

The Word of the Lord to Hosea

Lesson 4

Hosea 9:1 – 9:17

In the first case against the people of the Northern Kingdom, the Lord stated that they were not only disloyal, they had also forgotten that He was their Maker.

The Case Expanded – 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. ² Threshing floor and wine press will not feed them, and the new wine will fail them.

The Northern Kingdom had made an alliance with Pul, the King of Assyria. As long as Israel paid the required tax, peace seemed secure and the north rejoiced. However, the alliance was adulterous. The Assyrians were at the apex of their national prosperity and the north attempted to mimic the same atmosphere in its land. Prostitution of the soul overshadowed the need for God. The first signs of their punishment would be the failed crops of both grain and grapes.

Hosea 9:3 They will not remain in the Lord's land, but Ephraim will return to Egypt, and in Assyria they will eat unclean food. ⁴ They will not pour out drink offerings of wine to the Lord, Their sacrifices will not please Him. *Their bread will be like mourners' bread*; all who eat of it will be defiled, for their bread will be for themselves *alone*; it will not enter the house of the Lord.

The Northern Kingdom tried to hire the Egyptians to protect them but to no avail; the Assyrians marched through the kingdom. However, the context of this passage does not mean that the north would ask Egypt for help; rather, it means that the Northern Kingdom would enter into bondage in Assyria just as they had done in Egypt. During their exile in Assyria, most of their Mosaic Laws were forgotten including their food restrictions, their offerings, sacrifices and visits to the Lord's house. Their bread would be eaten for physical sustenance rather than as an offering for the sins of the soul.

Hosea 9:5 What will you do on the day of the appointed festival and on the day of the feast of the Lord? ⁶ For behold, they will go because of destruction; Egypt will gather them up, Memphis will bury them. Weeds will take over their treasures of silver; Thorns *will be* in their tents.

In the heat of the battle with Assyria, many of the northern Israelites fled to Egypt, but there they died. Memphis, which is now Cairo, became their graveyard and vegetation overtook the homes they left behind in Israel.³⁵

Hosea 9:7 The days of punishment have come, The days of retribution have come; Let Israel know *this!* The prophet is a fool, the inspired man is demented, because of the grossness of your iniquity, and *because* your hostility is so great. ⁸ Ephraim was a watchman with my God, a prophet; Yet the snare of a bird catcher is in all his ways, *And* there is *only* hostility in the house of his God. ⁹ They have gone deep in

³⁵ Jeremiah 8:2; Ezekiel 29:5

depravity as in the days of Gibeah; He will remember their iniquity, He will punish their sins.

The Northern Kingdom was a functioning society which was loyal to its religious leaders; however, its religious leaders were fakes, falsely foretelling prosperity with Divine authority.³⁶ The great hostility mentioned in this passage emanated from the prophets who were furious that their prophecies were not coming true. Little did they know that their failure was the result of their great apostasy! In the past, the prophets were the Lord's security guards whose jobs were to warn the people of coming calamity. Their prophets were true spiritual men instructed by God, but the ones in Hosea were a snare to the kingdom, holding the people in idolatry like trapped birds. The prophets were ruthless in the house of their false gods, and their sin was as bad as it was in the days of the great sin in Gibeah.

Judges 19:16-30 ¹⁶Then behold, an old man was coming out of the field from his work at evening. Now the man was from the hill country of Ephraim, and he was staying in Gibeah, but the men of the place were Benjamites. ¹⁷And he lifted up his eyes and saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?" ¹⁸He said to him, "We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote part of the hill country of Ephraim, for I am from there, and I went to Bethlehem in Judah. But I am *now* going to my house, and no man will take me into his house." ¹⁹"Yet there is both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and also bread and wine for me, your maidservant, and the young man who is with your servants; there is no lack of anything." ²⁰The old man said, "Peace to you. Only let me *take care of* all your needs; however, do not spend the night in the open square." ²¹So he took him into his house and gave the donkeys fodder, and they washed their feet and ate and drank. ²²While they were celebrating, behold, the men of the city, certain worthless fellows, surrounded the house, pounding the door; and they spoke to the owner of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him." ²³Then the man, the owner of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my fellows, please do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not commit this act of folly." ²⁴"Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. Please let me bring them out that you may ravish them and do to them whatever you wish. But do not commit such an act of folly against this man." ²⁵But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and brought her out to them; and they raped her and abused her all night until morning, then let her go at the approach of dawn. ²⁶As the day began to dawn, the woman came and fell down at the doorway of the man's house where her master was, until *full* daylight. ²⁷When her master arose in the morning and opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, then behold, his concubine was lying at the doorway of the house with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸He said to her, "Get up and let us go," but there was no answer. Then he placed her on the donkey; and the man arose and went to his home. ²⁹When he entered his house, he took a knife and laid hold of his concubine and cut her in twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout the territory of Israel. ³⁰All who saw *it* said, "Nothing like this has ever happened or been seen from the day when the sons of Israel came up from the land of Egypt to this day. Consider it, take counsel and speak up!"

In the Lord's eyes, the sins of the kings, prophets, priests and ordinary people of the north were just as great as the sins in Gibeah and He would remember all that they had done.

³⁶ Lamentation 2:14; Ezekiel 13:3; Micah 3:11; Zephaniah 3:4

Although the punishment for this gross self-inflicted alienation from the Lord will not occur for many years, the judgment upon them has been set.

Hosea 9:10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first *season*. *But* they came to Baal-peor and devoted themselves to shame, and they became as detestable as that which they loved. ¹¹ As for Ephraim, their glory will fly away like a bird— No birth, no pregnancy and no conception! ¹² Though they bring up their children, yet I will bereave them until not a man is left. Yes, woe to them indeed when I depart from them! ¹³ Ephraim, as I have seen, is planted in a pleasant meadow like Tyre; but Ephraim will bring out his children for slaughter.

It was a great delight for travelers in those days to stumble across a wild vineyard of grapes or fig trees. The sweet moisture from either fruit would soothe their parched mouths and encourage the travelers as they continued their journey. So it was with Jacob's descendants when the Lord saw them in bondage in Egypt and rescued them.

However, the Lord's hatred of the Israel's sin was equal to His love for them. There, the young women prostituted themselves before a Moabite god and the men of Israel joined in the folly. ³⁷ The unfaithfulness of the Northern Kingdom was equal to the unfaithfulness at Baal-Peor and the Lord remembered both. For their sin, they would forfeit bearing children. Sterility was a curse. Ephraim was about to become fruitless as far as children were concerned and those that were born would be killed.

Hosea 9:14 Give them, O Lord—what will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. ¹⁵ All their evil is at Gilgal; indeed, I came to hate them there! Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of My house! I will love them no more; all their princes are rebels. ¹⁶ Ephraim is stricken, their root is dried up, they will bear no fruit. Even though they bear children, I will slay the precious ones of their womb. ¹⁷ My God will cast them away because they have not listened to Him; and they will be wanderers among the nations.

In Gilgal, the Israelites had begged for an earthly king rather than remaining under the direction of the Lord as their king. Hosea cried out to God to give the Northern Kingdom what it deserved, no descendants.

1 Samuel 8:7 ⁷ The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.

The Lord's anger was a holy hatred for their sin not like that of human passion and anger. For their wickedness, most of the Northern Kingdom would cease to be included in God's heavenly family. Soon those who survived would be in exile, never to return to the land.

³⁷ Numbers 25:3