they worshipped idols; they worshipped the calf rather than God. Israel was about to reap what she sowed, nothing. Their idols and their fields provided nothing. All their efforts were in vain – profitless! No one would rescue Israel; she was a stench in their nostrils and no one would freely lend a hand – they had to be paid to help. King Menahem, whose name can be seen today inscribed on a column in one of Nimrod's palaces in Assyria, did so by becoming subservient to King Pul of Assyria.³³ Menahem approached Assyria like a wild, headstrong animal, but Pul was not swayed. He held many kings and princes under his thumb.

God gave them up to go their own way, continuing in their sin, building many altars to other gods as they opposed the laws of the mighty God. All of their actions were attempts to satisfy their carnal lusts rather than to honor the Lord. She forgot her Maker. Instead of running to the Lord, Israel sought to escape to Egypt. Judah was not as sinful as Israel at this time, but her people also forgot their Maker. Instead of turning to Him, they turned to their walled cities for protection. When Sennacherib attempted to take over the Southern Kingdom after he had conquered the north, he burned all the wooden fences in the south that had been built for protection with the exception of those in Jerusalem.³⁴

³² Psalms 1:6

³³ Tiglath-pileser overthrew Pul in 786 BC. Pul's wife, Sermiranis and her son, Nabonassar, established the beginning of the Tenth Dynasty of the Babylonian era in 747 BC.

³⁴ 2 Kings 18:13