The Book of Hosea

Zanesville, OH | Sunday AM Bible Study

**Chapter 13**

* **13:1-3– Ephraim’s Idolatry**
* **Verse 1**– The tribe of Ephraim was once one which would incite fear among all others (Judg. 8:1; 12:1). He, through the providence and strength given by God was exalted in all of Israel but their pride was their fall. Jeroboam was of this tribe (1 Kings 11:26; 12:26-33) and introduced idolatry into Israel.
* Although Jeroboam does not introduce Baal worship himself, he initiates the downward spiral of the northern kingdom. Ahab introduced Baal worship in conjunction with his wife Jezebel (1 Kings 16:30-33). Israel’s constant worship of Baal and their constant idolatrous practices was part of what led them to devastation and death (2 Kings 17:16-18; Hos. 11:2).
* **Verse 2**– Their sin is multiplied as their idols are multiplied (4:7; 10:1-2). The supply and demand chain is seen here with their idolatry. Idols are being constantly made to satisfy their incessant desire of sin. The idols come courtesy of their own workers and skillful makers (Psa. 115:4; Isa. 40:19-20; 44:9-20).
* Those who make sacrifices are called to kiss (submit, pay homage) to these statues and objects (1 Kings 19:18). This is a picture of the depravation and degradation of man. God made rational creatures but these who do such things are irrational (Psa. 115:5-8; Acts 17:22-31).
* **Verses 3**– Because of these actions, God uses four images which speak of the swiftness or fleeting of something that appears for just a moment and is gone in the next (Hos. 6:4; Jam. 4:14). These examples are commonly used in the OT to speak of God’s judgment against the people (Psa. 1:4; 68:2; Isa. 17:13).
* **13:4-8– God’s care and anger for Israel**
* **Verse 4**– This section emphasizes God’s ambivalent state towards Israel. God sharply contrasts the folly and destructive nature of idolatry by emphasizing His role and His nature. He alone has been YHWH (the self-existent, all powerful God) since Egypt (Ex. 20:2; Psa. 81:9-10; Hos. 12:9). God declares that His deeds and wonders since then should have been enough for them in order not to turn anywhere else. The fact that there is no one like Him further illustrates this point (Isa. 43:11-13; 44:6-8; 45:21-22).
* **Verse 5**­– God manifested His presence to His people in the wilderness when they left Egypt bound for the promised land. He cared for them (Ex. 2:25; Deut. 2:7; 8:15; 32:1-43; Hos. 11:1-4) and constantly met their needs. His love has not known limits when it comes to looking after Israel.
* **Verse 6**– Over the course of time, as God blessed them and as they got physically satisfied, they grew prideful and forgot their ultimate source of dependence and life (Deut. 8:12-14; 32:13-15; Neh. 9:25-26). In this state, they neglected and forgot God (Deut. 6:10-12; 32:18; Psa. 10:4; Isa. 17:10).
* **Verse 7**– God will judge Israel according to the wrong they have done to Him. His care for His people requires that He deals with sin harshly. He will hunt them and destroy them as a lion does to its prey (Jer. 5:6; Hos. 5:14). They have allowed the sin which crouches at the door to rule over them (Gen. 4:7) and now God will crouch in wait for them.
* **Verse 8**– The wrath of God and the brutality of His judgment is further painted with the image of a bear, who being robbed of her cubs, hunts down her prey mercilessly (2 Sam. 17:8; Prov. 17;12. God will *“tear”* and *“devour”* His people (Psa. 50:22). The Assyrians were known for their brutal torture and execution of their enemies and this is probably the idea of the verse.
* **13:9-16– Israel’s sin cannot be overlooked**
* **Verse 9**– God so aptly and powerfully states that Israel’s opposition to Him is their destruction. Anyone who stands against this Holy, omnipotent God will be shattered and broken (Psa. 2:4-5, 9, 12). God has always been the only help to His people but they have withdrawn from Him (Deut. 33:26; Psa. 33:20; 46:1; 115:9-10; 121:1-2; 146:5).
* **Verse 10**– In what seems to be somewhat of a taunt and definite sarcasm, God asks where their precious kings and judges are (Hos. 7:3-7; 8:4; 10:3). The point is that God should have always been their King and their master but they rejected Him (Psa. 10:16; 47:6-7; 74:12; 89:18; Isa. 33:22; 43:15; Jn. 1:49).
* **Verse 11**– Israel requested their own kings, judges and princes and rejected God as king (1 Sam. 8:5-6, 19-20; 12:11-12). While God was not happy with their request, He granted it according to their free-will and He warned them about the consequences but they would not listen and now they are reaping the consequences.
* God gave them their kings and took them all away. He is the true, Sovereign King and He does as He wishes (1 Sam. 8:7-9; 1 Kings 14:7-16; Dan. 4:17, 25, 32). None did righteousness in His sight in the northern kingdom. Their decision has been their downfall.
* **Verse 12**– Ephraim’s sin is so much it is described as being stored up and bound up as a treasure (Deut. 32:35; Job 14:17; Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; Matt. 6:19-21; Rom. 2:5). As their sin has increased, so has God’s wrath. It will break forth like rushing water from a dam.
* **Verse 13**– This verse is a difficult one but the idea seems to be that God is giving Israel a chance to repent and He has given such opportunities (10:12; 12:6) but they are as stubborn and unwise as a foolish child (Prov. 1:5; 22:3) and thus they will die (miscarriage). It could also be talking about the judgment that will come upon Israel (Isa. 13:8).
* **Verse 14**– There seems to be a two-fold use of this verse. The first is negative and it indicates that God will not have compassion of the northern kingdom and He will not save them from the death and destruction that shall come upon them.
* The second seems to refer to the future Israel and the victory which comes through Jesus Christ (Isa. 25:8; 26:19; Ezek. 37; Psa. 16:10; 49:15; 1 Cor. 15:55-57). When Jesus comes and dies and rises from the dead then Hoses 13:14 will have its true fulfillment in relation to the true Israel.
* **Verse 15**– The glorious northern kingdom which once flourished under God’s guidance (Gen. 41:52) will now be destroyed and left desolate according to the will of God (Ezek. 17:10). They will be plundered and ravaged by their enemies and there will be no future and nothing at all to look forward to.
* **Verse 16**– The capital city of the north will be held accountable for their rebellion against God and their punishment is pictured here as brutal and overwhelming (2 Kings 17:6, 18; Isa. 7:8-9; Amos 3:9-15). They will fall by the sword and there will be no future generations and no youth to continue the heritage (Hos. 10:14-15).