

Exiled & Dried Up

Hosea 9

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**BIG BEND
BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP**

Hosea 9:1-17 – Punishment for Israel (NIV)

Do not rejoice, Israel; do not be jubilant like the other nations. For you have been unfaithful to your God; you love the wages of a prostitute at every threshing floor.

²Threshing floors and winepresses will not feed the people; the new wine will fail them. ³They will not remain in the Lord's land; Ephraim will return to Egypt and eat unclean food in Assyria. ⁴They will not pour out wine offerings to the Lord, nor will their sacrifices please him. Such sacrifices will be to them like the bread of mourners; all who eat them will be unclean. This food will be for themselves; it will not come into the temple of the Lord.

⁵What will you do on the day of your appointed festivals, on the feast days of the Lord? ⁶Even if they escape from destruction, Egypt will gather them, and Memphis will bury them. Their treasures of silver will be taken over by briars, and thorns will overrun their tents. ⁷The days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this. Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired person a maniac. ⁸The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman over Ephraim, yet snares await him on all his paths, and hostility in the house of his God.

⁹They have sunk deep into corruption, as in the days of Gibeah. God will remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins. ¹⁰“When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your ancestors, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree. But when they came to Baal Peor, they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved.

¹¹Ephraim's glory will fly away like a bird— no birth, no pregnancy, no conception. ¹²Even if they rear children, I will bereave them of every one. Woe to them when I turn away from them! ¹³I have seen Ephraim, like Tyre, planted in a pleasant place. But Ephraim will bring out their children to the slayer.” ¹⁴Give them, Lord— what will you give them? Give them wombs that miscarry and breasts that are dry. ¹⁵“Because of all their wickedness in Gilgal, I hated them there. Because of their sinful deeds, I will drive them out of my house. I will no longer love them; all their leaders are rebellious. ¹⁶Ephraim is blighted, their root is withered, they yield no fruit. Even if they bear children, I will slay their cherished offspring.” ¹⁷My God will reject them because they have not obeyed him; they will be wanderers among the nations.

v1 – Why might Israel have cause to rejoice?

Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like other peoples: At the time Hosea brought this prophecy, things perhaps were not so bad in Israel. Maybe there were plenty of fun and good times among the people.

- But they shouldn't rejoice *like other peoples*, because judgment was on the way.
- It may be the case that Hosea delivered the opening part of this oracle as a sermon on the occasion of a harvest festival... characterized by feasting, mirth, and dancing.

Why did they love the wages of a prostitute at every threshing floor?

Israel practiced idolatry on the **threshing floor**, a place where grain was processed. They worshipped idols here because they believed that it helped the harvest.

v2 – How would God respond to the idolatry on the threshing floor?

Because of their idolatry, the LORD would curse their harvest, and *the threshing floor and the winepress shall not feed them.*

What else would be the consequence of Israel's idolatry?

They shall not dwell in the Lord's land: Not only would God curse their grain and grape harvest, but He would also cast them out of the land in exile to Assyria.

v3 – How can this & Hosea 8:13 say Ephraim will return to Egypt when Hosea 11:5 says they will not?

Hosea 11:5 – *He shall not return to the land of Egypt; But the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to repent.*

There is no contradiction because the statements refer to different aspects of Israel's experience. In Hosea 8:13 & 9:3, God is remembering the sin of Israel in worshipping other gods. In their hearts, the people of Israel were always “returning to Egypt.”

- In Hosea 11:5, God is reiterating the promise of Deuteronomy 17:16 that Israel would not return to the captivity of Egypt.

v4 – Why would they not pour out wine offerings to the Lord?

In the lands of exile there would be no bread or food for sacrifice to the LORD, only for survival (*their bread shall be for their own life*).

v5-6 – What would happen to the feast days of the Lord?

They are gone because of destruction: Israel did not honor the LORD in their appointed feast days, so the LORD will take them away. In their lands of exile, they will not be able to honor the feasts of the LORD.

v7 – Why was the prophet considered a fool?

The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is insane: This is what the people of Israel said about Hosea. When things prospered and everyone was happy, Hosea announced coming judgment and called for repentance. They thought he was a fool and crazy.

- They said in effect, ‘Who in his right mind would prophesy a judgment like this when we are in the midst of such a bountiful harvest, in itself a proof of God’s blessing?’ (Prosperity Gospel)

How does this relate to how Bible prophecy is generally regarded today?

Bible prophecy is maligned today because people don’t know God nor His Word. They don’t regard the Bible as God’s Word so they are free to ignore what it says.

- Fake, professing Christians are often revealed in what they think of God’s Word.
- Many of those who have an erroneous view of God’s Word may in fact be saved but are carnal Christians, babes in Christ who love the world more than the Savior.

Why is it dangerous to remain a babe in Christ?

At some point, with no spiritual growth, you have to wonder if you’re really saved (no eternal security).

v8 – What snares await those who dare to speak out about God’s prophetic Word?

They will be ostracized by religious leaders in the church. What would you expect in the Age of Scoffers:

1 Peter 3:3-4 – *scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”*

It is interesting to note that those scoffing about the return of Jesus also embrace the uniformitarianism of the theory of evolution (which is evidence of not having an orthodox view of Scripture).

v9 – What happened during the days of Gibeah?

Judges 19 describes horrific crimes of perversion and violence in Israel in the days of the Judges. Hosea says that in his day it is just as bad in Israel.

v10 – When was Israel like finding grapes in the desert?

Like grapes in the wilderness... as the firstfruits on the fig tree: God fondly remembered the days when Israel was faithful and fruitful to Him. *Grapes in the wilderness* and the *firstfruits on the fig tree* are unexpected blessings. There was a time when Israel was something special to God, as if one found luscious *grapes in the wilderness*.

- While they were faithful, they were as *acceptable* to me as *ripe grapes* would be to a *thirsty traveler* in the desert.

What happened at Baal Peor?

Israel’s sin and idolatry in the days of Hosea was like their sin at *Baal Peor* in Numbers 25, associated with sexual immorality and idolatry.

What is the problem with putting anything before God?

They became an abomination like the thing they loved: Israel loved their disgraceful idols, and they had become like them. We will become like the god we love and serve, whether it is the LORD or like an *abomination*.

v11-12 – What would become of Israel’s glory?

No birth, no pregnancy, and no conception: In contrast to their past fruitfulness, now Israel will experience barrenness and bereavement (*I will bereave them to the last man*), given to them by the God they rejected.

What does it mean for God to turn away from someone?

He will stop pursuing a relationship with them and that has eternal ramifications... separation from the One whom we were made to have a relationship with is what makes hell so terrible.

v13 – How would Ephraim bring out their children to the slayer?

By raising them up to be ungodly... there will be dire consequences.

Why did Hosea call for miscarriages and mothers unable to nurse?

Give them, O LORD – What will You give? The idea is that Hosea began an angry prayer against the people (“*Give them, O LORD*”), then he stopped because he checked his heart and didn’t know what to pray (“*What will you give?*”). In the end, he asked for *a miscarrying womb and dry breasts*.

- Really, Hosea prayed for mercy. Knowing the coming judgment, he prayed “LORD, give them few children so those children will not have to face the horrors of Your coming judgment.”

What caution should we remember as we consider the lukewarm condition of the modern church?

Sometimes those who see themselves — perhaps accurately — as more spiritual and closer to God than others in a church or group get angry and frustrated with those who don’t seem to have hearts burning for the LORD.

- This frustration is understandable but the pause in Hosea’s prayer should give them pause.
- It is a good thing to long for revival and spiritual passion among God’s people, but if that makes us proud, angry, or bitter against others then Satan has won a great victory.

v15 – What did God have against Gilgal?

All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them: As mentioned before in Hosea 4:15, God despised the city of Gilgal as a center of idolatry in Israel. At one time, Gilgal was a place where prophets were trained under Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2:1; 4:38). But in Hosea’s day it had become a center of false worship (Hosea 4:15, 12:11; Amos 4:4, 5:5).

What would God do about Israel’s idolatry?

I will drive them from My house: In this sense, exile was the perfect punishment for Israel. They had disgraced God’s house, His land, so He would “evict” them from His house. “...My house, My rules!”

v16 – What did Israel’s Idolatry have to do with God slaying their children?

One of the major reasons Israel went after idols like Baal and Ashtoreth was because those gods were thought to bring fertility and fruitfulness. God reminds Israel that He is really the LORD over the womb, and that He will turn their fruitfulness into barrenness.

v17 – Why would God cast Israel away?

because they did not obey Him: This is exactly what the LORD promised under the terms of the Old (Mosaic) Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:14-18).

- Thankfully, we can come to God by faith in a new covenant, where He promises to remember our sins no more (Hebrews 8:12, 10:16-17).

What would become of Israel when God casts them away?

They would become wanderers among the nations.

How would Israel fare as wanderers among the nations?

Deuteronomy 28-65-66 – *And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life.*

Intense persecution... this would drive to either return to Israel or assimilate effectively becoming Gentiles...

Hosea 7:8 – *Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake unturned.*

What applications come to mind from this passage?

- Unfaithfulness to God damages our relationship with Him.
- How a person regard’s God’s Word reflects what they think of God Himself.
- Our differences in disputable matters should never pit Christians against each other.