

4. Sow the wind, reap the whirlwind

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Last September I was traveling to Bulgaria for our pre-missions trip via England. Jim Manning from Missions Assist and I stayed in a hotel near by Heathrow Airport. Somewhere between the hotel and the airport, I had a chance to read a newspaper article regarding epidemic result of free sex in England:

One out of five girls between 15-16 in England, uses the pill "Morning After", because they are pregnant.

One out of eight girls between 16-19 in England has sexually transmitted diseases called "Chamydia". Chamydia does not show any symptom to the female carrier for a quite long time that she doesn't even realize that she has a problem. In the meanwhile, she ends up losing capability to bear a child because of that disease.

That disease "Chamydia" is a great example of the consequences of people sins.

We are going to study the consequences after consequences from the results of the wickedness of Israel and Judah tonight.

Chapters 7-12 deal with the fact that Israel could escape judgment by turning to God who loves her. God is dealing with Israel in a harsh way. Yet in tenderness He is attempting to call the people back to Himself before judgment comes. But Israel turns to Egypt and Assyria instead of turning to God.

A. THE TWISTED HEARTS

Hosea 7:1-7 "When I would have healed Israel, Then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered, And the wickedness of Samaria. For they have committed fraud; A thief comes in; A band of robbers takes spoil outside. 2 They do not consider in their hearts That I remember all their wickedness; Now their own deeds have surrounded them; They are before My face. 3 They make a king glad with their wickedness, And princes with their lies. 4 "They are all adulterers. Like an oven heated by a baker-- He ceases stirring the fire after kneading the dough, Until it is leavened. 5 In the day of our king Princes have made him sick, inflamed with wine; He stretched out his hand with scoffers. 6 They prepare their heart like an oven, While they lie in wait; Their baker sleeps all night; In the morning it burns like a flaming fire. 7 They are all hot, like an oven, And have devoured their judges; All their kings have fallen. None among them calls upon Me.

What was happening in Israel during Hosea's day was that whatever they had been doing in secret previously they were now doing openly. There was no shame, no conviction, no conscience relative to their sin. The Lord would forgive their iniquity if they would repent and turn to Him. Instead, they persisted in their wickedness and went farther and farther into it.

In America, public display of homosexuality used to be a crime 30-40 years ago. Now it is encouraged and those homosexual people are proud of it. They are a special group of people who are protected by the U.S. Government, judicial systems, Congress and, of course, liberal media. They no longer feel shame, but they are the ones calling others who are against their wicked lifestyle as bigots.

The problem among the people and leaders of Israel was they forgot – willfully – that the Lord saw and remembered their sin. Just like them, we often deliberately forget that the Lord sees and remembers when we sin. It may be secret before men, but not before God. He says, “they are before My face.”

Do the people think God doesn’t see? Do the people think their pornography habit goes unnoticed? Do the people think God’s eyes are closed when they get drunk or take drugs? There are many church-going people today who think that God forgets or never sees such things, because they do them and then they come to church and make a profession of godliness, pretending that those things are never part of their life. It doesn’t work that way. God sees it all.

There is a precious promise for those who come to God under the New Covenant:
Jeremiah 31:34 For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

We often wish that time would make God forget our sin, but it doesn’t. Only the atoning substitute of Jesus, crucified in our place under the New Covenant makes God forget our sin.

Israel was after the foreign idols as their own gods with passion while they deserted the one true God from their hearts, but not in action. They did in fact continue to sacrifice to the Lord but it was empty ceremony, not a true calling upon the Lord.

B. EITHER IN OR OUT

Hosea 7:8-10 “Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake unturned. 9 Aliens have devoured his strength, But he does not know it; Yes, gray hairs are here and there on him, Yet he does not know it. 10 And the pride of Israel testifies to his face, But they do not return to the Lord their God, Nor seek Him for all this.

In that day, bread was often prepared as a cake that was cooked on both sides, something like a pancake. In thinking they can serve both the Lord and idols, Israel is like an unturned pancake – burned on one side, uncooked on the other.

The nation is being ravaged by sin but does not know it. They should know it, because even the pride of Israel testifies to his face – yet in their blind ignorance they do not return to the Lord their God.

Jer. 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”

Man has an amazing ability to deceive himself when he is in sin. Considering how easily we deceive ourselves, and how our sin can be apparent to everyone but us. So Israel’s condition isn’t unusual.

The same kind of thing happened to the strongest wimp in human history – Samson in Judges 16:20. He had been playing with sin so long that he didn’t know that the Spirit of God departed from him after Delilah cut his hair.

C. BECOMING A BIRDBRAIN

Hosea 7:11-16 “Ephraim also is like a silly dove, without sense-- They call to Egypt, They go to Assyria. 12 Wherever they go, I will spread My net on them; I will bring them down like birds of the air; I will chastise them According to what their congregation has heard. 13 “Woe to them, for they

have fled from Me! Destruction to them, Because they have transgressed against Me! Though I redeemed them, Yet they have spoken lies against Me. 14 They did not cry out to Me with their heart When they wailed upon their beds. "They assemble together for grain and new wine, They rebel against Me; 15 Though I disciplined and strengthened their arms, Yet they devise evil against Me; 16 They return, but not to the Most High; They are like a treacherous bow. Their princes shall fall by the sword For the cursings of their tongue. This shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

Hosea uses many different illustrations to emphasize the sins of Israel. Now Israel is like a bird fluttering about, confused and without direction. They think they can escape God by running to other nations. But their effort was futile.

Israel's guilt is increased according to what they have heard. Greater knowledge means great accountability.

Luke 12:48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

Just like that, Americans don't have an excuse to tell God that they have never heard the Gospel of Jesus in their lives. The more we learn, the more we are accountable.

The Israel people looked for the solution from Egypt and Assyria instead of the Lord.

Hosea adds another illustration of a faulty bow that won't shoot an arrow straight. Everything that comes from Israel misses the mark, because they are like a treacherous bow. They are like a useless and dangerous weapon.

D. SOWING IDOLATRY, REAPING EXILE

Hosea 8:1-7 "Set the trumpet to your mouth! He shall come like an eagle against the house of the Lord, Because they have transgressed My covenant And rebelled against My law. 2 Israel will cry to Me, 'My God, we know You!' 3 Israel has rejected the good; The enemy will pursue him. 4 "They set up kings, but not by Me; They made princes, but I did not acknowledge them. From their silver and gold They made idols for themselves-- That they might be cut off. 5 Your calf is rejected, O Samaria! My anger is aroused against them-- How long until they attain to innocence? 6 For from Israel is even this: A workman made it, and it is not God; But the calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces. 7 "They sow the wind, And reap the whirlwind. The stalk has no bud; It shall never produce meal. If it should produce, Aliens would swallow it up.

Trumpets were used to assemble God's people and to call troops to battle. Here, God commands the trumpet to sound to gather the mighty Assyrians against Israel for judgment.

Israel didn't really know God. It will be the same way for many church-goers today.
Matthew 7:22-23 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

E. NO THANKS FOR YOUR FAKE SACRIFICE

Hosea 8:8-14 Israel is swallowed up; Now they are among the Gentiles Like a vessel in which is no pleasure. 9 For they have gone up to Assyria, Like a wild donkey alone by itself; Ephraim has hired lovers. 10 Yes, though they have hired among the nations, Now I will gather them; And they shall sorrow a little, Because of the burden of the king of princes. 11 "Because Ephraim has made many altars for sin, They have become for him altars for sinning. 12 I have written for him the great things of My law, But they were considered a strange thing. 13 For the sacrifices of My offerings they sacrifice flesh and eat it, But the Lord does not accept them. Now He will remember their iniquity and punish their sins. They shall return to Egypt. 14 "For Israel has forgotten his Maker, And has built temples; Judah also has multiplied fortified cities; But I will send fire upon his cities, And it shall devour his palaces."

It seems to Israel that the judgement they receive is worse than the sin they committed. But it is true in how judgment feels. This is usually because our sin is sown over a long period of time, but often reaped in a short period of judgment.

God promised that Israel would face the conquering Assyrians and exile, but also that He would one day gather them again.

When we give ourselves opportunity and occasion for sin, it is never surprising when we end up sinning. Once we start to trust our own capabilities, the human minds do not know the limit. We will continue to ignore God's warning against our pride and start to replace our God with ourselves, our accomplishments, our bank accounts and our own kingdom. But we still want God as a lucky charm or 911 emergency personnel to call. That was exactly what Israel did and that is where America is on her way.

F. THE EXILE IN JUDGEMENT

Hosea 9:1-9 Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like other peoples, For you have played the harlot against your God. You have made love for hire on every threshing floor. 2 The threshing floor and the winepress Shall not feed them, And the new wine shall fail in her. 3 They shall not dwell in the Lord's land, But Ephraim shall return to Egypt, And shall eat unclean things in Assyria. 4 They shall not offer wine offerings to the Lord, Nor shall their sacrifices be pleasing to Him. It shall be like bread of mourners to them; All who eat it shall be defiled. For their bread shall be for their own life; It shall not come into the house of the Lord. 5 What will you do in the appointed day, And in the day of the feast of the Lord? 6 For indeed they are gone because of destruction. Egypt shall gather them up; Memphis shall bury them. Nettles shall possess their valuables of silver; Thorns shall be in their tents. 7 The days of punishment have come; The days of recompense have come. Israel knows! The prophet is a fool, The spiritual man is insane, Because of the greatness of your iniquity and great enmity. 8 The watchman of Ephraim is with my God; But the prophet is a fowler's snare in all his ways-- Enmity in the house of his God. 9 They are deeply corrupted, As in the days of Gibeah. He will remember their iniquity; He will punish their sins.

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 the judgment was on the way.

Israel practiced idolatry on the threshing floor, a place where grain was processed. They worshiped idols here because they believed that it helped the harvest. Because of their idolatry, the Lord would curse their harvest.

Not only would God curse their grain and grape harvest, but He would also cast them out of the land in exile to both Egypt and Assyria.

Israel did not honor the Lord in their appointed feast days, so they Lord will take them away.

Hosea 9:10-14 "I found Israel Like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. But they went to Baal Peor, And separated themselves to that shame; They became an abomination like the thing they loved. 11 As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird-- No birth, no pregnancy, and no conception! 12 Though they bring up their children, Yet I will bereave them to the last man. Yes, woe to them when I depart from them! 13 Just as I saw Ephraim like Tyre, planted in a pleasant place, So Ephraim will bring out his children to the murderer." 14 Give them, O Lord-- What will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb And dry breasts!

Israel loved their disgraceful idols, and they have become like them. We will become like the god we love and serve, whether it is the Lord or like an abomination.

In contrast to their past fruitfulness, now Israel will experience barrenness and bereavement, given to them by the God they rejected.

The idea is that Hosea began an angry prayer against the people, then he stopped because he checked his heart and didn't know what to pray. 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."

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. Their 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.

Hosea 9:15-17 "All their wickedness is in Gilgal, For there I hated them. Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them from My house; I will love them no more. All their princes are rebellious. 16 Ephraim is stricken, Their root is dried up; They shall bear no fruit. Yes, were they to bear children, I would kill the darlings of their womb." 17 My God will cast them away, Because they did not obey Him; And they shall be wanderers among the nations.

The exile was the perfect punishment for Israel. They had disgraced God's house, His land, so He would "evict" them.

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.

G. APPLICATION

1) In everything we do, we must face the results: reward from God or consequence of our stupidity.

We need to remember that God never makes us do wrong. Rather, he wants us to do what is right in His eyes. No stupid decision, no need for an excuse.