

Hosea 5 - 7

God's Warnings to Israel; A Call to Repentance;
God Laments Ephraim's wickedness

Day 1

Read Hosea 5:1-7

God's judgment of Israel's deeds

For Your Information "For several chapters now the picture will be building up by fragments, coming at the subject from all kinds of angles. By its very disjointedness the style suits the chaotic situation it addresses...God's exposure of His people and of what must happen to them continues in a hail of strong and lively metaphors." - Derek Kidner (56)

"Scarcely any book in the Old Testament is more difficult of exposition than the Book of Hosea....He is controlled by his subject, instead of controlling it. It is his heart that speaks; he is not careful to concentrate his thoughts or to mark his transitions; the sentences fall from him like the sobs of a broken heart." - The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia

1. What three groups did God address and what commands did He give them? 5:1a (How would you describe the tone of this chapter?)

2. As God summoned Israel and its leaders to judgment, what phrases did He use to describe:

- Their idolatry? 5:1b (Compare Joshua 23:12-13)
- Their rebellion? 5:2

For Your Information: "**Snare...net:** The leaders of Israel, especially the priests had promoted pagan worship at Mizpah and Tabo and in this way led the people to destruction...**Slaughter** may refer literally to acts of violence or to pagan sacrifices. "

- The Nelson Study Bible (1452)

"**deep/profound**—deeply rooted [Calvin] and sunk to the lowest depths, excessive in their idolatry"

- Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

- The state of the nation? 5:3b

For Your Information: "Ephraim was the largest tribe that made up the population of Israel. Therefore, the prophets often refer to Israel as 'Ephraim.'"

- David Guzik

3. Why were these charges warranted? 5:3a (Compare Hebrews 4:13)

For Your Information: "God's knowledge, however painful it may initially be, is seen as something to be welcomed, for it means that He knows the worst, and yet persists with us. 'I have seen his ways, but I will heal him' (Is. 57:18)"

- Derek Kidner (58)

4. What kind of bondage had their corrupt deeds produced? 5:4

- List what is associated with “a spirit of harlotry/prostitution.” 5:4b (See also 4:12b)

Optional Digging Deeper
What is the solution to sin’s enslavement? John 8:34-36; Romans 6:6-11

For Your Information: “*spirit of harlotry*: The people had an uncontrollable desire to worship other gods.”
- The Nelson Study Bible (1452)
“They know not the Lord.’ This is the hiatus at the heart of all nominal religion.” - Derek Kidner (59)

God’s judgment of Israel’s attitude

5. Why do you think unfaithfulness/idolatry constitutes “arrogance?” 5:5a (Compare Jeremiah 13:8-10; Ezekiel 28:2)

- What influence were they having? 5:5b (Compare 2 Kings 17:19)

6. Apparently, what was Israel still doing? 5:6a

- How was God responding? 5:6b Why? 5:7a (Compare Isaiah 1:11-17)

For Your Information: “‘New Moon festivals’...refers to the monthly sacrifices, which were debased by hypocritical worship and thus, devoid of God’s blessing, would bring about the ruin of people and fields alike.”
- The Expositor’s Bible Commentary

7. Underline the kind of sacrifices God wants:

- 1 Samuel 15:22 Samuel said, “Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. NASU
- Psalm 50:23 “He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.” NASU
- Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. NIV
- Psalm 69:30-31 I will praise God’s name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the LORD more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hoofs. NIV
- Micah 6:7-8 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. NIV

- Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. NIV
- Hebrews 13:15-16 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise-the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. NIV

Applying the Word: *Imagine being raised in a religious culture that combined the worship of God with Baal. Imagine being taught that the success of crops and having children depended on giving homage to Baal. How hard do you think it would be to go against your family and friends and even religious leaders and reject that kind of indoctrination? (Do you see any parallel with false teachings, superstitious beliefs...that you have struggled with?)*

Day 2

Read Hosea 5:8-15

God's judgment of Israel's injustice

8. What type of atmosphere does the threefold call to battle in 5:8 create? (Compare Numbers 19:9; Joel 2:1)
- What was going to happen to Ephraim: 5:9 (Cf. 5:12,14) (Compare Isaiah 28:1-4)

For Your Information: "The threefold command to sound the trumpet – either as a fanfare announcing the king's arrival or as an alarm warning of imminent danger (see also 8:1). – Africa Bible Commentary (1019)

Blow the ram's horn: This act signaled an emergency and mustered the fighting men to defend the land. The towns mentioned here [5:7] were north of Jerusalem, within or near the borders of Benjamin." - The Nelson Study Bible (1452)

"The theme is national disaster. It was no empty threat: the northern kingdom (called both 'Israel' and 'Ephraim' in these chapters) was wiped out in 722 BC, and the southern kingdom, Judah and Benjamin, was brought to its knees in 701, surviving by a hair's breadth, only to collapse little more than a century later." - Derek Kidner (60)

9. How did the Lord characterize Judah's leaders? 5:10 (Compare Deuteronomy 19:14)

- What kind of boundaries do you think God meant - moral, religious, legal...? (*What "boundaries" do you see being moved in our society today?*)

For Your Information: "[Boundary] stones marked the extent of a family's land, and moving them amounted to theft of land, which would deprive people of the ability to support themselves." - Africa Bible Commentary (1019)

"Property lines, indicated often only by stone markers, could be easily moved in a night. Judah's leaders, however, were not shifting physical property lines but spiritual lines established by God, changing the boundary between right and wrong, between true and false religion, between the true God and the idols." - The Expositor's Bible Commentary

10. List the phrases that describe Ephraim's condition in 5:11.
11. Why do you think Israel pursued the idols of the nations around them? (Why did Gomer run after other lovers?)
12. What do the words "moth" and "rot" (5:12) suggest about the type of disintegration going on in the nations?
13. To overcome their growing weakness, to whom did Ephraim turn? 5:13 (See 2 Kings 15:19-20)
- Why wouldn't that be successful? 5:13b-14 (Compare 2 Kings 17:5,6)

For Your Information: "Help could not come from Assyria... God, mightier than this foreign country, was 'like a lion' in bringing destruction on both Ephraim and Judah. God's justice, like his love, works inevitably, irresistibly. His chastisement, already operating through the mothlike and decaying conditions indicated in v. 12, would be greatly accentuated through the coming devastation by Assyria--the very country whose aid had been sought."

- The Expositor's Bible Commentary

"Both Israel and Judah sought protection through alliances with Assyria, but the cruel Assyrians were more interested in exploiting God's people politically and economically. King Jareb probably refers to Tiglath-Pileser III, with whom both Israel and Judah formed alliances (see 2 Kings 15:19,20; 16:7-9)."

- The Nelson Study Bible (1453)

14. What was the goal of God's judgment? 5:15 Cf. 3:5 (Compare Jeremiah 29:10-14)

For Your Information: "The people kicked aside God's Law, and even the priests and prophets pursued evil (4:4-10,18-19)/ God's children had discarded His covenant for cheap and dangerous thrills. How could Israel not be judged?...Restoration, though, not annihilation, was God's goal: 'In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me' (5:15)".

- Charles Swindoll (8)

earnestly seek Him. "The Hebrew verb for earnestly seek suggest eager longing and desire (see Job 24:5; Psalm 63:1)."

- The Nelson Study Bible (1453)

"Throughout the book this is the longed-for outcome of [God's] judgments. Whatever else might be their character, they are pre-eminently a lover's short-lived coolness to reawaken love."

- Derek Kidner (64)

Applying the Word: Consider your own idols. What reasons do we run after idols/other lovers?

Day 3**Read Hosea 6:1-11****A call to repentance**

15. What did Hosea encourage the people to do? 6:1,3a (Contrast 4:6) (Compare 2 Chronicles 7:14)
16. List the phrases in 6:1-3 that describe the restorative things the Lord would do when the people returned to Him.

Optional Digging Deeper

What do you learn about "returning" to the Lord from:

1 Samuel 7:3-4

Isaiah 55:7

What did Jeremiah encourage the people to "know" about the Lord? Jeremiah 9:23-24

For Your Information: "This is a prayer that trusts the love of God, and sees His loving hand even in correction... Hosea prayed this full of confidence in God's love and power to restore." - David Guzik

Food for Thought:

"Come, let us return to the LORD...Let us press on to know the LORD" Hosea 6:1,3

"But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." NIV Phil 3:13-14

"Scriptures shows us that we can't be content with who we are, where we are, and what we've done. If we want to glorify God in our lives, we must, like Paul, press on. We can never know God intimately, experience Him fully, and taste His goodness completely unless we abandon self and run after Him.

We must be sure He has our best interests at hearts and will bandage our injuries, heal our wounds, revive us, and raise us up from whatever pit we're in. The challenges in our lives that leave us feeling downtrodden, unappreciated, stressed out, depressed, or hopeless are not more than God can handle. He can and will come to us like the rain that waters the earth.

This is the truth we must believe to have and maintain hope. We must have confidence in the ultimate victory of life over death – in the triumph of Christ over all the rulers, authorities, and powers of this age and in our triumph and reign with Him. Otherwise, we will be defeated in attitude and heart, in spirit and mind. We won't operate in truth but in lies our adversary feeds us – such as *its just too hard*, and *no one cares anyway*.

Hope replaces despair by the uplifting power of Jesus Christ and the purposeful decision we make to place our trust and hope in the One who raises us up. We must know who He is, what He has done, and what our relationship to Him is to have confidence that He has our best interests at heart." - Kay Arthur (34,35)

The state of Israel

17. Why did God lament over His people? 6:4

IT'S GREEK TO ME: *loyalty (6:4,6)* "cheched Strong's #2617, "loving-kindness; steadfast love; grace; mercy; faithfulness: goodness: devotion" - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

18. List the phrases that describe what God's word and truth did to the people. 6:5 (Compare Hebrews 4:12)

19. What qualities was God looking for? 6:6 (Compare Micah 6:6-8)

- How did Jesus apply these words? Matthew 9:10-13

For Your Information: "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice: At this time, God's people were still good at bringing sacrifices (Hosea 5:6). But they had forsaken **mercy**, and they abandoned **mercy** because they gave up the knowledge of God and truth (Hosea 4:1). God would rather have right hearts, full of truth and mercy than sacrifice. Jesus twice quoted this passage of Hosea to the religious leaders of His day (Matthew 9:13 and Matthew 12:7). They also missed the heart of God, focusing on the wrong and superficial things. **And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings:** Israel brought animals for sacrifice, but they never brought themselves as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). They missed what God really wants: a deep, close relationship with Him." - David Guzik

20. Record the phrases that describe what the Lord found instead.
6:7-10 (Compare Ezekiel 22:27-29)
- "transgressed the covenant"

Optional Digging Deeper

What else did God refer to as a "horrible thing" in Jer. 2:12-13; 5:30-31?

- What does describing what He sees as "a horrible thing" (6:10) say about God's feelings and involvement in men's lives?

Applying the Word: How involved do you picture God in everything you go through? Do you see Him greatly affected by what you do or disinterested? Consider Psalm 139:1-4

Day 4

Read Hosea 7:1-16

Ephraim's wickedness

21. What desire did God have toward Israel? 7:1a

- What was their condition? 7:1b

For Your Information: "Samaria, the capital city, is cited as the center of crime. This verse goes on to specify some of the sins: deceit, burglary, and street robbery by gangs. God knew about all this sin and saw it as engulfing the people, who themselves are depicted as unaware that God knew of their wrong deeds." - The Expositor's Bible Commentary

22. What deceptive idea did the people have about God? 7:2a (Compare Psalm 94:6,7)

- What is the reality? 7:2b (Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 16:17-18)

For Your Information: 7:2 "People's bland dismissal of any question of divine judgment had made repentance virtually unthinkable."
- Derek Kidner (69)

Wicked rulers

23. How did the rulers (kings and princes) feel about the nation's wickedness? 7:3
24. What does the image of a hot oven that needs no stirring/stoking say about their passions? 7:4 (Compare Amos 6:3-6)
25. What kind of behaviors did these passions produce?
- 7:5
 - 7:7

For Your Information: "7:5 'festival of our king.' Probably a coronation or birthday that became a drunken party. King Elah died in drunkenness (1 Kings 16:9-10)
- The NIV Study Bible (1329)

"With such a fever running at every level of society, it was no coincidence that Israel's last three decades were a turmoil of intrigue, as one conspirator after another hacked his way to the throne, only to be murdered in his turn. Of the six men who reigned in those thirty years, four were assassins, and only one died in his own bed." - Derek Kidner (71)

"During Hosea's time alone, Zechariah was killed by Shallum, Shallum by Menahem, Pekahiah by Pekah, and Pekah by Hoshea (2 Kings 15:10, 14, 25, 30). The last two lines of v. 7 recall that, though so many kings fell in this way, still no one in the land called to God for help, so far were the people from him in their attitude and actions." - The Expositor's Bible Commentary

Wicked foreign policy

26. What do the following descriptions indicate about Israel?
- "mixes with the nations" (7:8a) (Compare Deuteronomy 18:9; Romans 12:2)
 - "a cake not turned" (i.e. "a half-baked cake") 7:8b

Optional Digging Deeper

What did God want Israel to be? Ex. 19:5-6 Deuteronomy 26:18-19

How did He want Israel to influence the world? Genesis 22:18; 1 Kings 8:58-60

27. What didn't Israel realize? 7:9 How do you think that is

possible?

- What kept them from repenting? 7:10

For Your Information: “To this people, if not to other, the decline is doubly imperceptible, unnoticed through its gradualness and invisible to their pride. Yet the pride itself is a tell-tale sign of it – almost like the hardening lines in a face – and a fatal obstacle to their even considering repentance.”
- Derek Kidner (73)

28. To what did the Lord compare Israel’s foreign alliances with other nations? 7:11 (Mark the comparison work “like” in chapter 7)
- What would happen to the alliances they made? 7:12 (Compare 2 Kings 17:1-7)
29. List the phrases in 7:13-15 that describe the peoples’ attitude and actions against God (notes the phrases ending with “Me”).
30. What characterized their prayers? 7:14 (Some manuscripts read “*they gash/slash themselves*” in place of “*gather together/assemble themselves.*” Compare 1 Kings 18:28)
31. What kind of problems does a “*faulty bow*” give? 7:16a (Compare Psalm 78:57)
- What will they reap because of their sinful, warped ways?
 - 7:16b
 - 7:16c

Applying the Word: What areas of your life have you “mixed with the nations.” What effect has that had on your relationship with the Lord?