The Book of Hosea

Zanesville, OH | Sunday AM Bible Study

**Chapter 8**

* **8:1-7– Reaping the whirlwind**
* **Verse 1**– The trumpet is to be blown as the enemy draws close to destroy and conquer Israel. The trumpet imagery is common pertaining to sounding an alarm as the enemy approaches (Jer. 4:5; 6:1; Hos. 5:8).
* The enemy is compared to an eagle swooping down for the kill (Deut. 28:49; Jer. 48:40). An eagle is a powerful and intelligent creature that knows exactly when to swoop down for the kill. The house of the LORD (people of God) will shortly come to an end.
* The reason for this end is their transgression of God’s covenant and their repeated rebellion against His law (Ex. 24; Jer. 31:32; Hos. 6:7). This should not come as a surprise since this was their common practice.
* **Verse 2**– Israel will cry out to God for deliverance on the day of calamity. They plead with God that they know Him, but such a statement could not be further from the truth (Psa. 78:34-37; Hos. 2:8; 4:1, 6, 11; 5:4; Mic. 3:11; Tit. 1:16; 1 Jn. 2:4).
* The people believed God was still with them, but He had left them (Judg. 16:20) because they did not seek Him faithfully. This scene is similar to what Jesus describes in Matt. 7:21-23. We may assume that we have a relationship with God but that does not mean He knows us.
* **Verse 3**– They cry out for help, yet they have repeatedly rejected that which is good. God is often described as the One who is good (Psa. 86:5; 119:68; 145:7-9; Matt. 19:17; Mk. 10:18; Lk. 18:19; Jam. 1:17). They have rejected God and His ways (Jer. 6:16-19).
* Consequently, the enemy (evil) will pursue them (Lev. 26:36; Deut. 28:22, 25, 45). Logically, when one rejects good the only other option is to receive evil. Israel rejected God and will now reap the consequences of evil and suffering.
* **Verse 4**– God speaks of Israel’s political chaos in this verse. Remember the book began by mentioning only one King of Israel, Jeroboam II (793-753; 2 Kings 14:23-29), but Israel would have 6 more kings after him. Why does God only mention one king at the start of the book?
* This verse answers that question for us. The kings after Jeroboam II were set up by themselves and not according to God’s will. The princes and kings sought the throne for themselves even if it meant murdering one another which was of course, not according to the will of God. The king was God’s representative and God controls the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5).
* Israel is completely relying on themselves instead of turning to God (2 Kings 15:10-30). Furthermore, they set up idols with the riches they have been blessed with from God, but it will only make them a severed people (1 Kings 13:34; Psa. 115:4-8; Jer. 10:3-4; 44:7-8).
* **Verse 5**– The calf (idol worship) probably is referring to Jeroboam idolatrous practices (1 Kings 12:26-30) which Israel continued in long after he was gone. Its roots perhaps go back to the events of Exodus 32.
* The point is that God is angry and fed up with their sin and blatant idolatrous practices (Ex. 20:3-6; Num. 25:3) and His question is disheartening. Because of their practices and consistency is sin God asks how long they will be incapable of innocence.
* It’s not that is impossible for them to repent and turn to God but for so long they have done evil and rejected Him all hope for such a scenario seems lost (Prov. 1:22; Jer. 4:14; 13:27).
* **Verse 6**– This verse emphasizes the foolishness of idolatry and its inequation with God. A craftsman makes these idols and therefore it cannot be God (Isa. 44:9-20; Acts 17:29; 19:26; 1 Cor. 8:4-6). God is not a created being and He surely is higher than our ways and thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9).
* Because of this, their calf can be easily broken and destroyed, and their hope and trust placed in such an object will also be shattered.
* **Verse 7**– The first part of this verse speaks aptly of the actions and decisions of the Israelites. They are putting their trust in idols (as seen in previous verse), other nations (Assyria and Egypt) and ultimately themselves.
* Because of this, it is described as vain or *“sowing the wind”* (See Ecc. 1:12-17; 2:4-17; 6:7-9). Wind is paralleled with vanity or futility time and time again in Ecclesiastes but also elsewhere in the scriptures (Job 4:8; Prov. 22:8; Gal. 6:7-8).
* Israel sowed to the wind (trusting in futile things) and they would reap a whirlwind of destruction for it. Typically, when one sows seed in the ANE, they would expect the harvest to be plentiful. Israel’s harvest will be plentiful but with destruction and not blessing.
* Israel’s judgment is further solidified by stating there will be no food for anyone. If there should be any yield, God will ensure Israel’s enemies consume it and not them (Deut. 28:33; Hos. 7:9). There is no scenario in which Israel gets even the slightest form of relief.
* **8:8-10– A nation swallowed up**
* **Verse 8**– The reader is left to realize that the enemy has swooped in for the kill and capture of Israel. More on this in verse 9. Israel is swallowed up by the enemy (Lam. 2:2, 5). A nation that was once powerful, wealthy, and well-established is humbled by the enemy but ultimately God.
* They are said to be scattered among the nations (Lev. 26:33; Deut. 28:25, 64; 2 Kings 17:1-6; 18:11). They are pictured as an object that no one likes. They have been wrecked, humbled and cast out because of their sin.
* **Verse 9**– The image reverts back to Israel turning to Assyria for help (2 Kings 15:19-20) like a wild donkey that is relentlessly stubborn (Job 39:5-8). God is not with them and they are all alone. They have hired them as *“lovers”* (Hos. 2:5-7, 10). The irony is that Assyria (their lover) would destroy them.
* **Verse 10**– God’s actions will always supersede that of the people. Even though they have tried to find solutions, God will ensure they are gathered and diminished at the hand of the Assyrians (Isa. 10:5-8).
* **8:11-14– Going back to bondage**
* **Verse 11–** Ephraim multiplied altars for worship that ultimately was to anyone, but God and it served as the centers for some of their revelries and profane practices (1 Kings 12:28-33; 13:33-34). God was only to be worship in Jerusalem (Amos 1:2). Altars meant for sin offering (Ex. 9:15; Lev. 9:15) have turned into sin centers (Isa. 1:10-17, Amos 5:21-24)
* **Verse 12–** God gave Israel His laws, commands and precepts for them to follow through prophets, kings and priests (Ex. 20; Deut. 5) but they have never had a habit of following it or staying with it and thus it is a strange thing for them. *“Ten thousand”* is the idea that God’s law is complete and profitable in every single way (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
* **Verse 13-14–** The chapter ends with God frowning on their self-indulgent lifestyles even in sacrifices they seek to offer to Him (1 Sam. 2:12-17). They will go into bondage (Egypt) for their sin. They have completely forgotten God and Judah is warned!