

THE BOOK OF HOSEA
"The Divided Heart"
Hosea 10:1-15

Dec. 26, 1982

INTRODUCTION

1. The prophet Hosea has uncovered the sin of the nation Israel (4, 5). God is burdened over them (6). They are insensible to their decadence (7). They have mislaid God (8). Judgment alone remains (9).
2. This chapter is a repetition of the previous one. It underscores Israel's deep sin. It records terrible results in the judgment of God.
3. The sad part of it is that God expected more from the nation. The word "empty" (v. 1a) is a participle meaning to pour, overflow, hence "running luxuriantly." God saw Israel with great potential (Psa. 80:8-11). Failing to come up to God's ideal, the nation fell into gross sin which demanded righteous judgment.

1. ISRAEL'S SINFUL ACTS

a. Idolatry v. 1b

This is the basic problem. In proportion to their abundant prosperity, Israel brought fruit to self, her altars, and images. How tragic--the more Israel prospered, the more she fell into idolatry.

b. Divided heart v. 2a.

"Divided" is the verb meaning smooth. The heart was dissimulating and not sincerely devoted to God (cf. 1 Kings 18:21).

c. Full of words v. 4a.

The divided heart yielded this--just words and untruthful covenants.

d. Compared to Gibeah v. 9a.

This has already been mentioned (9:9). It has reference to Judges 19, 20. Sin has long been Israel's practice.

e. Bound to idols v. 10c.

The two furrows (transgressions) have been variously identified. It may be a reference to Jeremiah (2:13) or to the two calves in Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:25-33).

2. ISRAEL'S JUDGMENTS PRONOUNCED

a. Broken v. 2b.

Their sin will be reckoned with "now." The emphatic personal pronoun "He" refers to God. "Break" means to cut off as to decapitate a victim.

b. Spring up v. 4b.

Just as hemlock in the field's furrows, so judg-

ment will come.

c. Shame v. 6b.

As God's judgment is unleashed, the nation will be ashamed for the counsel of Jeroboam to establish the two centers of idolatry (Bethel and Dan).

d. Destruction v. 8a, b.

There will be destruction of the idolatrous high places. Thorns and thistles will cover the false altars.

e. Chastisement vv. 9b-10a.

Whereas the tribes in Gibeah's day stood and did not perish, it will not be so now. He will vindicate His righteousness and His chastisement will fall upon the ungodly.

f. Yoked v. 11.

Israel was accustomed to treading, an easy task. God would make her yoked (so Hebrew for "ride"), i.e. for hard field labor. Judah also is implicated for she is not faultless.

g. Shambles vv. 14, 14b.

War will come. Fortresses will be spoiled. "Shalman" is probably a contraction of Shalmaneser, altho nothing is known about Betharbel. There infants were first killed and mothers afterward (cf. 2 Kings 8:12; Isa. 13:16; Psal. 137:8, 9).

3. ISRAEL'S EXPERIENCES REPORTED

a. Royalty vv. 3, 7, 15b.

Their king will be cut off due to their failure to fear the Lord.

b. Fear vv. 5, 6a.

As the people see what happens to their idols, they will fear. They will feel the loss of them. All the glory (worship) afforded the idols will be gone. They, like the people, will be carried into captivity-- a manifest proof of their helplessness and futility.

c. Wickedness v. 13.

Evil was not allowed to grow of itself, but pains were taken to cultivate it. Consequently, the nation reaped iniquity. They ate lies as the fruit of such cultivation. Reason: they trusted in their own deeds and might. The truth of the law of harvest is demonstrated here: As a man sows, so shall he reap.

CONCLUSION Things will be so bad and the people in such despair, they will cry for inanimate creation to fall on them (v. 8c). This is the end for Godless living! God in mercy, calls upon the nation to repent (v. 12). Three items: 1) Sow for righteousness, 2) break up fallow ground, 3) seek the Lord.