



The Book of Hosea
January 28, 2018
God's Judgement

Sermon #5
Reading: Hosea 4:1-19
Hosea 4:1-19



Prosecution's Case



As we studied the 1st 3 chapters, it has been apparent Hosea's relationship and treatment of Gomer parallels that of God and Israel. Further I taught there is a parallel between how Israel worshipped idols and sought sin and to how the world and America in particular have turned their back to God and live worshipping idols of all kinds. Finally, we observe a parallel in the first 3 chapters that there is a relationship between the unfaithful, disobedient, idol worshipping leaders of Israel of Hosea's time and how today's secular church leaders walk away from the truth of the Word and seek to please society above God. It is only the remnant Church that is living faithfully and bringing God glory. In this story there is hope for Gomer and Israel and the Church. By the end of chapter 3 Gomer has been redeemed but is not living with Hosea as a true wife. God says he will redeem Israel at a future point during the Church Age, but until then the nation Israel is living without its "king or prince" as we read in verse 4 of chapter 3 because of their sin and worship of idols.

In chapter 4 of Hosea, through his prophecy from God, he acts as the prosecuting attorney and launches into the case against Israel. The problem is clear as evidenced by the sins of both the people and especially the leadership of priests. We may look at Israel and relate and say, I understand, for after all we are people who have trouble with temptations that surrounds us as well. We are only human, just like the Israelites in 750 B.C. However, God has called his people, both then and now, to live holy or separated from the world. So Hosea, the prosecuting attorney, approaches God the Judge to lay out the case against Israel. As we travel through chapter 4 see what verdict you conclude.

Chapter 4 opens with Hosea making a formal command as he begins the charge against them, “Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel...” Does this not sound like the old movies or episodes of Perry Mason, “All rise. Hear Ye, Hear Ye. This court is now called in session before the honorable Judge Ryder.” The judge sits and the bailiff says, “You may now be seated.” Hosea is the prosecuting attorney and he approaches the bench of the only eternal judge Yehwah. Beginning chapter 4 again, “Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.” Hosea says, “the Lord has a controversy” with the people. Controversy means a prolonged disagreement with the people. This controversy of God with the children of Israel has been growing and on-going for 380 years, since the spilt of the northern and southern kingdoms.



Prosecution’s Indictment

Hosea stands before Israel and God and he says, Your Honor the people of Israel stand accused of the following, reading the 2nd half of verse 1, “There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land...” Hosea, the prosecutor, makes 3 charges against the nation of Israel. First, there is no faithfulness. Second, there is no devotion to or steadfast love of God. Third, there is no knowledge of God.



Hosea first charge is there remains no faithfulness in Israel. Faithfulness is observed by how people live their lives in honor of God. Faithfulness is found first and foremost in living as the faithful bride of God. Gomer was not living faithful to His and neither are the people of Israel living faithful to God. Secondly, God has instructed there is to be honor and faithfulness to God in our marriages between one husband and one wife. Finally, faithfulness also means and being true to God while living in a broken world because God is always true and faithful. God always keeps his word. Let me ask, were the people of Israel true to their

word to worship God? Do they honor the name of Yahweh? I know I have shared this before and let me do so again, quickly. When I was a young lad I did something wrong, I do not remember what I did, but I remember I expected my dad to spank me. Instead he sat me down and told me the value of one's name is found in keeping their word. If one keeps their word over time they prove themselves honest and trustworthy. My dad asked me, would I be a man of my word or a man of no honor? Gomer was not faithful or true to her word and vow. The people of Israel were not faithful to the God who provided them with everything, they were not a people of their word or of honor. We cannot change the past but we are to take each day and live faithfully seeking God. We are to seek God in his Word, through the humble strength of the Holy Spirit and in prayer. If we do these, we will live in God's strength and wisdom, and not our own, and we will be known to all as people of God's Word and trustworthy in our word. We will be known as a people who honor God and live with honor.

Secondly, there was a lack of devotion or steadfast love of God in Israel. Living in faithful devotion means living as the bride of God. It means living holy as a people that God has set aside from the world to live by his standards instead of the world's standards. As we read in Ephesians [“you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”](#) (Ephesians 2:1-3) This described Israel at the time of Hosea - they lived [“like the rest of mankind.”](#) Today we have the same problem; the Church is to live as a holy people, yet, the “broad church” is living [“like the rest of mankind.”](#) The “broad or secular church” are not a people of God's Word and therefore have no honor.



The 3rd charge is there was no knowledge of God left in Israel. This is not just intellectually knowledge, as the Pharisees and Sadducees had, but knowledge that comes from spiritual wisdom. Spiritual wisdom brings an awaking that our souls embrace creating a deep love for God that directs how one experiences life and the goals for living. This relationship with God is like the intimate knowledge that a husband and wife experience, the oneness. True knowledge is the basis on which a meaningful relationship can be built and grow and maintained.

Hosea says there is not a oneness between God and the people. Flip a couple of pages over to chapter 6, verse 6 of Hosea, [“For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”](#) Hosea is saying that a loving and compassionate heart comes when one is transformed by God and is evidenced by who or what one worships. The shrines and rituals of Israel had become empty, they were routine ritual and lacked true heart-felt spirituality. The people were worshipping idols and the false gods of Baal. I want to be clear neither Hosea nor I, are saying that sacrificing the things of the world for a life focused on God through the practices of studying the Bible, time spent in prayer, coming to church on Sunday, the taking of the Lord’s Supper and liturgy are by their nature unspiritual ritual, but these practices are right only if ones heart is right towards God. In our modern language I might say it like this, “God desires devotion and not ritualistic hymn-singing or service out of obligation or guilt or sermons by leaders who preach as merely their job. None of this - the efforts of Leland and Joyce in choosing and practicing music or my time spent in study and sermon prep means anything or even your coming to church - doesn’t mean anything unless we are doing so from hearts desiring to honor and worship God. God desires a natural outpouring of worship from the hearts of the people whom he has saved. He has no desire for compulsory acts of sacrifice or meaningless ritual. Israel is just like Adam, had broken the covenants of God. People have not



changed since the time of Adam. Technology has changed, but the hearts of mankind remain the same - they are broken and sinful without hope until God regenerates one's soul and by love one lives for the glory of their Creator.



Prosecution's Evidence

Hosea says the people and leaders are without excuse. He makes this clear later in his prophecy in chapter 13, where God says, **"I am the LORD your God from the land of Egypt; you know no God but me, and besides me there is no**



savior." (Hosea 13:4) Here Hosea is referring back to Exodus and the 1st of the Ten Commandments. **"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³You shall have no other gods before**



me." (Exodus 20:2-3) The people know the history of God's faithfulness, his miracles and his blessings, yet they reject God and worship idols. Israel has turned from true worship of the only true God to giving lip-service to God and doing as they desire. Hosea points this out later in chapter 8 saying, **"To me they cry, 'My God, we—Israel—know you.'**" (Hosea 8:2) Let me ask, is this not the same sin that one finds in the "broad church" today? The "broad church" says it knows God, but they are not even sure who God is since they no longer accept the Bible as the Word of God. At this point Israel's only hope is God's promise of reconciliation in future history, as we read back in chapter 2, **"I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord."** (Hosea 2:20)



It would be hard for me to believe that Paul did not have the prophecy of Hosea in his mind when he wrote to the believers in Rome, ¹⁸**"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ... ²⁴"Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among**

themselves, ²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator ... ²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. ... ²⁷ receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. ²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.” (Romans 1:18-19, 24–28) Paul is

echoing Hosea in saying 3 things. First, God has revealed himself to all mankind throughout all history. History also shows that mankind in every generation departed from God. So, mankind is without excuse for they have chosen their sinful desires instead of worshipping the Creator of the universe. The second point builds upon the first; having knowledge of God, at this time certainly the Jews had more knowledge of God than the gentiles, mankind has worked hard to suppress the knowledge of God in an effort not to be held accountable to God. By this very action they acknowledge God and their sin against him. At the time of Hosea,

Israel desired sin - as is written in verses 10 to 14, “They shall eat, but not be satisfied; they shall play the whore, but not multiply, because they have forsaken the Lord to cherish ¹¹ whoredom, wine, and new wine, which take away the understanding. ¹² My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore. ¹³ They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your brides commit adultery.

¹⁴ I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for the men themselves go aside with prostitutes and sacrifice with cult prostitutes, and a people without understanding shall come to ruin.” Throughout history women and children have suffered when men have

failed to stand strong for the glory of God. Men have also turned from their calling by God to lead and protect their family and church and thus allowed women to usurp and lead. Men, God calls you just as he called Adam and the men of Israel

and your role in His church and the family that he has given you is to lead as a sacrificial leader putting the needs of you wife, children and church before your own. God model this when he put the needs of his creation as the highest desire and sent his Son to die that mankind might live in his grace for eternity.

Paul's 3rd point is the same as Hosea's, because of the people rejection of God through the suppression of the truth, even though God's truth is evident and exists all around them, the wrath of God is bring poured out from heaven. At the time of Hosea the idolatry and debased living had become the normal way of life. Paul says the same thing about people groups and nations of his age and I say the same thing of our age. So too, Israel's turning from God lead to them becoming made captive and much of Israel destroyed. Just as Israel turned from God at the time of Paul and this lead to the domination of Israel, the destruction of the temple and their being scattered to the 4 corners of the earth - why would one think it is any different as the "broad church" or "secular church" today turns from God's precepts to create man-made and man-centered precepts for his church.



Prosecution's Closing

Because the people of Hosea's Israel would not have God and because the people Paul's time would not have God to the point they killed the Son of God sent to redeem them and because people of our time do not want God and as God has done in the past he will do today - there will be an increase measure of God's wrath poured out on the sinful nations. Throughout history we observe God's wrath being poured out on the nations and sometimes we observe God giving people and nations over to their sinful desires and shameful lusts which leads them to their own destruction. Hosea describes the process; their hearts lead them to moral depravity, and this leads to the destruction of the environment God has given them stewardship over. Moral depravity leads people to choose leaders who will support



their sin. Choosing leaders who embrace moral corruption is not limited to government but also the Church. The “broad church” embraces the depravity of society in order to appeal to society. The remnant church holding fast to God is seen by society and the “broad church” as the enemy because it stands as Hosea and Paul stood firm and called for the conviction of the world because of its sin. Now hear me, all who have ears to hear, godlessness is not incompatible with religion. In fact, one can observe it goes along with religion very nicely. Religious leaders of Hosea’s time and Paul’s time and our time are often professional elites filled with self-seeking ambitions; the desire for fame and money, and debauchery. The world loves the “broad church” and its unfaithful leadership because it shows there is no difference between the world and the religion of the broad church. Paul wrote of these leaders, “Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.” (Romans 1:22-23) I cannot name one charge Hosea and God laid out in verses 10 to 14 that are not true this day also.



Here is the result of such a massive turning from God to seek sinful desires. It leads to emptiness and dissatisfaction. Hosea says people eat but do not have enough. They are never satisfied. They seek pleasures of sex and drugs and yet, they know no peace. Look at our world - if the world’s way of doing anything you desire is all good and is right - then why is there an ever growing number of suicides, divorces, embezzlements, obesity, aggressive behavior and the most profitable websites are pornography? God does not have to send his judgement against these things for they are their own worst punishment. Look again at Hosea chapter 4, verse 14, “I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for the men themselves go aside with prostitutes and sacrifice with cult prostitutes, and a people without understanding shall come to ruin.” This is the beginning of the end, the ruin of the nation by its





self-seeking sin on a grand scale. History shows this over and over; Israel, Rome, Europe and now America and other nations. What was the hope for Hosea's and Paul's Israel? Repentance was the only hope. In 2 Chronicles, chapter 7, verse 14 we read, "if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." Our prayers should be for repentance and revival. We should be praying not only for the repentance of the world and America, but also repentance of the "broad church". This was the prayer and hope of both Hosea and Paul and it is our hope today.



Prosecution's Plea for Judah

As we arrive at the end of chapter 4, Hosea has delivered God's indictment against Israel, but Israel is not the whole of the Jewish homeland. To the south is the kingdom of Judah and thanks to her more faithful leaders she had not slipped to the level of moral decline as their brothers to the north in Israel. For Judah there was still hope. Hosea writes, "Though you play the whore, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty. Enter not into Gilgal, nor go up to Beth-aven, and swear not, 'As the LORD lives.'" ¹⁶ Like a stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn; can the Lord now feed them like a lamb in a broad pasture? ¹⁷ Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone. ¹⁸ When their drink is gone, they give themselves to whoring; their rulers dearly love shame. ¹⁹ A wind has wrapped them in its wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices." The fact that Hosea writes do not enter Gilgal and Beth-aven is significant. Israel and Judah were divided after the death of Solomon. The son of Solomon, Rehoboam takes the throne and the northern tribes rebel under the leadership of Jeroboam. Rehoboam gathers 185,000 men to fight and take the north back from Jeroboam. God speaks to Rehoboam through the prophet Shemaiah and tells him not to fight his brothers in the north for God has divided the kingdom. This took place in 930 B.C. The capital of the southern



kingdom was Jerusalem. The northern kingdom's new capital is Shechem. The northern kingdom was ruled by Jeroboam and he set up shrines at Beth-aven and Gilgal to replace the temple in Jerusalem the capital of Judah. This is what opened the door for the northern kingdom of Israel to begin idol worship at the fake alters in Gilgal and Beth-aven. Hosea tells Judah not to follow the way of Israel. He tells Judah do not come north to the shrines at Beth-aven and Gilgal. Hosea tells Judah to stay pure and worship God only, do not follow the way of Israel.



This is the warning Hosea gives us today: We live in a declining, pleasure-seeking culture. Sin can be observed at every level of our society. God has called us to live holy lives and to worship of him alone. This is the goal we strive for to live holy as a community of believing families. But we must also pray for revival. We must pray the “broad church” repents and returns to God and becomes part of the stalwart remnant church. Like Israel the idol worshipping of the “broad church” or “secular church” is seen as good by society because the society runs away from God. We, my beloved, are called to share the truth, the truth of God’s Word, the truth of Christ’s Gospel and the truth of God’s saving grace while remaining pure and holy. It is a challenge, but God will strengthen us. Amen!