

## Reaping The Whirlwind

Seminaries teach how to prepare and structure a 3-point sermon. However, I just could not accomplish that because I wanted to cover chapters 8 and 9 of Hosea. I have built this message on 7-points, but that will work because 7 is a biblical number. As we quickly work through Hosea this morning and please consider the history that was prophesied and came to fruition and also think of where the world is today and how it parallels Hosea. Think of how the powerful countries of today reflect what Hosea preached to Israel and said of its neighboring nations. Students of history know well that history repeats itself – yes, over centuries of time and with different nations, but the themes of the rise and fall of nations remains the same. As nations mature and prosper the normal development seems to be one of moving away from God. People’s sinful hearts remain the same, without God, they are broken and seek after sin. God always saves the remnant when his judgment comes. This cycle of nations rise and fall will continue until the return of Jesus Christ. Please open your Bibles to Hosea chapter 8. I asked you to read chapters 8 and 9 because I will be moving fast and hitting upon the broad themes.

The heart of chapter 8 is found in verse 7, “[For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads; it shall yield no flour; if it were to yield, strangers would devour it.](#)” Hosea puts forth the principle that there is a correlation between what a person does and what happens to them as the result of their actions. Israel has sown the seeds of meaningless ritual that has grown into meaningless religion and they will therefore reap the judgment of God. A headless stalk of wheat is worthless and produces no flour, so it is only fit to be burned. Israel has moved away from God who was their Head and Protector and Israel

remains a stalk without a head that is worth only burning. Hosea is saying the enemies who will invade and destroy Israel are proof of the truth of his prophecy.

### **Their Maker Forgotten**

Israel's sins have been revealed at various points in the previous chapters and again Hosea lists Israel's sins against God here in chapter 8. All the sins are rooted and grow out of the sin mentioned at the end of the chapter. Reading the beginning of verse 14, "[Israel has forgotten his Maker...](#)" I do not believe Hosea is saying Israel actually forgot God or who God is by the history of Israel or from the prophets and holy writings. Israel would have said that they knew God and worshipped him. When I looked at the Hebrew word translated here as "forgotten" it would have been better translated as "to neglect" or "ignore" or "cease to care". Intellectually Israel still knew God, but they had ceased to care to live for God. They had woven false gods into their lifestyles and they sought the pleasures of the world that the false gods approved of. Paul said it plainly, <sup>18</sup>["For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup>For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup>For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. \*\*So they are without excuse.\*\*"](#) (Romans 1:18-20) Israel's sins were rooted in that they had allowed the focus to move from the Living God to lesser gods, dead gods of wood, stone and metal and with this came corruption of worship and lives focused on fulfilling lustful desires. This is what Gomer sought and Israel gladly abused her. Today it is the same; churches have brought in many ideas that have nothing to do with worshipping the Living God through His Son, Jesus Christ who was sent to save the world from its sin. The church should be like John the Baptist shouting out to the world, "[Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!](#)"

(John 1:29) In Christianity of today, in our country and many others, it is not that God is denied. On the contrary, he is spoken of often, there may even be elaborate ceremonies built around his name in the form of worship. But, God looks at the heart, not ceremonies built on ritual without meaning. People have forgotten God by not believing the Bible as he has given it, by choosing to live the world's lack of morals instead of being obedient to God's word and living as his light in a dark world. How many people do we know that all their energy and time goes into jobs, house, cars and hobbies and the family lacks time for God. Families where the children are raised in confusion because they are not taught the boundaries of living for God as opposed to being caught up in the world. Many, like Israel, recognize God and even come to church, but they have forgotten God or as the Hebrew language implies they lead lives that "neglect" or "ignore" or "cease to care" for truly worshipping God.

### **Five Sins Of Forgetting**

Five sins resulted from Israel forgetting, neglecting, ignoring and ceasing to care for their relationship with God. First, they broke God's covenant. Second, they chose kings and leaders without seeking God. Third, they allowed idolatry to come into their lives and become normal. Forth, they made alliances with ungodly nations and discounted God precepts in the process. Fifth, Israel constructed false alters to false gods and worshiped them. Hosea says it is these sins that are the grounds for God's judgment.

Chapter 8 begins, reading verse 1, "[Set the trumpet to your lips! \*The trumpet is sounding the alarm!\* One like a vulture is over the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law.](#)" Covenant implies relationship. It is a personal agreement between God and his people. The law is the standard on which the covenant functions. Today as then, it is a heart

issue. We live by God's laws and standards not because of judgment for failing to do so, but because of our love for God, and because of our desire to live in such a way it bring him glory and because of our gratefulness for his gift of salvation through Christ. The result is lives that know his love and peace in the midst of a world burning itself up in corruption. Jesus taught for 3 years and said, **"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."** (John 16:33) Israel could have known God's peace and protection had they remained faithful.

Countries today may also know God's peace and protection through faithfulness to God's Word and his Son Jesus Christ. However, in God's perfect timing they may also reap the whirlwind of his wrath and punishment when they give him "lip service" but live lives of corruption. God called Israel to be his chosen people and his light in the dark world, but they turned away and embraced the world. Jesus calls us to be his light in this broken world. The question before us this morning is are we living in loving obedience to God or have we allowed the idols and corruption of this world to creep into our lives? Have we placed our jobs, careers, house, cars, giving our children the material things of this world above our worship of God?

How do we stand in the 5 sins committed by Israel because they forgot, neglected, ignored and ceased to care for their relationship with God? Are we faithful to the covenants of God? Are we seeking God in choosing and supporting leaders; leaders in our jobs, community, state and nation? Are we voting and vocal concerning the laws our government enacts to rule our society – calling for laws that are consistent with God's? One I am guilty of to some extent is idolatry. Are we allowing things of this world to creep into our lives and distract us from God? It is hard to not allow the materialism of America, movies, video games, busyness of life to take our focus off of God and rob him of the time we should spend

seeking him. Israel tried to find safety in alliances with other countries; are we seeking safety by alienating ourselves with the things of our society instead of standing firm for God and knowing no matter what happens in this life we have his eternal safety? Finally what are the alters of worship in our lives we need to tear down in order for us to worship God with a pure heart?

### **Prosperity Replaces God**

We saw that the five sins of Israel are the same five sins that mankind continues to wrestle with and are the result of forgetting, neglecting, ignoring and ceasing to care for God and therefore God's judgment will come. In verse 1 the sounding trumpet is a warning and in verse 14 Hosea says Israel has forgotten God, but there is one more thing I want to spend a little time on from chapter 8. Read verse 14 with me, [“For Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces, and Judah has multiplied fortified cities; so I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour her strongholds.”](#) God says because Israel has forgotten, neglected and ignored their relationship with him they have built palaces and fortified cities. On the surface this does not seem all that important and maybe even out of place. What I am seeing here is Israel built palaces or as the New King James says temples. What we see is Israel, because they have turned from God, was pursuing, as a nation, building big buildings, elaborate buildings and large fortified cities. If we have a relationship with God we know he is our all in all. I thought about America building big skyscrapers that go far beyond function and are temples or palaces to honor men. We have lost our focus on God and have replaced him with big things that glorify man. The nicest and biggest buildings in Albuquerque are government buildings, the nicest buildings in Tijeras is the Village government buildings. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the standard American home was 2 to 3 bedrooms, 1 bath and 1 car garage. When I was younger, working to establish my career it was 3 bedrooms, 2 baths and 2-car garage. Today the standard is 3000 square feet or

more, 4 to 5 bedrooms, even though the number of children families are having has gone down, and 3 to 4 baths and 3-car garages with and RV pad or garage.

Without God we find satisfaction in things and the bigger the better. What about Church? Success in American Church culture is how big is the campus, how many people are coming, how big is the budget and do you broadcast your services. For the American Church bigness is blessedness. Is size really the measure of God's presence and blessings? Sometimes God does bless people or ministries with enlarging them, but he also blesses people to be content with what he provides – big, medium or small. I think here is the secret, it is what God did for Abraham, God said, [“I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”](#) (Genesis 12:3) God blessed Abraham so that he would bless all the families of the earth with what God blessed him with. This hit me hard this week – am I using God's blessings to bless others. Am I using my material goods – mainly money wisely for the kingdom of God? Am I using my time wisely – studying the Bible, serving others and sharing the saving gospel of Jesus Christ with the lost? Am I a blessing to my family, my church and my community? If I am – praise God, but if I am not – what then? Let me ask, how are you seeing these questions answered in your life?

## **God Turns Away**

In chapter 9 of Hosea we find some answers in Israel's long-term neglect of their relationship with God. For centuries Israel had benefited from God's presence. They had benefited even though they grew over time to become a society that no longer honored God. Because of this God says he will now turn away from Israel and with his turning away his blessing will be removed and they be devoured by the world. Reading verses 11 and 12, [“Ephraim's glory shall fly away like a bird — no birth, no pregnancy, no conception! <sup>12</sup> Even if they bring up children, I will bereave them till none is left. Woe to them when I depart from them!”](#) Ephraim

was the second son of Joseph, blessed by him and given preference over his first son, Manasseh. Hosea uses the name Ephraim to identify the northern kingdom of Israel whom God blessed and favored. Even today when one is in the midst of their sin they desire God to go away so they will not feel convicted. America desires not to feel convicted, so it desires God to go away. But, if God goes away, what then? His blessings and protection are removed.

### **God's Punishment Approaches**

We do not know for sure, but biblical scholars believe Hosea may have delivered chapter 9 as a sermon to the people on the occasion of the harvest festival. The autumn festival of Sukkoth was a time of joy held at the end of the harvest. It was a time of feasting, celebration and dancing. The approaching disaster and judgment of God would have been the last thing on their minds. Yet, it appears amid this celebration Hosea steps forth and delivers God's message to stop the celebrating of the things of the world and call people to repent. Reading verse 1, Hosea shouts out above the noise of the celebrating, **“Rejoice not, O Israel! Exult not like the peoples; for you have played the whore, forsaking your God. You have loved a prostitute's wages on all threshing floors.”** This should have gotten people's attention. This would have been difficult for the people to hear and accept. But the message is simple enough and the understanding is clear, because the people have forsaken God – God will now forsake them. Because God is turning away his punishment approaches and soon the merriment of the harvest will come to an end and they will suffer.

As Peter wrote and Hosea would agree, **“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise (of punishment) as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”** (2 Peter 3:9) I believe this applies to America also. Hosea's sermon brings to my mind another sermon

given by the great preacher Jonathan Edwards with the title “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”. If you have not read it, it would be well worth your time.

Edwards’ sermon was based on Deuteronomy 32:35, where God says through Moses, “Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.”

Edwards preached God’s judgment will come upon unbelievers and his message was for people to repent and turn back to God. Moses’ message called for repentance as did Hosea’s and Edward’s message was the same, he preached, “Now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands calling ... How awful it is to be left behind at such a day!” Hosea preached the day of reckoning was at hand for Israel. I am preaching this morning the day of reckoning for America is coming swiftly! Will America hear God and repent?

How did Israel respond to Hosea? Reading verse 7 where Hosea declares, “The days of punishment have come; the days of recompense have come; Israel shall know it.” But instead of heeding Hosea’s words Israel responded to Hosea with hatred and believed “The prophet is a fool; the man of the spirit is mad, because of your great iniquity and great hatred.” Men who have faithfully preached God’s unaltered Word are often hated by the sinful world. But better to be hated by the world than for God to turn away and remove his blessing. Is the world hearing the preaching of God’s Word? To a large extent the answer is “No.” But there is hope as long as people proclaim the truth of God. As long as you and I proclaim the saving gospel of Christ there is hope. There remains hope until the day of the Lord. Paul said of his life, “Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but **also to all who have loved His appearing.**” (2 Timothy 4:8) My beloved, will we be able to say the same? Hear this all who have ears to

hear, I say, “Woe to those who have not loved Christ for on that day when he comes again it will be your judgment and eternal doom!”

### **Unfinished Prayer**

As we move to the end of chapter 9 of Hosea verse 14 begins a prayer, “Give them, O LORD --” Hosea breaks off suddenly from his prayer. Hosea is worn out, he has preached from his heart with the words given by God. The people have been unresponsive. This happen before, it happened with Moses. When Moses came down from the mountain after being with God he saw the people have sinned by making a golden calf and worshipping. it.

In Exodus chapter 32, “Moses said to the people, ‘You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.’

<sup>31</sup> Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, ‘Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold!’ Moses begins his prayer to God, <sup>32</sup> ‘Yet now, if You will forgive their sin— but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.’ ” (Exodus 32:30-32) Moses suddenly stops his prayer after saying, “Yet now, if You will forgive their sin -” Moses knows the hearts of the people are not right. So Moses says God if you do not forgive the people who I love blot my name out of the Book of Life as well. Moses does not know what to pray. Hosea is at the same point, “Give them, O LORD --” Hosea wants the Lord to give mercy, but knows the peoples hearts desire sin. Hosea stops and then says, “What will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts!” Hosea is saying God, I understand if they do not repent then it is time for your wrath and judgment. My prayer for our country this morning is for repentance, but I also know that if there is not repentance God’s judgment will soon come.

### **God’s Final Word**

This is the way the chapter 9 ends. God's reiterates his approaching judgment and Hosea accepts God's pronouncement. Hosea knows that Israel will not repent and closes chapter 9 saying in verse 17, "My God will cast them away, because they did not obey Him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations." This is the end for Israel at this point in history. What Hosea and the other prophets have prophesied will now happen. The people of Israel will be carried away into slavery. The words of God given by his prophets now become silent for over 400 years until the coming of God's Son and the establishment of the New Covenant.

Blessed are we for we possess the complete revelation of God that we hold in our hands this morning, the Bible. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' <sup>7</sup> Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Galatians 4:4-7 NKJV) This is our hope, we live in the grace of God and by the strength of His Holy Spirit that he has given to every believer - may we hold fast to His Word and live for his glory by God strength and not our own! Amen and amen!