

# Hosea 8 - 10

## Israel to Reap What They Sowed

### Day 1

#### Read Hosea 8:1-14

#### Warning of approaching judgment

1. What does the image of the enemy coming like “*an eagle*” convey? 8:1 (Compare Deut. 28:49-50)

2. What did Israel claim about their relationship with God? 8:2 (Compare 1 Kings 18:21; 2 Tim. 3:5)

**For Your Information:** “Though Israel would cry out that she knew God, this would be a cry of desperation rather than the cry of a believing heart. The people had rejected the ‘good’ of truly knowing and serving God. Therefore their enemy would be permitted to pursue them.”  
- The Expositor’s Bible Commentary

3. Why were Israel’s claims of loyalty to God (8:2) false? (Compare John 8:47)

- 8:1b (Compare Amos 2:6-8)
- 8:3a
- 8:4a
- 8:4b

#### **Optional Digging Deeper**

Read Jeremiah 7:1-11 for similar thinking by the people of Judah.

**Food for Thought: They set up kings, but not by Me:** “To choose leaders without the direction of God is not only sinful, it is foolish. Those who follow their own wisdom in the choice of leaders inevitably get what they deserve. (Boice)”  
– David Guzik

4. How did God feel about the “calf” idol in Samaria (i.e. the Northern kingdom)? 8:5,6 (Cf. 1 Kings 12:26-30)

- What was going to happen to the idols? 8:6b (For the fulfillment of this see 2Kings 23:15,19. King Josiah reigned in Judah after the northern kingdom had been taken into captivity.)

#### **Optional Digging Deeper**

What did God say about idolatry in Isaiah 41:21-24?

**For Your Information:** “Throw out your calf-idol” (8:5) is literally ‘your calf stinks.’” – The Expositor’s Bible Commentary

5. What other consequences was Israel going to face? 8:7 (Compare Deut. 28:38-42)

**For Your Information:** "The 'wind' speaks of the emptiness of Israel's sin; the 'whirlwind' speaks of God's impending destruction."  
- The Expositor's Bible Commentary

"The Assyrian alliance will yield no benefits. Even if it did, the benefits would not be for Israel to enjoy, but would be swallowed up by foreigners (8:7c). In fact, Israel herself will be swallowed up by foreigners and will be a subject for ridicule."  
- The Africa Bible Commentary (1021)

6. What had happened to Israel's reputation? 8:8,9

- What would alliances with other nations (*and the burdens that came with them: see 2 Kings 15:19-20*) become? 8:10 (Compare Jeremiah 2:36-37)

**For Your Information: Israel is swallowed up (8:8):** "This image vividly depicts the effects of Israel's foreign alliances, which drained the nation economically."  
- The Nelson Study Bible (1455)

"They promised themselves plenty, peace, and victory, by worshipping idols, but their expectations came to nothing... The works of darkness are unfruitful; nay, the end of those things is death."  
- Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

**Ephraim has hired lovers (8:9)** "Menahem (2 Kings 15:19) and Hoshea (2 Kings 17:3), kings of Israel, paid tribute to Assyria."  
- NIV Study Bible (1331)

### **God's rejection of Israel's worship**

7. What had Ephraim's altars become? 8:11

- What had God's word become? 8:12 (Compare 1 Corinthians 2:14)

8. Why were their sacrifices unacceptable? 8:13 (Compare Proverbs 21:27; Isaiah 1:13-16)

**For Your Information: 8:13 They will return to Egypt:** "Egypt symbolizes exile and slavery. The people would actually be taken to Assyria (9:3; 11:5)."  
- The Nelson Study Bible (1456)

9. Where had the people put their trust? 8:14a (Compare Jeremiah 22:14-17)

- What happened to the things they had put their trust in? 8:14b (Compare 2 Kings 25:9)

**Applying the Word:** God told Israel that He wanted to "throw out" or "break in pieces" (8:6) things that they were running after and looking to for help instead of Him. What might God want to throw out or break in your life?

## Day 2

### Read Hosea 9:1-9

#### Ephraim to go into exile

**For Your Information:** "In this darkest chapter of the entire book, pictures of judgment pile up. Israel will be deprived of everything that makes it a people, a community, a society, a nation...It had been called to be a holy nation, different from all other nations, and to thank God for his gifts. But instead of doing this, it has been eager to commit spiritual adultery by following other gods. The consequences of the nations' adulterous behavior follow thick and fast."  
- The Africa Bible Commentary (1021,1022)

10. List the phrases condemning Israel in 9:1.

**For Your Information: love for hire on 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."  
- David Guzik

11. What would Israel lose? 9:2

- Where would they go? 9:3
- What would they be prohibited from doing? 9:4,5
- What would happen to their land and possessions? 9:6

**For Your Information: shall return to Egypt:** (9:3) "Although a few refugees, especially from Judah, did flee to Egypt, the Israelites as a whole were taken to Assyria. Thus Assyria became their new 'Egypt.' God had delivered them from slavery in Egypt: now they were once again in slavery under even crueler taskmasters than those their fathers had escaped in Egypt."  
- Henry Morris

**Unclean food:** "The food they were to eat there would be 'unclean' because it would not be selected and prepared according to the Mosaic Law nor sanctified by presenting its firstfruits (cf. Exod 22:29; Lev 23:10-12). The captive Israelites would not be able to present 'wine offerings'... or 'sacrifices,' because there would be no temple of the Lord in Assyria (Deut 12:5-14)."  
- The Expositor's Bible Commentary

**mourner's bread:** "Because they had touched a dead body, mourners were ceremonially unclean and contaminated everything that came in contact with them (see Num. 19::14,15,22). Living in a foreign land, Israel would be ceremonially defiled and unable to worship the Lord with sacrifices and offerings."  
- The Nelson Study Bible

#### Ephraim's iniquity

12. How were the the prophets and wise men regarded? Why? 9:7

**For Your Information:** *"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."  
- David Guzik

*(There are two different interpretations about which prophets are being called "fools/insane/maniac." Some think this was referring to Hosea and the true prophets while others think this was referring to the false prophets.)*

"Here the prophet and the man of the spirit are:

(1) the false prophets which pretended to inspiration, and flattered the people with false hopes and vain promises of safety and prosperity; and thus helped to confirm them in their sinful courses...Israel is doomed to know by bitter experience the folly and madness of those prophets who deceived and duped the people by...and their own folly and madness in giving ear to the delusive prospects they held forth...

(2) many others understand the prophet and spiritual man to mean true prophets, which the people called fools and madmen, and treated as such, contemning and persecuting them."  
- Pulpit Commentary

13. Underline the kinds of prophecies the people wanted to hear:

- Jeremiah 14:13 But I said, "Ah, Sovereign LORD, the prophets keep telling them, 'You will not see the sword or suffer famine. Indeed, I will give you lasting peace in this place.'"
- Jeremiah 23:17 They keep saying to those who despise me, 'The LORD says: You will have peace.' And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, 'No harm will come to you.' NIV
- Micah 2:11 If a liar and deceiver comes and says, 'I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,' he would be just the prophet for this people! NIV
  - Micah 3:11 Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they lean upon the LORD and say, "Is not the LORD among us? No disaster will come upon us." NIV

**Optional Digging Deeper**

For examples of how some of God's prophets were regarded as fools, see Amos 7:10-13.

Who else was declared "insane" because of the truth they taught?

- Mark 3:21,22; John 10 19,20

- Acts 26:24

14. Underline the true nature of these prophecies:

- Jeremiah 14:14 Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them. They are prophesying to you false visions, divinations, idolatries and the delusions of their own minds.
- Ezekiel 13:2,3 "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who are now prophesying. Say to those who prophesy out of their own imagination: 'Hear the word of the LORD! 3 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! 4 Your prophets, O Israel, are like jackals among ruins.NIV
- Jeremiah 23:25-27 "I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, 'I had a dream! I had a dream!' 26 How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds? 27 They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name, just as their fathers forgot my name through Baal worship.NIV
- Lamentations 2:14 The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; they did not expose your sin to ward off your captivity. The oracles they gave you were false and misleading. NIV

15. What was the job of a prophet? 9:8a (Compare Ezekiel 33:7f)

- How were they treated? 9:8b (Compare 2 Chronicles 36:15-16; Acts 7:51-52)
- What did Jesus say about this? Matthew 5:11-12

16. What phrases describe the peoples' iniquity/depravity? 9:9a

- What did it parallel? 9:9 Cf. Judges 19,20

**Optional Digging Deeper**

What kind of hostility was directed at prophets?

1 Kings 19:10

2 Chron 24:20-21

Jeremiah 26:20-23

**For Your Information:** "Here the sin of Israel is likened to that of the men of Gibeah, who committed a heinous crime against the concubine of a Levite who was their guest (Judges 19-20). This incident, which is one of the most shocking examples of sin in the OT, led to civil war and brought the tribe of Benjamin to the brink of annihilation."

– The Expositor's Bible Commentary

17. Compare Hosea 9:9:b ("*He will remember their iniquity, He will punish their sins*") with Jeremiah 31:24 ("*for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*") How do you account for the difference?

**Applying the Word:** *When have you seen someone who lives for the Lord considered a fool? When has God asked you to do something that looked foolish?*

### Day 3

#### Read Hosea 9:10-17

#### Ephraim's decline

18. What words come to mind by the phrases "*grapes in wilderness*" (9:10) or "*earliest fruit on the fig tree*"?

**For Your Information:** "Grapes, unusual in the desert, are a special delight when found there; the early figs are considered especially delicious. When God first found Israel in the desert (Deut 32:10), it was like finding such delicacies."

– The Expositor's Bible Commentary

19. In contrast, what had Israel become? 9:10b *Mark the word "but."* (See Numbers 25:1-3 for sins of Baal-peor.)

20. What was going to happen to the nation's population? 9:11-13

- What had the people of Ephraim been doing to their children? 2 Kings 17:17

**Optional Digging Deeper**

What had Ephraim's glory been? Genesis 41:52; 48:16-20

**For Your Information:** "From verse 11 to the end of the chapter the family tree of Ephraim is seen either dying back or being lopped of all new growth. They have worshipped fertility through the sex-rites of Baal, and they have sold their souls for peace: their judgment will be infertility and war...The abuse of sex tends towards disease and to the barrenness of 11b and 14."  
- Derek Kidner (89)

"God had given Israel a pleasant and advantageous location. All caravan trade between Egypt and countries to the north had to pass through her land, because the Mediterranean Sea was to the west and the desert to the east. She was like Tyre, for Tyre also had a situation highly advantageous for her maritime activities. Israel failed, however, to realize her potential because of her sin...The use of the word 'slayer' connotes frequent murders, civil strife, and also war fare."  
- Expositor's Bible Commentary

21. Because of the horror of the coming war and captivity, for what did Hosea pray? 9:14 (Contrast Genesis 12:1-3)

22. Why was God going to drive Ephraim from His house? 9:15

**For Your Information:** "God said the severe treatment of Israel was because of 'all their wickedness in Gilgal.' By this time Gilgal had clearly become a center of false worship (cf. 4:15). Here they represent the worst elements in the land."  
- The Expositor's Bible Commentary

**"For the wickedness of their doings"** The sin of Israel was no common sin, not a sin of ignorance, but against the full light. Each word betokens evil. The word "doings" expresses "great bold doings."

**I will love them no more** This was a national judgment, and so involved the whole of them, as to their outward condition, which they enjoyed as members of that nation...It did not respect the spiritual condition of single persons, and their relation, in this respect, to God."  
- Barnes' Notes

23. Why would reminding Israel about three historical events (Gilberah, Baal-peor and Gilgal) be an effective way to show the depth of their sin?

**Optional Digging Deeper**

What picture does Jer 17:7-8 give of trusting in the Lord?

24. What was Israel's fate? Why? 9:16,17

25. List the reasons given in chapter 9 for Israel's exile.

- 9:1 "you have
- 9:7b "because
- 9:9 "they have
- 9:10b "they became
- 9:17 "because they have not

**For Your Information:** "They shall bear no fruit . . . 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." - David Guzik

**Applying the Word:** What warnings do you tend to heed and which do you ignore? (Doctors; dash board lights, helmets; warning labels; food expiration; smoking....)

Hosea's warnings were God's last call to bring Israel back from destruction. When have you sensed God giving you warnings?

## Day 4

### Read Hosea 10:1-15

#### Israel's guilt

26. In 10:1-8; list the problems Israel had with the following and what would happen to them:

10:1-2 Material abundance (Cf. 2:8,12)	
10:3-4 Rulers, society	

Compare Psalm 5:9

**For Your Information:** "The word translated 'deceitful' (10:2) - 'faithless/divided') is *halaq* 'smooth,' 'flattering'. The OT elsewhere speaks of lips or tongues as 'smooth' in the sense of being insincere (cf. Ps 5:9...)

(10:4) "Hosea here enlarged on the idea of deceitfulness of heart: promises had been made, false oaths taken, and contracts signed. Though such treaties were being made with other countries (especially Assyria), the thought here mainly concerns agreements among the people themselves. With the denial of people's legal rights, 'lawsuits' ('judgment,' 'right') were springing up like 'poisonous weeds'...in a 'plowed field'" - Expositor's Bible Commentary

27. What do you picture happening to a society when its leaders and citizens speak deceitfully and judgments/lawsuits spring up everywhere?

28. What would happen to their calf idols? 10:5,6 Why do you think their loss would cause fear and mourning?

- Why do people today fear/mourn giving up their superstitions, habits, and false beliefs?
- Ironically, what should the people have been anxious and sad about instead?

29. From 10:7-8, list the phrases that describe what was going to happen to the rulers, the people, and their material abundance?

- How does a “stick” floating on the compare to a “luxuriant vine” (10:1)?
- What does “thorn and thistle” convey about the extent of the destruction? Cf. Gen 3:18)

30. How would the people feel when all these things happened? 10:8b (Compare Rev. 6:16)

- Why do you think they don’t call to be saved?

31. How long had God been patient with Israel? 10:9 (Cf. 9:9) (FYI: *The Period of the Judges was approximately from 1381-1050 B.C. Hosea prophesied in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (700’s) B.C.*)

- What was God going to use to punish them? 10:10 (Cf. 2 Kings 17:1-6,22,23)

**For Your Information: Double sin** “Many suggested meanings have been offered. Among the most likely is that it refers to Israel’s resort to Baal in its worship and to worldly allies in its politics...[or] their rejection first of God as their true king and then of David as His anointed...[or] as Israel’s past and present [sins]...[or] just the repeated or persistent acts of Israel’s disobedience.”  
- Derek Kidner

32. What was the Lord going to do to Ephraim? 10:11 (Cf. 4:16) (What does the image of going from a heifer that could eat freely to being yoked and plowing convey?)

- What did Jesus say about His yoke? Matthew 11:29

33. With advice and hope did Hosea give them? 10:12 (What does “fallow/unplowed” ground indicate? Compare Jesus’ parable in Matt. 13:3-7; 18-23)

- What could have happened if the people had repented because of Hosea’s prophecy? See Jeremiah 18:7-10; 26:12,13

**Optional Digging Deeper**

What do the following accounts tell you about God’s willingness to forgive?

2 Chronicles 33:1-20

Jonah 1:1, 3:3-10

**For Your Information:** “The yoke of verse 11 would no longer be the well-fitting one of God’s ideal design, but the harsh, heavy collar of slavery...The expression ‘fallow ground’ was extraordinarily well suited to describe a people doubly impervious to the good seed of God’s word, both by the tangled growth of worldly notions and preoccupations which had taken hold of them, and by the hard crust beneath it all, of wills and attitudes never broken into penitence.” - Derik Kidner (98)

**“For it is time to seek the LORD** reminds us of *how* we break up the fallow ground. We do it by seeking the LORD, not our self or idols.” - David Guzik

34. Compare the sowing and reaping in 10:12 versus 10:13.

- What reasons are given for the peoples wickedness? 10:13b

### **Coming Destruction**

35. Instead of a “rain of righteousness” (10:12), what was going to fall on the people? 10:14,15 (How brutal was warfare in that day? See 2 Kings 8:12)

**For Your Information:** “The strength and military might on which Israel prided itself will be the very means that the Lord will use in judgment and destruction (10:13b-14). We do not know exactly who Shalman was, but it is clear that the town of Beth Arbel suffered a terrible fate at his hands (10:14b). Israel can expect no better.” - Africa Bible Commentary (1023)

“A conqueror’s atrocities against mothers and children were clearly all too common.” - Derek Kidner (99)

“To illustrate how bad the time would be, it is compared with another, no doubt well known to the people of Hosea’s day, but difficult now to identify. Harper (p. 358) cites several possibilities. Perhaps Shalman is Shalmaneser V, who played such a decisive part in the Assyrian action leading to Israel’s captivity (2 Kings 17:3-6). The identity of Beth Arbel, however, remains a pure guess. The context shows that it was an occasion of tragic slaughter.” - The Expositor’s Bible Commentary

36. What tone is conveyed by the words “*it is time*” (vs. 12) and “*at dawn*” (vs. 15)? (Compare the plea in Hebrews 3:12,13.)

***Applying the Word:*** What are you investing in with the blessings that God has given you?