

HOSEA 4-6

REVIEW...

- Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom from 755 - 715 B.C.
 - He prophesied during the reign of 6 different Kings in Israel – right up to the Assyrian captivity...
 - God used the example of the life of Hosea to illustrate the rebellious character of Israel!
 - God spoke to Hosea – go marry a harlot – so he went and married Gomer ...
 - God told Hosea to name his 'son' – Jezreel – because God would judge the house of Jehu in Jezreel...
 - God told Hosea to name his 'daughter' – Lo-Ruhamah – no mercy...
 - God was not going to have mercy on Israel – referring to the Assyrian captivity – 722 B.C.
 - God told Hosea to name his second 'son' – Lo-Ammi – not my people...
 - Because of their rejection of God – God was now rejecting His people!
- God used the example of Gomer and the children of Hosea to bring charges against Israel...
 - Because Israel only wanted her lovers – seek after the pleasures of this life – not eternal life!
 - THEREFORE - God would block Israel with thorns – take away her blessings...
 - But once He had humbled Israel through consequences - He would comfort to her ...
 - God will marry Israel forever – and they would find Mercy / and be His People!
- God said to Hosea – go and get Gomer who has committed adultery...
 - So he went and purchased her for \$160 – she was not expensive – no value to anyone else...
 - And for many days Gomer had to wait - show that she would not run off again...
 - Just as Israel would also have to wait many days to be restored to their God!

THE CHARGES AGAINST ISRAEL... (3 THINGS)

- 1ST – THE ACCUSATION AGAINST ISRAEL... VS. 1-19
 - 1st – Hosea sets up a courtroom setting – God had a lawsuit to bring against Israel... vs. 1-5
 - The people had forgotten truth / mercy / and the knowledge of the Lord... vs. 1-2
 - The result was that the people began to break the 10 commandments of God...
 - They swore / lied / stole / killed / and committed adultery without restraint...
 - We live in a world that would love to question truth – there are no absolutes...
 - What is right for you / may not be what is right for me – everything is relative...
 - Event Pontius Pilate famously said to Jesus – What is Truth - **John 18:38**
 - But when truth is removed – there is no longer any guidelines by which to live...
 - When a nation refuses to allow a judge to hang the 10 commandments in his courtroom...
 - Who is to say stealing is wrong / why is it bad to lie / its not wrong to kill an unborn child...
 - Sin is allowed to run rampant – hearts are hardened by sin – and God is forgotten!
 - THEREFORE the Land will mourn... vs. 3
 - God would allow the people to waste away – even the animals / birds / fish would die off!
 - Likely speaking of a great drought in the Land – causing a devastating famine...
 - God is not mocked – whatever a nation sows it will also reap – **Galatians 6:7**
 - Whether it is hurricanes and floods / or droughts and famine...
 - It is appropriate we call them 'natural disasters' – and 'Act of God'...
 - Because God uses natural disasters to get our attention – teach us a lesson!
 - NOW – do not point your finger (*rebuke*) at someone else... vs. 4-5
 - Rather than recognize it as the judgment of God – the people would blame each other...
 - They blame priests / follow false prophets – therefore God would destroy Israel (*mother*)!
 - Times have not changed – today we blame 'Global warming' for Acts of God!

- When the consequences of our sin find us – we often look to blame others...
- Because it is far easier to see the faults in others – then to look at our own shortcomings...
- If the problem is with others – than we do not have to change / repent...
- But until we admit we are the problem – there is nothing God can do to save us!
- o 2nd – Charge against the priests... vs. 6-11
 - The people are destroyed for lack of knowledge... vs. 6
 - But it is not that knowledge of the Lord is hidden – the priests refuse to teach it!
 - As a result the people forgot the law of God – so God would reject the priests!
 - Too many pastors today spend too little time expounding / teaching the Word...
 - Instead they tell funny stories to entertain – sprinkled with the occasional Bible verse!
 - But it is not our words / or funny stories – people need to hear...
 - They need to know about the dangers of hell - and the reward of heaven...
 - About the coming judgment of God - and the amazing hope of Jesus!
 - But they do not know these things - because they do not know the Word!
 - And the ones who should be teaching them - the pastors - do not...
 - The biggest problem in the church today – there is a famine in the Land!
 - **Amos 8:11** - “Not a famine of bread or water but of hearing the words of the LORD.”
 - The more the priests increased – the more they sinned against the Lord... vs. 7-11
 - When people sinned they brought offerings the priest ate – so the priest liked people to sin!
 - o Like priests - like people - since the priests were wicked the people were wicked too!
 - o “Alcohol and prostitution have robbed my people of their brains.” – **Hosea 4:11 (NLT)**
 - o The priest were the representation of God to the people...
 - o So it was incredibly important that obey all laws of God - regard Him as Holy...
 - o If they did things God did not command them to do - they misrepresented God...
 - o If the priests were mad at the people - Israel would assume God was mad at them...
 - o If the priests told Israel to jump on one foot - they would assume it was from God...
 - o Whatever the priests said or did - was a pattern for Israel to follow after!
 - o A heavy responsibility - with stern consequences for misrepresenting the Lord!
 - Which is why God would severely judge the priests!
 - o They would eat – but still be hungry / commit harlotry – but not increase!
 - o Because a bad example kept people from God - Hophi and Phinehas - **I Samuel 2:12-17**
 - o They took the best of the meat of the sacrifices (*steal*) from the people...
 - o They had affairs with the women who came to worship - **I Samuel 2:22**
 - o They were such poor representatives of God - the people hated coming to God!
 - o When pastors start to follow the example of the world – rather than teach the Word...
 - o They begin to misrepresent God – give a false impression of what God is like...
 - o It is no wonder people are not that interested in getting to know Jesus!
 - o And God will judge these leaders for their misrepresentation!
 - o **James 3:1** - “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”
- o 3rd – Foolishness of idol worship... vs. 12-19
 - It was common practice to use a staff to divine the will of the gods... vs. 12
 - They would throw a rod stripped of its bark on one side onto the ground...
 - If the bare side turned up – the answer was yet / if the bark side turned up – no...
 - They had to ask a wooden stick for help – because they had deserted God!
 - **Isaiah 44:19-20** - “The person who made the idol never stops to reflect, ‘Why, it’s just a block of wood! I burned half of it for heat and used it to... roast my meat. How can the rest of it be a god? Should I bow down to worship a chunk of wood?’”

- We might think - well that is silly - of course carved idols cannot help us...
- I do not think any of us plan on running home and bowing before some statue...
- But we often forget what our money is made of – paper is a wood product...
- Too often we look to old George (\$10) / Abe (\$5) / or even the revered Benjamin (\$100)....
- And we think they can help - they can save us - some piece of wood we shaped!
- If we are trusting in idols then we are no longer looking or listening to God...
- Where God has the power to help us / save us - idols can do nothing...
- The sad thing is we run to money (*wooden idols*) – because we have forgotten about God!

- Israel practiced spiritual harlotry – burning incense on the mountaintops... vs. 13-14
 - The result was their women were harlots – their wives adulteresses...
 - Yet God did not punish the women – because the men were just as bad...
 - Those who do not understand – will be trampled by their sin!
 - People did not make the connection – their spiritual adultery led to real adultery!
 - Their marriages were falling apart – because they had forgotten about the Lord!
- God warned Judah to be careful not to follow the example of Israel... vs. 15-19
 - Do not go to Gilgal – where Israel first entered the Promised Land – **Joshua 5:10-15**
 - But was now a place wholly given over to idolatry – **Judges 3:19**
 - Or go to Beth-Aven - house of vanity / what used to be the Beth-el - the house of God...
 - The location of one of the golden calves set up by Jeroboam – **I Kings 12:28-29**
 - Israel had become stubborn – just like the calves that they worshiped!
 - So God would make them forage like a helpless lamb in a broad field (*easy prey*)...
 - Leave Ephraim (*Israel*) alone – because she has joined himself to his idols...
 - She drank rebellion / committed constant harlotry – and her rulers love it!
 - The wind would wrap her up in its wings – carry her off - Assyrian captivity!
 - In **Numbers 16** – Korah challenged the authority of Moses...
 - In response Moses warned all the people to step away from Korah...
 - Moses told them - if he were not chosen then Korah would die as an old man...
 - But if he were chosen - the earth would open and swallow Korah alive...
 - Moses hardly finished speaking - the earth opened and swallowed him up!
 - And all those who stood with Korah – were swallowed as well!
 - Be careful who you stand with - you will become like them - and share their fate...
 - We are foolish if we think the people around us will not affect us...
 - One of the greatest keys to a Godly life - it being surrounded by Godly friends!
 - **I Corinthians 15:33** - "...bad company corrupts good character."

● 2ND – THE JUDGEMENT OF ISRAEL... vs. 1-15

- 1st – Nothing is hidden from the Lord... vs. 1-7
 - God uses the illustration of a hunt to describe the sin of the leaders of Israel... vs. 1-3
 - All the priest / leaders / even the king – were involved in the slaughter!
 - Judgment was theirs because they had set a 'snare' in Mizpah – spread a 'net' in Tabor...
 - They had dug a deep pit in Acacia (*slaughter*) – places where they set up idols!
 - All meant to lead the people of Israel into sin – and God was going to replay them for it...
 - God saw it all – the sin of Israel was not hidden – the harlotry of Ephraim!
 - Interesting God calls out Ephraim as being especially bad among the 10 tribes...
 - They are one of two tribes not mentioned in the 144,000 - **Revelation 7:4-8**
 - **Hebrews 4:13** - "Nothing in all creation can hide from him. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes. The God to whom we must explain all that we have done."

- People think that no one sees the sin in their lives – no one knows what they did...
- But Every action / every word / every thought is open and seen by the Lord...
- And for every action/word/thought - we will one day be judged for!
- Unless we receive the forgiveness of Jesus - unless we have a relationship with Him!

- The deeds of Israel kept them from coming back to God... vs. 4-7
 - They were a prostitute through and through – they COULD NOT know the Lord...
 - Pride was their response – therefore they will stumble / and Judah will stumble with them!
 - And when they come with their flocks to sacrifice to the Lord – it will be too late...
 - They will be alone – because they betrayed the Lord – raised pagan children...
 - Now a new moon (*month*) will devour them – speaking of the short time they had left!
 - What keeps people from seeing that Jesus is the answer to their lives...
 - It is not that they cannot find Jesus – or that the Gospel is difficult to understand...
 - Men stay away from Jesus because they LOVE (*agape*) their sin - **John 3:19**
 - And because men LOVE sin they CANNOT come to the light...
 - They think that they will have to give up the 'wonderful' sin in their life...
 - In pride they would rather have their sin - than eternal life with God in Heaven!

o 2nd – The fall of Israel... vs. 8-15

- Blow the shofar in Gibeah / the trumpet in Ramah / cry out in Beth-Aven...
 - Because the enemy was upon them – the time of their judgment had come...
 - God gave His guarantee (*I will make it sure*) - Ephraim (*Israel*) will be desolate!
 - To the princes of Judah who move landmarks (*moral boundaries*) – wrath like a waterfall!
 - Ephraim (*Israel*) will be broken – cause they were content to listen to the command of men!
 - God will be like a moth to Israel / and rottenness to Judah – He will consume them...
 - They will run to Assyria for help – to king of strife (*Jareb*) – but he will not be able to help...
 - Israel did attempt to seek the help of Assyria on several occasions – **II Kings 15:9 / 17:3**
 - But God would be like a lion – tearing Israel and Judah – dragging them away...
 - Then God would wait till they admitted their sin – in their affliction they would seek Him!
- Amazing that even when things began to unravel – Israel went to the world rather than God...
 - **Jude 1:12** – “They are clouds without water...”
 - The world is full of the promise of wonderful things – but they are empty promises...
 - The promise if we get a good education / good job – we will find happiness...
 - The promise if we have enough money – we will have no more worries...
 - But what the world does not tell you – only in Jesus are promises Yes and Amen!

● 3rd – THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL... vs. 1-11

o 1st – On the 3rd day... vs. 1-3

- Come and let us turn to the Lord – He has torn but will heal / He has injured but will bind...
 - Hosea speaks of a day when Israel and Judah will finally see Jesus is the answer...
 - They will recognize that God punished them because of their sin...
 - But that God is also willing to heal them – bind up their wounds – forgive them!
- After 2 days God will revive Israel – on the 3rd day He will raise them up...
 - There is some speculation on the meaning of this verse – some say it refers to Jesus...
 - How He rose on the 3rd day – and through His death and sacrifice we are forgiven
 - The problem is the prophet is speaking of Israel – they would be reborn after 2 days...
 - And on the 3rd day they would be lifted up so they could live in the sight of God!
 - In **II Peter 3:8** – we are told that a day to the Lord is like 1000 years...
 - The nation of Israel was destroyed in 70 A.D. – the destruction of the Temple...
 - For 2000 years (*2 days*) they were lost – until the nation was reborn on May 14, 1948...

- When Jesus returns Israel will be lifted up to live in the sight of God for 1000 years (*1 day*)!
- This likely speaks of the ultimate restoration of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom!
- THEREFORE – let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord...
 - Because His going forth (*decisions*) is as certain as the rising of the sun!
 - His grace is like the former / later rains – that give new life to those who are dead!
 - God has established His plan for the world - and nothing will change it - **Matthew 5:18**
 - He will come to judge the nations - and every knee will bow - **Philippians 2:10**
 - There are only two kinds of people when it comes to God...
 - Sinner who have received the free gift of salvation in Jesus - and sinners who have not...
 - Therefore let's pursue the Lord now – receive His grace and be healed!
 - **Hebrews 10:31** - “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God...”
- o 2nd – Mercy not sacrifice... vs. 4-11
 - What was the Lord to do with rebellious Ephraim (*Israel*) / Judah...
 - Their faithfulness was like the morning dew – it only lasted for a brief moment...
 - God sent the prophets – cut them with His Word – sent His light to judge them...
 - Trying to show them He wanted mercy / not sacrifices – empty vain religious rituals!
 - In **Matthew 12** – the Pharisees rebuked Jesus disciples for picking grain on the Sabbath...
 - Jesus responded to them by quoting this verse – God is not concerned about rituals...
 - God is looking for good fruit – the evidence of a heart that is devoted to Him!
 - But like Adam (*men*) Israel broke the covenant...
 - The people of Gilead are sinners covered in the blood of their victims...
 - Priest act like robbers – lying in wait to murder those coming to Shechem (*city of refuge*)...
 - God had seen a horrible thing in Israel – the people of God would be scattered – Diaspora!
 - And Judah also would be harvested (*taken captive*) – though God would return them!
 - God sets the choice before every man – follow Adam / or follow Christ – **Romans 5:14**
 - We get to choose which we want – do we want judgment or forgiveness...
 - God did not make salvation hard – He wants everyone to be saved – **II Peter 3:9**
 - But at the same time – it is our choice – heaven or hell / life or death...
 - God will not make us go to heaven – He provides the way for those who believe!