

Message #10**Hosea 8:1-14**

Not long ago I witnessed something that took every bit of restraint to keep myself out of it. A little boy was riding an electric car and the mother went out to the boy and told him it was time to put the car in the garage and come in the house. The boy started screaming at the top of his lungs. He was yelling and screaming at his mom that he was not going in and he actually turned the car and started moving away from the garage and his mom. Well now I thought, I know what I would do at this point, but of course I am not really involved in this at all so I just kept watching. Well the mother said to the son, I just don't know what to do with you and she turned around and went back into the house. A couple of minutes go by and here comes the grandmother and the grandmother goes out to the boy and tells him the same thing. The boy again starts screaming at the grandmother and took off out in the field. So out comes the mother again. This time the mother runs in front of the electric car and forces it to stop. Then she tries to lift the boy off the car and the boy is hanging on to the steering wheel. Finally she gets the boy off the car. She sits the boy down in the field and she gets in the car and starts driving it back toward the house. The boy is sitting in the field screaming. I am watching all of this and saying you have got to be kidding me.

If those parents wanted to do what was the best loving thing to do for that child, they should have pulled him off that car and paddled him. If you truly love someone, you will not just let them get away with doing what is wrong. You will not just sit idly by and do nothing about one doing what is bad.

Now many of God's people are like that child. They just hope God will go away and leave them alone so they can do what they want just like some spoiled child. God will not do that and God is not like that. If you are His property and you move away from Him and His Word, God will not just sit idly by and hope you figure it out. He will be patient with you, but as a loving and caring Father, He will come after you.

If ever you want to see an example of this, it is the relationship between God and Israel. God loves Israel. He always has and always will; but He will not sit idly by and let Israel act like a spoiled child. In fact, God's love guarantees He will send His judgment against His rebellious people. If ever you want to see that point, just look at Hosea 8.

GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE GUARANTEES THAT HE WILL NOT LET HIS PEOPLE GET AWAY WITH EVIL; BUT HE WILL SEND HIS SERIOUS CHASTISING JUDGMENTS IN AN ATTEMPT TO GET HIS PEOPLE TO TURN BACK TO HIM, THE GOD THEY FORGOT.

Now this is one very serious chapter in the Bible. God loves His people and He has given them plenty of opportunities to respond to Him, but they are not doing it; so He says you will pay a price. There are several observations we want to make concerning this:

OBSERVATION #1 – God announces to His people that His judgment is coming. **8:1a**

When God says, “put the trumpet to your lips” He is basically saying it is time for a special announcement to be made to Israel. Blowing a trumpet, a ram’s horn, literally “shofar,” was a way of announcing something special for national Israel. Only what this trumpet announces won’t be positive. This blowing of the trumpet was that something dangerous was on the horizon.

Now the specific charge is that a predator bird has swiftly come and is permitted to exist in the “house of the LORD.” Notice the attack starts against the sacred place of worship. An unclean bird was being permitted to exist at the Temple. A trumpet needed to sound the alarm that evil was in the Temple and because of that God was going to cause a predatory enemy to sweep in against His own people.

The Rapture of the Church will be signaled by some heavenly trumpet blast (I Thess. 4:16). That blast will signal that the Church Age is over and that the program of God is now swinging back to Israel. One of the things that will again come into play will be the Temple. But as quick as the Temple is up an unclean Antichrist will sweep into that Temple and turn against Israel. The reason why God will permit this is to get this nation to finally turn to Jesus Christ, her Messiah.

OBSERVATION #2 – God gives specific reasons why His judgment was coming. **8:1b-6**

There are some very specific reasons why God would permit His people to suffer the chastening judgment of God:

Reason #1 - Because His people have transgressed His covenant. **8:1b**

Israel had transgressed God’s covenant in so many ways we cannot even count them. Probably in the Hosea analogy, we are talking about the fact that she violated her marriage covenant with God. She was consistently unfaithful and unloyal to the God who loved her. God had entered into a wonderful covenant relationship with His people and His people didn’t even think about that. They just did what they wanted to do. They never considered the fact that they were connected to God.

Reason #2 - Because His people have rebelled against God’s Word. **8:1c**

So what we learn here is that the people who claimed to be right with God didn’t think it was too important to study and understand and apply the Word of God. It didn’t matter what God’s Word said, they just did what they wanted. They went to their worship services, but they never took God’s Word too seriously.

Reason #3 - Because His people cry to a God they claim they know. **8:2**

These people were confident of themselves. They were confident they were right with God. If you are not dead serious about applying God's Word, it makes no difference how confident you feel; you do not really know God or have a deep relationship with God. This is nothing but an arrogant, empty boast. They claim they know God when in fact they do not. In fact, **verse 14** says they forgot God.

Reason #4 - Because His people have rejected the good. **8:3**

Do you see this? God's own people rejected good. We already know they rejected the Word of God, but they also rejected the God who wanted to do good things for them. They rejected good ways of life; good morals; good worship; good teaching and good things.

Reason #5 - Because His people have appointed their own leaders, not in accordance with the Word of God. **8:4a**

These people elected people to office who were not interested in God or His Word. They crowned kings one right after another who were evil. They appointed princes not by the approval of God; they did not even consult God or look to God. They wanted some leader who would fit in with them. Now think about this. These are people who are not interested in knowing or obeying God's Word, who are electing their own leaders. Do you think they will pick those who will honor God? In fact, they did not even consult God. They did not pray for God to send them His leader.

S. Lewis Johnson once said one of the things that greatly troubled him is that many people in the church want their leader to make them be like all the other churches. He said most of the time that will bring people into the "reproach of God." So rather than pray for God to send them His choice, they appoint their leaders who will make them like all the other churches. They get the resumes and they appoint some "rah rah" leader who will be good with youth, who will bring in progressive music, who will head lots of programs. The problem is these men are not called or gifted by God to feed people the Word of God. Very few churches actually look for someone who will study to rightly divide Scripture, who will give attention to systematic reading of the Word of God and the teaching of the Scriptures. Instead, they appoint their own leaders because they really don't care about the Word of God.

Reason #6 - Because His people worshipped idols totally rejected by God. **8:4b-6**

These are God's people and you would think that someone from Israel would say, "You know, I was reading the book of Exodus and I read about the fact that when they made a golden calf, God's anger so burned against them that He executed some of them." But no one thought this way. They did not learn their lesson.

These people had a history of idolatry and God's anger burned against them. They had a craftsman make some idol. They took their silver and gold and made their idols.

Samaria was the capital of Israel in the north and they made some calf idol and worshipped it as "god." These were people who claimed they knew God. What a joke. God says at the end of **verse 5** that these people were "incapable of innocence." In other words, these people were incapable of doing anything that pleased God.

OBSERVATION #3 – God specifically states what He will do in judgment. **8:7-10**

There are three judgment realities that are brought out in this text:

Judgment Reality #1 - Nothing they do will prosper. **8:7**

God basically says because of your refusal to get serious about Me and My Word, nothing you do will prosper. It will be like they are sowing the wind in everything they do. They will plant grain but it won't grow right. It will yield nothing. In fact, even if there is a little that exists, strangers will take it and they will get it.

Judgment Reality #2 - God's people will be swallowed up among the nations. **8:8**

God's people won't control anything. Others will dominate them. They will be swallowed up among the nations and the nations will not honor them and delight in them. Isn't this exactly what has happened to Israel? Jewish people are scattered all over the world. They are not in their land as a nation of God.

Judgment Reality #3 - God's people will be taken by the Assyrians. **8:9-10**

Now Israel thought Assyria was her friend. But take a good honest look today at the relationship between Israel and Syria. Has Syria become her friend? Has Syria delivered Israel from her enemies? No alliance Israel has ever made has ever delivered her from anything.

It was God who delivered her from Egypt and it would be God who would deliver her from her enemies. What ultimately would happen would be that the Assyrians would turn against Israel. No one will come to their rescue. They will be like a wild donkey all alone. Even though they thought they had friends among the nations, they will begin to diminish.

OBSERVATION #4 – God describes His perspective of the worship of His own people.
8:11-14

There are four perspectives God has for Israel.

Perspective #1 - Their altars are altars of sin. **8:11**

Israel wanted religion. She built her altars all over the land. But these altars were not altars to the true God and they became nothing but an altar for sin.

At these altars the priest would tell the people you are all now right with God. Nothing was further from the truth. They were not right with God. In fact, they were actually hiring prostitutes and lovers to come to these altars so they literally could pursue sin.

People were so distorted in their concept of God. Sin can become such a habitual pattern in one's life that that lifestyle may actually bring the judgment of God and the people think they are right with God.

When we go to corporate worship, it is important that we honestly analyze ourselves to make sure that our lives are not displeasing to the Lord. It is critical that we come with cleansed hearts. If we have failed or displeased the Lord, we need to confess it and receive His forgiveness; otherwise, our own altar is an altar of sin.

Perspective #2 - My Word is strange to My own people. **8:12**

This is a major key to being right with God. People who are right with God want to learn the Word of God so they may make adjustments to their own lives. God has given His precious Word to His people so they may know Him.

God gave His precious Word to His own people and they ignored it. I think it is intriguing that God says He wrote His Word with 10,000 precepts. The Jewish Rabbis went through the Old Testament and counted the commandments and said there were a total of 613. They said there were 248 positive commandments and 365 negative commandments.

In the New American Standard English Bible there are 1189 chapters (OT-929; NT-260); 31,173 verses (OT-23214; NT-7959); 807,361 words (OT- 622,771; NT-184590). In the book of Exodus there are over 30,000 words. In Leviticus there are over 24,000 words. In Numbers there are over 30,000 words and in Deuteronomy there are over 28,000 words. So in the four main books of the law there are over 112,000 words. God is only thinking about less than 10% of those words and they did not come close to obeying that.

In fact, just as verse 12 says, the Word of God became foreign or strange to His own people. Think of this. These people are going to their places of worship and the Word of God is like a strange thing there.

Isn't that what is happening in so many churches today? People are going to their worship services, but not to hear the precious Word of God. In fact, if the Word of God were carefully, systematically and accurately taught, many of the people would leave.

Perspective #3 - Their sacrifices do not delight Me but cause Me to punish them. **8:13**

Now the Hebrew here is tricky, but the point seems to be that the people of God were turning festivals for sacred worship into festivals for fun and food.

God says I do not delight in your worship services because they are not about Me and My Word. They are all about you having a good time. Therefore God says I will punish you for your sins. The specific sins to which He is referring are the multiple times you have gone to worship with a light and loose mindset about Me and My Word.

Perspective #4 - Israel had forgotten her God. **8:14**

Clearly understand the ramifications of what is said here. These people went to their worship services and claimed they were right with God. This was true for Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

They all said God was blessing them and they got involved in building projects; but they both had one serious problem—**THEY FORGOT GOD**.

Now I thought we read in **verse 2** that they cried out to God. They did not forget God, did they? They sure did. You can cry out to your idea of God and think He is listening. They invented their own idea of a God who was happy with them. They did not believe that God would not listen to them until they dealt with sin. They came up with their own concept of God. Their God loved them. Their God blessed them. Their God was happy with them. Their God did not hate sin. Their God loved their religious stuff. They had numbers and they had money and they built things.

God says, “You have forgotten ME.” You have forgotten what I am actually like. You have forgotten how I love people who are serious about My Word; and because of that God says I will let My own family be chastised.

It is possible to come to church and be absolutely delusional about your real relationship with God. You can be out of tune with the Holy Spirit that you don’t even recognize it. If you are not coming with a desire to hear God’s Word so you may apply it to your life, take a serious look at where you are in your relationship with God.

If you go to church and hear God’s Word and then say well that was interesting, now let me get back to my own life, and Monday through Saturday you live life your way without any consideration of the need to apply God’s Word, then you are falling into the same trap as Israel.