

THE BOOK OF HOSEA
"The Difficulty of God"
Hosea 6:4-11

Nov 14, 1982

INTRODUCTION

1. The cup of Israel's iniquity is full (4:1-18). Judgment is predicted as a wind. Then false sacrifices will be worthless (4:19).
2. The nation, priests, and royal house are in line for judgment (5:1). Their sins are listed (5:2-5). God says He will come against them as a moth, a worm, and a lion (5:12-14).
3. The Lord withdraws from the nation until they acknowledge their sin and seek His face (5:15). What grace and tenderness!
4. In the light of this situation, what does the prophet record? He presents a predicament and holds out hope. God's grace is evident.

1. ISRAEL'S SINFUL DEEDS vv. 6-10.

a. Hypocrisy v. 6.

God is not levelling against the sacrificial system here. External ritual is worthless without moral obedience. True knowledge of God is demonstrated in piety, mercy, goodness.

b. Transgression v. 7.

Just as Adam transgressed God's commandment, so the entire nation had violated God's law (2 Kings 17). In so doing, they dealt faithlessly with the Lord.

c. Homicide v. 8.

Gilead is reckoned as a city of evil-doers. Specifically, the city is involved in bloodshed. The horror of all of this is beyond comprehension for it applies to the nation.

d. Robbery v. 9.

The priests take the lead in the evil mentioned. They form gangs to rob and murder travellers. Some see "consent" as Shechem rather than as a common effort. Being a city of refuge, the deeds of evil are increased. All of this is heightened by lewdness (cf. Lev. 18:17; 19:29).

e. Idolatry v. 10.

All sorts of horrible crimes were observed. Idolatry is singled out as the principal sin. The

conclusion is that Israel is unclean.

2. GOD'S PERSONAL DIFFICULTY vv. 4-5.

a. Expressed v. 4.

The more one looks at these questions, the more startling they become. It is the cry of God seeking the soul. It is the difficulty of God because He cannot deal with man.

b. Explained v. 4.

The word "goodness" is really the same as submission. In essence the prophet says the nation's return to the Lord is evanescent--like a morning cloud or morning dew. It ends with nothing. There must be resoluteness, something with abiding results. Oh what a cry from God. Sin can be dealt with, but super-ficiality is so difficult.

c. Exhibited v. 5.

With no place to turn, God struck at the nation by the prophets (the very words of His mouth) and His judgment went forth conspicuous as light. It should have been heeded.

3. HOSEA'S URGENT DESIRE vv. 1-3.

a. Return v. 1.

What an appeal by the prophet in behalf of the Lord. There is room for grace and hope of pardon. This is the way to resolve God's difficulty.

b. Revive vv. 1-3.

The "He wills" are important. God "returned" (5:15) and when Israel "returns" (6:1) God "wills." He heals, binds up, revives, raises up, and comes. What a God of refreshment.

c. Recognize (know) v. 3.

Here is the true knowledge of God. Recovered favor results in progressive knowledge of God. The "if" is better taken as a means rather than a condition.

CONCLUSION Alas, Judah will reap a harvest of judgment when God returns the dispersion of His people (v. 11). Why? They rejected Messiah. Oh, the horrible judgment upon those who turn away from the Lord.