

Hosea 9:1 ¶ Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as *other* people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor.

Hosea 9:2 The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her.

The prophet calls for the people to recognize the seriousness of their situation. He warns them against rejoicing in the flesh because they are so spiritually sick. They had prostituted themselves to the false gods of the heathen nations and are going to reap God's judgment because of it. The crops are going to fail because they have misused them in the worship of these false gods.

Hosea 9:3 They shall not dwell in the LORD'S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean *things* in Assyria.

Hosea 9:4 They shall not offer wine *offerings* to the LORD, neither shall they be pleasing unto him: their sacrifices *shall be* unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the LORD.

The people of the Northern Kingdom were to be carried off into captivity by the Assyrians—to conditions very much like what they experienced in Egypt. While in captivity they will be forced to eat unclean foods. They will lose the ability to sacrifice to God in accordance with His will. They are compared to mourners who automatically defile what they touch. They will not have the option of going to the temple.

Hosea 9:5 What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the LORD?

Hosea 9:6 For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant *places* for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns *shall be* in their tabernacles.

Hosea 9:7 ¶ The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know *it*: the prophet *is* a fool, the spiritual man *is* mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.

Hosea 9:8 The watchman of Ephraim *was* with my God: *but* the prophet *is* a snare of a fowler in all his ways, *and* hatred in the house of his God.

Hosea 9:9 They have deeply corrupted *themselves*, as in the days of Gibeah: *therefore* he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.

Verse 5 is basically emphasizing that they will no longer have the ability to celebrate their festivals in accordance with God's will. Why? Because they will be living in captivity and the land of Israel left to ruin.

The "days of visitation" speak of God's judgment, and the prophet is declaring that the time for that judgment has come. Because the people were so possessed by their sin, they had declared God's prophets to be fools and madmen. They refused to recognize them as true prophets of God sent to call them to repentance from their sin and deliver them from His judgment.

I couldn't help but think about how Christian fundamentalists, those who unabashedly believe in scripture as the literal word of God and seek to live according to its principles, are today lumped in with the radicals of false religions. Why do they do this? Because we are intolerant in belief and are outspoken about sin. Society does not want to be confronted with their sin; they want others to embrace their sin. I can't help but be reminded of Paul's words to the Romans.

*Romans 1:28–32 “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that **they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.**”*

I believe “the days of Gibeah” are in reference to the wicked actions of the men of Benjamin as described in Judges 19-20, the consequences of which almost wiped out that tribe's existence. At that time the other tribes came together in judgment against and in the eventual preservation of that tribe. This time it will be God coming against Israel in judgment and eventual preservation of the nation.

Hosea 9:10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: *but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.*

When God set apart the nation of Israel as His chosen people, He considered them a special delight and treasure in comparison to the heathen nations surrounding them.

Baalpeor is a reference to the time that the men of Israel were lured into adultery and idolatry with the people of Moab as described in Numbers 25—and this was before they even took possession of the Promised Land. The miracles of God on their behalf were still quite recent and still they chose rebellion and disobedience without thought of the possible consequences to their future. Their mindset was one of experiencing the pleasures of sin for a season; they had no thoughts regarding their eternal future.

The most telling statement in this verse—“their abominations were according as they loved.” They loved their sin more than God.

Hosea 9:11 ¶ *As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.*

Hosea 9:12 *Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!*

Hosea 9:13 *Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer.*

The Northern Kingdom had once been thriving and prosperous. God was going to take away their glory with a judgment of infant mortality and infertility. Those children that did survive would meet an untimely death in other ways. Though they had once been as prosperous as the city of Tyre, their children would not live to experience that same kind of prosperity. It's interesting to note that "Ephraim" means fruitfulness, and her judgment would make her fruitless and barren.

Again, I couldn't help but make a comparison to the circumstances in America today. We have been blessed as a nation with great growth and prosperity. During my lifetime, however, we have thrown God out of the schools and the public square and turned away from embracing the concept of "one nation under God." I believe that just as surely as Israel suffered great loss because of rejecting God, so will America. Just as Israel murdered their children, we have murdered millions of our children before ever giving them a chance at life.

Hosea 9:14 Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.

At this point Hosea calls out for God's judgment, but he calls out for mercy in the process. He would rather there be no children at all than for those children to come into the world only to suffer because of the judgment of their parents' sin.

This is one of those difficult issues in scripture. I empathize with Hosea's heart. I am a doting Grandma, yet I am concerned about what my grandchildren will face in the future if the Lord chooses to tarry. I rest in the truth that God loves these children even better than I do. I rest in the truth that everything God does is righteous and holy. I don't have to understand His ways; I just have to trust Him because of Who He is—and I do.

Hosea 9:15 All their wickedness *is* in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes *are* revolvers.

Hosea 9:16 Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay *even* the beloved *fruit* of their womb.

Hosea 9:17 My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

Hosea notes that the disobedience of the people at Gilgal (as recorded in Joshua 9) laid the foundation for the troubles they were experiencing now. They were to have destroyed the people of the land as they took possession of it...

Deuteronomy 20:16–18 "But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God."

...instead, they fell for deception and made a pact with the Hivites that allowed these idolaters to stay in the land. Because of their continued idolatry God has determined to drive them from His house, their home, the land of Israel. This action is in fulfillment of His words to Solomon.

*2 Chronicles 7:17–20 "And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments; Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel. But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; **Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them**; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations."*

The LORD emphasizes again that Ephraim will become unfruitful and shrink in numbers because of their sin. They were destined to be wanderers among the nations.

There has been much said about the so-called ten lost tribes of Israel. That is not really true. Scripture is clear in declaring that there were representatives of all the tribes in the land of Judah after the two kingdoms separated from one another.

*2 Chronicles 11:14–16 "For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the LORD: And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made. And after **them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers.**"*

It is true, however, that there was never a mass return to Israel by those from the Northern Kingdom comparable to the return of Judah from the Babylonian captivity. The people as a whole that did live in Israel were once again dispersed among the nations after the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in 70 AD. This was a consequence not only of forsaking God's law and embracing the traditions of men, but for rejecting His Son, the Messiah that came to redeem them. The reestablishment of the nation of Israel in 1948 is an important fulfillment of prophecy that signifies the Messiah will soon return.

Ezekiel prophesied that the day would come when God would once again resurrect Israel as a nation and put His Spirit within them and cause them to live in the land of Israel.

Ezekiel 37:12–14 "Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your

graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD."

The nation is being gathered and I know that spiritual restoration will soon follow.