The Book of Hosea

Zanesville, OH | Sunday AM Bible Study

**Chapter 5**

* **5:1-7– Israel is separated from God**
* **Verse 1**– God seems to be the one speaking here and a threefold command to listen is given to priest, people and king. The message requires the attention of all from the least to the greatest among the people (Gen. 49:1-2). The message is one of judgment and it applies to everyone involved.
* Two places are singled out in v. 1. The first is Mizpah which is a city of Benjamin associated with assemblies of the people (cf. Josh. 18:26; Judg. 20:1, 3; 21:1, 5) and one of the places where Samuel judged Israel (cf. 1 Sam. 7:5-16). It is also the site where Saul was proclaimed King (cf. 1 Sam. 10:17-27). The *“Ebenezer”* memorial was set up between Mizpah and Shen.
* The second place is Tabor which is a prominent mountain located west of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Psa. 89:12; Jer. 46:18). It is also associated with the victory over Sisera by Barak and Deborah (cf. Judg. 4:6-15). Some have also suggested it is where Jesus was transfigured but there is no way of knowing this for certain.
* The point of bringing up these places is because of what was being done there. Snare and net are terms associated with hunting animals (birds especially) and both these places were wooded areas good for hunting.
* It seems that these places became closely associated with the sin of the people (idolatry) and thus they were hunting souls. They were a snare and a trap to their own people (Psa. 140:4-5). Sin is pictured here as keeping us longer than we intended to stay.
* **Verse 2**– The Hebrew in this verse is very difficult to translate. Some suggest it has reference to Shittim (cf. Num. 25) where Israel committed immorality and idolatry with the people of Moab. If this is what is meant, it would be in keeping with the context and the “depravity” that is translated in most versions.
* Whatever the case is, the revolters (Jer. 6:28; Zeph. 3:1-2; revolted against God) have engaged in deep depravity (most versions read). Sin is pictured here in a gross light (cf. Rom. 1:18-32).
* Though they rejoice in sin and continuously seek to do evil, God will not leave them unpunished for their wrongdoings (Prov. 3:12; Heb. 12:6-11). It must be understood that God seeks to correct those whom He loves.
* **Verse 3**– God declares that He knows Ephraim and they are not hidden from His sight (cf. Job. 34:22; Psa. 73:11; 94:7-13; Isa. 29:15; 47:10; 1 Cor. 4:5; Heb. 4:13). Though the people try to hide their sin, God knows that they have played the harlot and have defiled themselves.
* Notice that God knows everything about them, but they know nothing about Him (Jer. 4:22; Hos. 2:8; 4:6).
* **Verse 4**– Their sin will not allow them to return to God. God here presents that the people are imprisoned by their sin and they cannot escape (Psa. 9:15; Prov. 5:22). Their spirit of harlotry has penetrated their hearts and minds and they do not know God (cf. Hos. 4:1, 11-12).
* **Verse 5**– Israel is prideful, and it’s pictured here as so blatant that it testifies against them. Their pride causes them to stumble (cf. Prov. 16:18; Isa. 3:9: 9:9-10; 28:1-3).
* Judah was previously warned not be to like Israel (cf. Hos. 4:15) but now it seems that they are following Israel’s lead (Jer. 3:6-10). This statement seems to be talking about the fact that they will fall in the future.
* **Verse 6**– Israel, stumbling, will seek to try and remedy their wrongdoings by their use of sacrifices here pictured by their flocks and herds (Ex. 10:24-26; 1 Sam. 15; Isa. 1:11-15; Mic. 6:6-7). As in Amos, the people have not learned what it means to truly seek God and thus they in ignorance will seek to make sacrifices (Amos 5:4-5).
* They will realize that God has departed from them (Prov. 1:28; Mic. 3:4) and they will not receive any response from Him (Prov. 15:8; 21:27). The repeated warnings Yahweh has given His people have gone unheeded and now they will face the consequences for what they have done.
* **Verse 7**– The language in this verse clearly brings to mind the idea of a marital affair and its consequences (Mal. 2:11-15). Israel has treated her husband with complete and utter betrayal when she sought after her idols (Isa. 48:8; 59:13; Jer. 3:20; 5:11).
* God has shown nothing but love and patience to His people, yet they have turned their eyes away from Him and gone after that which is evil. Illegitimate children (idolaters) is the consequences of such actions (Neh. 13:23-24; Hos. 1).
* New Moon was a festival associated with sacrifices and celebration. We know from Amos it was all hypocritical and a pretense to commit sin (Amos 8:5). Their actions on this day will be to their demise. Their sin will bring on their destruction.
* **5:8-15– Israel’s slaughter**
* **Verse 8**– The picture in this verse is the onslaught of war in terms of the enemy that shall besiege them. Gibeah here refers to the city which is familiar for the story of the Levite’s concubine in Judges 19-20. It is located in the territory of Benjamin approximately 3 miles north of Jerusalem.
* Ramah is a city also in the territory of Benjamin located 5 miles north of Jerusalem (Josh. 18:25; Judg. 4:5; 19:3; 1 Sam. 22:6; Ezr. 2:26; Neh. 7:30). Samuel also judged Israel here and he lived here as well (1 Sam. 1:19; 7:17; 15:34). The last city mentioned is Beth-aven (Bethel) which is located ten miles north of Jerusalem.
* The point of mentioning these cities is because they are so close together and are in the heart of Israel’s territory. The horn will be blown, trumpet sounded, and the alarm sounded because the enemy will be coming against them (cf. 2 Kings 16-17).
* These cities are also near the southern borders which likely indicates that the enemy has already took control of all the other major cities. This is all brought on as well by the consequences of the Syro-Emphraimite war (Isa. 7).
* **Verse 9**– Ephraim will be destroyed and left desolate (Lam. 1:1) by a merciless enemy acting according to God’s will. God here advises that it is a guarantee that He will punish them for their sin (Deut. 28:37; Isa. 46:10; Zech. 1:6).
* **Verse 10**– Judah is condemned for seeking to break God’s law (cf. Deut. 19:14; 27:17). God gave portions of the land to different tribes and people and this was permanent. Judah sought to take advantage of the devastation of Israel. It may also refer to the spiritual boundaries of right and wrong?
* God’s punishment to Judah for their sin is here pictured as an outpour of water (flood) which they will not escape (Psa. 88:17). The consequences to sin are extreme and pictured as inescapable.
* **Verse 11**– The people are oppressed and crushed (Deut. 28:28-29, 33) by their enemies (Lex Talionis; Amos 4:1). Their punishment is overwhelming, but it fits the crimes committed.
* They were determined to follow man and not God (1 Kings 12:26-33; Mic. 6:16). This could be referencing the people following their leaders and themselves instead of reliance on God. In the immediate context it may also be tied to trust in Aram (2 Kings 16). May also be used to refer to following idols and the nonsense that is idolatry (some versions read this way).
* **Verse 12**– God is a destroyer to the people of Israel and Judah. A moth (Job 13:28; Isa. 50:9; 51:8; may be translated pus or disease) would be pictured as eating away a garment. Rottenness wastes away a man’s body from the inside. Both external and internal ruin of the people will come to pass according to God’s doing (Deut. 28:21-22, 35, 53-57; 30:15-20).
* **Verse 13**– After God’s judgment in v. 12 has taken its effect, the people will seek help but not with God. Israel is pictured here as seeking help from Assyria (2 Kings 15:19; 17:1-3; 2 Chron. 28:16-23). *“Jareb”* means contender, striver or great king. The idea is that Israel appealed to a man who seemed powerful enough to help them.
* *“Israel and Judah sought relief of their symptoms instead of a real cure”* (Stuart). The final statement of the verse aptly indicates that any such king cannot deliver what God can (Psa. 3:7-8; 121:2).
* **Verse 14**– Because of their sin and their stubbornness in seeking help from all the wrong places, God will tear the people apart as a lion does to its prey (Psa. 7:2; 50:2; Lam. 3:10; Amos 1:2; 3:8).
* Notice the emphasis on I in this verse indicating God’s hand in the capture and destruction of the people. He is the force behind everything and no one can do otherwise to thwart His will (Deut. 28:31; Job 42:2; Isa. 14:27; 43:13).
* **Verse 15**– God will withdraw from His people for a time until they acknowledge Him and seek to return to Him with all their heart (Lev. 26:40-42; Deut. 4:27-31; 2 Chron. 7:14; Neh. 1:8-9; Jer. 29:12-14; 1 Cor. 5:9-11, 13; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15).
* God dwelt in the midst of His people (Ezek. 8-10) but shall now return to His dwelling place until the people in their affliction and suffering come to the realization that they desperately need God (Ezek. 40-48) and without Him they can’t do anything (Ezek. 36:31; Hos. 3:5; Jon. 3:8-10).