



8 | HOSEA 8-9

THE SINFULNESS OF SIN

Why the Christian should have a posture of hostility toward sin

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3. SIN'S DEFEAT (COL 2:14)

Songs

All Creatures of Our God and King
Who You Say I Am
Jerusalem
Only a Holy God
Living Hope

Call to Worship:

Psalm 34:1-3

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
2 My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.
3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!

Announcements

1. **Welcome** visitors.
2. **OUT OF TOWN:** I'm out of town all next week taking a seminary class at Faith Seminary in Lafayette, IN.
3. Don't forget to fill out the volunteer service **questionnaires**. They are available at entrance.

Introduction

Our message today is from Hosea 8 on page 754 of your pew Bible. The title of our message today is "The Sinfulness of Sin".

Sin is so incredibly destructive, but it often presents itself as a delightful surprise, full of wonder and happiness. In C.S. Lewis' series on the *Chronicles of Narnia*, in his book *The Magician's Nephew*, Digory and Polly find some cryptic words written in stone:

Make your choice, adventurous Stranger,
Strike the bell and bide the danger,
Or wonder, till it drives you mad,
What would have followed if you had!

Do you remember what happened when the young boy named Digory did "strike the bell?" Later he regrets having done so because it results in **Jadis** being freed. You remember her, don't you? She's better known as the evil White Witch in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*! I don't believe the characters in that story were too fond of it being "always winter and never Christmas."

We all remember before we knew Christ when it was "always winter and never Christmas". Oh, how painful and ugly that life of sin was. We were bribed by Satan. We were enslaved. But we came out of Egypt! We left our slavery behind.

Saint, don't ever forget the deception you were under when you were lost. Sin is the great deception. By eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve thought they would gain everything but instead they lost everything. They were deceived. What is deception?

Deception – concealment or distortion of the truth for the purpose of misleading; the act of representing as true what is known to be false; a stratagem; a trick; something that is done to mislead.

The message in Hosea 8 is all about sin's deceit. It just tells you lies. It promises life but gives you death. Beware! Stay far away.

ILLUSTRATION

I remember a anchor lady on television who was doing a morning show on dogs. She loved dogs. Most dogs are amazing. She was comfortable with her dogs, but this dog was a pit bull. She treated that Pitbull like she would her Labrador at home and touched her nose to the dog's nose. That lady trusted the dog, but didn't realize you can't do that with a Pitbull. And that dog attacked her. She had to have reconstructive surgery.

That's how sin is. You think it's fine until it ruins your life. Sin is more dangerous than any animal, even the most vicious animal. Don't go near it. That's why the Prophet Hosea says: Blow a trumpet of warning.

1. SIN'S DECEIT (8:1-14)

BLOW THE TRUMPET (8:1)

Sin is so deceptive and blinding that we need to warn against it. It doesn't advertise its danger. God tells Hosea to lift up a trumpet and warn Israel to turn from their sin to the Lord, but they won't listen.

8:1 | Set the trumpet to your lips! One like a vulture is over the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law.

God blasts **trumpets** and sends **vultures** as a harbinger, a warning of what's coming if you choose sin. **A vulture is a bird of prey**. Sin, like a vulture wants to eat you for lunch. Sin sends people to hell every day. All who are without Christ are circled by the vultures of eternal destruction. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23).

The Assyrians were about to destroy Israel. God sends the prophet Hosea to blow a spiritual trumpet through his preaching. He wants Hosea, and all of us today, to blow a trumpet for the lost.

Blow the trumpet. Who are you praying for? Who are you speaking to? God's given you a mouth. Don't be silent.

The Spirit of God is God's trumpet to the soul. No one can be saved without an **epiphany**: the lost must wake up to faith in Christ. They must come to yield their life to the absolute Lordship of Christ.

How will they hear without a preacher? (Rom 10:14, KJV).

SIN MAKES GOD'S ENEMIES YOUR FRIENDS (8:2-4)

Israel thought they knew God, but they had no victory.

8:2 | To me they cry, "My God, we—Israel—know you."

Israel things they can be friends with God and friends with the world. The greatest deception is for people to think they know God, yet they do not experience his presence and power. There are people who go to church, and yet are very acquainted with the enemy. They are satisfied with an outward commitment to the church but have little or not walk with God.

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (Jas 4:4).

Sin Promotes Bad Choices

8:3 | Israel has spurned the good; the enemy shall pursue him.

The enemy was overtaking them. Assyria and Egypt had so much power that little Israel had to pay them taxes. Israel boasted of a great big God, but he seemed powerless. If God seems powerless to you, you may not know him.

Israel spurned what they knew was right. They thought it would really work out. They thought the pagan nations would take care of them. Nope. The enemy always brings hurt.

Israel's enemy was Assyria. **Yours is the devil.** He hates you. He loves blinding the lost. Sin will try to introduce you to God's enemies and try to have you call those enemies your friends. Listen the devil is not your friend.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly (Jn 10:10).

If you are in Christ, the enemy has no victory over you.

Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world (1 Jn 4:4).

Without Christ, the enemy will take you to hell with him. If you are lost, the vultures of sin are circling you. Don't let the devil win.

But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!" (Rev 12:12).

Christ is our victory. Don't let the devil win. If you are lost, come to Christ. Yield to the voice of the Spirit and come!

If you are saved, blow the trumpet. Mark the enemy. Raise a victory banner over the enemy. He is defeated!

He [God] disarmed the demonic rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him [Christ] (Col 2:15).

Don't spurn Christ, who is our ultimate Good. He is victory. He triumphs over all enemies.

Sin will blind you so that you make good friends with the devil. Don't fall for that.

Sin Promotes Bad People

8:4a | They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not.

Israel chose some really bad people to be their **kings**. As God's people we need to surround ourselves with godly leaders. We all need help. We can't live the Christian life alone. We need each other. That's how discipleship works. Submit yourself to godly people. Lost people don't want accountability. Christians beg for accountability. We are teachable. We want correction. We need godly leaders in our lives so that we can see where we need to grow and change.

Christians want godly leaders. You need the church. You need fellowship. If you despise the fellowship of the saints, something is seriously wrong. We cannot grow as lone rangers. We cannot afford to neglect the right kind of accountability in our lives. Two bad models Christians follow that gets them in the most trouble is (1) try to go it alone and live the Christian life in isolation, or (2) **allow the wrong leaders or influences to guide your life.**

PAUL, BARNABAS, AND TIMOTHY

Follow the example of Paul. He had a Barnabas in his life. He had someone above him who was stronger. He had someone to whom he was accountable. He also had someone below him who he was helping. He had a Timothy. Who is your Barnabas? Who is your Timothy?

SIN GIVES FALSE PEACE (4B-6)

The pagan nations attributed their wealth to their gods of prosperity, the chief of which was their calf gods. Those idols were their saviors.

8:4b-6 | With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction. ⁵I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence? ⁶For it is from Israel; a craftsman made it; it is not God. The calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces.

God hates Samaria's golden calf. And he hates any idol you may have. The false gods of today are even more tantalizing than the golden calf, but they are just as empty. Sin is deceitful because it makes you think everything is ok. It gives you false peace. That's what the golden calves did.

There is a false peace attached to sin. It seems like everything is ok. Sin deceives us by convincing us that what happens to others will never happen to us. Let's say that we know that ten times out of ten, people get caught when they sin. Ten times out of ten, and yet sin convinces us that we are going to be the exception. We know that for the history of time people who have done this sin have suffered for it. But sin says "Wait a minute. Are you kidding me? You're going to be different. You're going to get away with this!" Just like the serpent said to Eve, **"You shall not die."**

The calf-gods promised health and wealth but had no power. **Health and wealth were the whole point of the fertility cult.**¹ They offer gratification, but they cannot deliver. This is clear to any modern thinker. This kind of worship seems absurd. Yet the lessons are ever relevant. Anything we love in place of God is an idol. You do not have to say, “I am worshiping an idol,” to be actually worshiping an idol. We can say that we are worshiping God but be worshiping an idol—our money, homes, cars, position, wife, husband, children—even when we associate those things with God or think of them as the gift of God.

SIN PROMISES GOOD, BUT DELIVERS HURT (8:7-10)

Sin deceives us by creating in us a desire for that which we know can only hurt us. A little voice says, “Go ahead.” And we stupidly go ahead even though we know we’re going to suffer for it. When Eve looked at the fruit she saw that it was good to look at, good to touch and good to taste. So she took it and she ate it and we’ve been taking and eating ever since. We’re no different even though we know that every time we take and eat it will hurt us. That’s the deceitfulness of sin.

Regardless of the way we sow seeds of sin in our lives, Hosea gives us a warning: sin is like a hurricane. Sow to the wind and you will reap the whirlwind.

8:7-10 | For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads; it shall yield no flour; if it were to yield, strangers would devour it. ⁸ Israel is swallowed up; already they are among the nations as a useless vessel...

⁹ For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild donkey wandering alone; Ephraim has hired lovers. ¹⁰ Though they hire allies among the nations, I will soon gather them up. And the king and princes shall soon writhe because of the tribute.

HURRICANE ELENA

Sometimes sin is like a hurricane in our lives. Only once in my life have I been close to the eye of a hurricane. It was August 29, 1985. Hurricane Elena. There were 14 fatalities and three billion dollars in damage.² I was a young boy at the time, and we lived in Louisiana, near the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Ponchatrain. While we were there a hurricane moved up the coast passing within ten or twenty miles of where we were living. As news of the approaching storm reached our community, many people evacuated and left the state. Our family stayed, and I will never forget the storm.

The wind began gently, then grew to a mammoth intensity; the rains were torrential. The streets surrounding our house in Ponchatoula, Louisiana were flooded. Trees snapped at the high winds. Rain was pouring sideways. As I stood watching the storm, I asked myself what could ever produce winds of such intensity and violence. Nearly one million people in low lying areas from New Orleans, Louisiana to Tampa, Florida were forced to flee.

¹ Garrett, 183.

² Thomas C. Frohlich. “From Elena to Katrina: These Are the Costliest Hurricanes to Ever Hit the US.” USA Today. September 14, 2018. Accessed February 14, 2019. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2018/09/12/most-destructive-hurricanes-of-all-time/36697269/>.

I still do not know everything that goes into the making of a hurricane. But because of the book of Hosea I do know what produces similar scenes of spiritual force and destruction. It is not big things. It is “little” things, like forgetting God and then trusting in our own perception of things. This neglect seems small at the beginning, but it grows big and ends in destruction.³ You might say it is the “respectable sins” that cause the hurricanes in our lives. I can tell you from personal experience and from observing some very sad situations that this is absolutely the case.

Hosea 8:7 tells us that sin is like a hurricane, “**For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.**” Israel planted little sins like forgetting and neglecting God, and it resulted in the destruction of their nation. Since “wind” in Scripture often refers to what is empty or illusive, the proverb means that Israel has sown the seed of meaningless religion along with their little “respectable sins” and shall therefore reap a harvest of judgment at the hand of God.⁴

SIN TRIES TO REPLACE GOD (8:11-14)

Here's another lie of sin: You can be satisfied by the things of this world. Sin will make you think you can replace the great Almighty God with the little bitty things of this earth. What a lie.

8:11-14 | Because Ephraim has multiplied altars for sinning, they have become to him altars for sinning. ¹² Were I to write for him my laws by the ten thousands, they would be regarded as a strange thing. ¹³ As for my sacrificial offerings, they sacrifice meat and eat it, but the Lord does not accept them...

Now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins; they shall return to Egypt. ¹⁴ For **Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces**, and Judah has multiplied fortified cities; so I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour her strongholds.

Verse 14 says it all: “**Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces.**” God burns down the cities. That's a mercy for God to take away from us whatever takes the place of God.

The lost sinner always has a substitute god. We are all worshippers. We have to give ourselves to serve something.

Can I just say, that nothing, absolutely nothing is glorious enough to replace the living God in your life. Everything else leads you back to slavery. God alone can set us free.

I like C.S. Lewis and what he said, our desires are too puny. We want little tiny things when we can have the great big God.

It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot

³ Boice, 63-64.

⁴ Ibid.

imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased. – C. S. Lewis

What deceit! You will never be satisfied by more of this world. Christ alone can satisfy.

2. SIN'S DESTRUCTION (9:1-17)

What sin takes from you. In chapter 9 of Hosea, we see a total decimation of the nation due to their sin. Here Israel loses everything:

Joy (9:1-2)

Protection (9:3-6)

Sight (9:7-9)

Livelihood (9:10-14)

God's Blessing (9:15-17)

Sin destroys. When God says “don't”, he's saying don't hurt yourself. Choose to sin, choose to suffer.

Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.
– Ravi Zacharias

Hosea 9 is the prophecy of Israel's destruction. It's like reading the record beforehand. They didn't plan on forfeiting their lives and livelihood for sin, but it happened. It always happens. **The devil seeks to kill and destroy**. He was a murderer from the beginning. He wants to end you. Sin brings deep suffering.

The devil wants to keep the lost from true joy. Look at what Israel loses.

A LOSS OF TRUE JOY (9:1-2)

9:1 | Rejoice not, O Israel! Exult not like the peoples; for you have played the whore, forsaking your God. You have loved a prostitute's wages on all threshing floors.

No Source of Joy

Israel was at one of the most prosperous times in their history, but God says, **“Stop rejoicing! You are a harlot. There's nothing to rejoice about.”**

Instead of sin benefitting them, they became slaves and **“played the whore”** and **“forsook their God”**. Real joy comes from God.

It's like they're **going back to Egypt**. They are getting ready to go back into slavery, though this time it will be Assyria. God says: don't rejoice. The pleasure of sin is short lived.

You can only “enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb 11:25).

Then sin brings rottenness to your bones. It will strip you of everything. God says, stop rejoicing at your sin and take it seriously. **It may give you pleasure now, but it's setting you up for misery.**

No Satisfaction

When Israel forsook their God, they settled for earthly things which cannot satisfy.

9:2 | Threshing floor and wine vat shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail them.

Without Christ there can be no lasting satisfaction. The lost will always be lacking because they don't have Christ. **Christ alone satisfies.** The most satisfying bread and finest **wine** cannot compare to the face of God. Bread and wine will **not feed them** – that is, it will never be enough. It will run out because of the coming famine. **New wine shall fail them.** God's pleasures, on the other hand, are inexhaustible. No earthly joy ought to occupy the place of God in our heart.

God doesn't just tell you to turn from sin, he offers you himself. He is like living, eternal water to satisfy your thirst (Isa 5:13, 41:17, 44:3, 49:10, 58:11; Psa 42:1-2, 63:1; Amos 8:11) and wine to make your heart glad (Psa 104:14-15). Listen to God's offer:

On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! ³⁸ Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" ³⁹ When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him... (Jn 7:37-39a).

A LOSS OF GOD'S PROTECTION (9:3-6)

In Hosea 9:3-6, we have a picture of removal from the promised land and a prophecy of the coming Assyrian military invasion. The only way to cleanse the nation of its idols is through drastic measures, tearing down their divine hedge of protection.

Removed from the Land (9:3)

The immediate effect of God's withdrawal from Israel's affairs is to cede the land to their enemies. Not only **famine**, but **military defeat** is on the horizon. God is Israel's strength; if he is withdrawn, they will be taken from their land.

9:3 | They shall not remain in the **land of the Lord**, but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean food in Assyria.

Taken away from **the land of the Lord**, they'll get new homes as servants of other nations like **Egypt** and **Assyria**. It won't be like having momma's home cooked meals. They'll eat foreign **food** in a foreign land that is **unclean**, not conforming to the Levitical food laws.

Removed from the Temple

No longer will they worship God in Jerusalem. Remember Jerusalem is the place where God manifested his presence in a fiery pillar of his glory. God says through Hosea:

9:4 | They shall not pour drink offerings of wine to the Lord, and their sacrifices shall not please him. It shall be like mourners' bread to them; all who eat of it shall be defiled; for their bread shall be **for their hunger only**; it shall not come to the house of the Lord.

Sacrifices of wine and lambs **will not please the Lord** because they will be nonexistent in a foreign nation. It will be like a perpetual funeral with everyone eating **mourners' bread**. **Mourners are not permitted to worship because in Israel you could not offer bread if you had touched a dead body (Lev 21:11)**. They are like those who are **defiled** and ceremonially unclean.

Their **bread** is **for their hunger only** since they will not be **coming** to worship at the Temple, **the Lord's house** in Jerusalem. They will be so far removed from their home place of worship, scattered among the pagan nations that surround them.

Removed from the Yearly Pilgrimage Feasts

Not only are God's people removed from their land and the Temple worship in Jerusalem, but of course they can no longer attend the **three nationwide festivals**, especially the Feast of Tabernacles.

9:5 | What will you do on the day of the appointed festival, and on the day of the feast of the LORD?

Though northern Israel had given themselves to the worship of the golden calves, they also thought themselves to be faithful to Yahweh. God says, "I'm taking you far away from your homeland, and you will not be able to celebrate your pilgrimages," specifically, the Feast of Tabernacles (*cf* Lev 23:39–43, where it is twice called a "feast of Yahweh").

Removed from their Homes

Israel would lose their land, their Temple, their festivals, and obviously, they would also lose their homes when the Assyrian military would decimate them.

9:6 | For behold, they are going away from destruction; but Egypt shall gather them; Memphis shall bury them. Nettles shall possess their precious things of silver; thorns shall be in their tents.

The people of the northern kingdom are trying to **get away from destruction**, running away from the Assyrians, but they cannot ultimately escape.

The land of Egypt that God took them out of, many will now return to as refugees. The **city of Memphis, the ancient capital of Lower Egypt**⁵ is said to bury them. Literally, some will die there instead of in Israel.

They will be taken captive, never again to return home. While they are gone, **nettles** and **thorns** will overtake their **precious** possessions. The land will overgrow their tents. Their homes and cities will become desolate habitations – ghost towns.

Isn't it amazing how people are willing to risk everything for their sin? Marriage, home, reputation, their relationship with God, their jobs – so much is at stake, yet they

⁵ Lange & Schaff, et. el, *Hosea*, 76

are willing to lose it all. This is why God brings discipline into our lives. It is so important that we respond to God's chastening love. God's motive is to give us a satisfied soul in him. Idols can never satisfy. If God sends pain through discipline, it is only for our good. He is merciful in taking away our idols in order to give us the very best of himself.

A LOSS OF SPIRITUAL SIGHT (9:7-9)

Sin steals our joy and remove God's protection, but it also blinds us from seeing God and hearing his voice. He wants to reveal the beauty of his presence to us, but idols will steal our sight every time.

Blind to God's Word

9:7-8 | The days of punishment have come; the days of recompense have come; Israel shall know it. The prophet is a fool; the man of the Spirit is mad, because of your great iniquity and great hatred. ⁸The prophet is the watchman of Ephraim with my God; yet a fowler's snare is on all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God.

God's people are blind to **his presence, his Word, his prophets, and their own sin**. They are blind to God's Word as now, the prophet (**the man of the Spirit**) is a **madman** (9:7). God's prophets are men of the **Spirit**. They speak the message from the Yahweh's Spirit, the Holy Spirit. We must understand that the lost person has a sinful nature that is hostile and **hateful** to God.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:14).

The lost person is blind to the Gospel. **"The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ"** (2 Cor 4:4).

Blind to Their Own Sin

Now Hosea reveals how northern Israel was blinded by idols in the first place: they were introduced to idolatry way back during the book of Judges in Gibeah.

9:9 | They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah: he will remember their iniquity; he will punish their sins.

To say the **"days of Gibeah"** is to say "the days of the judges." This is referring to Judges 19-21, in which the most depraved act in Israel took place. This was the time when "everyone did that which was right in their own eyes." And truly it was the most depraved time. When you give yourself to sin, you lose your conscience. You lose your ability of spiritual sight. You can't hear God's voice!

A LOSS OF YOUR LIVELIHOOD (9:10-14)

We now turn again to a familiar theme: sin will take away all that makes life good: it steals our worship, our family, and our financial stability and so much more.

Loss of Worship (9:10)

God calls us from our mother's womb. There is that general call of the Gospel that goes into all the world. God called Israel to come to him. But when they gave themselves to sin and rejected him, they lost the possibility of repenting and worshipping God. He gave them over to their idols.

9:10a | Like grapes in the wilderness, I found Israel. Like the first fruit on the fig tree in its first season, I saw your fathers....

God delighted in finding Israel in the time of the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His love was so great, he describes himself as a desert person, like a nomadic shepherd, who delights in finding **grapes in the wilderness**. When God **found Israel** in his youth, he took special pride and joy in his people. God delighted the patriarchs (**fathers**): Abraham, Isaac and Jacob like a desert person delights in the **first fruit on the fig tree in its first season**. What a joy to know the delight of God over our souls (Zech 3:17). He loves us.

Yet Yahweh's delight turns to dismay and discipline at the apostasy of Israel.

9:10b | ... But they came to Baal-peor and consecrated themselves to the thing of shame, and became detestable like the thing they loved.

They worshipped the Baal god at the city of Peor, renamed **Baal-peor** where 24,000 of God's people died of a plague that God sent as a result of their deviant worship. **Baal-peor** holds a prominent place in Israel's geography of **shame** (Num 25:1-5; Deut 4:4; Psa 106:28; cf Josh 22:17).⁶ It was here that the people coming out of Egypt were introduced to the **cultic rituals of fornication in Baal worship** for the first time.

The prophet Balaam has been hired to curse Israel, but instead pronounces a blessing over them. According to the account in Numbers 25, the Israelites, begin to engage in Baal worship, a part of which was to fornicate with the Moabite women. A plague is sent from the Lord and 24,000 die.

Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, with a desire to stop this idolatry, rises up with a spear, follows a Baal-worshipping Israelite man into a tent and thrusts the spear through both the man and woman, who were evidently fornicating to the idol Baal. Finally, after 24,000 dead, the plague stops.

Why such destruction? The Israelites had become **detestable like the thing they loved** (Baal, the fertility god which included the worship of money and pornography). Now in their later history, they are losing everything because of it.

YOU BECOME WHAT YOU WORSHIP

The saddest truth about idolatry, is that we can become **detestable like the thing we love**. You become what you worship. Whatever we esteem in our hearts, we begin to bear that image in our souls and in our lives. Greg Beale said his book *We Become What We Worship*:

⁶ Hubbard, 174-175.

What people revere, they resemble, either for ruin or for restoration.⁷ – Greg Beale

The is the paradigm of worship. We become what we worship. Baal and all idols are worthless. When you worship worthless things, you become worthless. You lose everything. It's like Paul said in Romans 1:25,

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen (Rom 1:25).

Loss of Family (9:11-13)

The loss that sin brings will eventually extend to your family.

9:11-13 | Ephraim's glory shall fly away like a bird— no birth, no pregnancy, no conception! ¹² Even if they bring up children, I will bereave them till none is left. Woe to them when I depart from them! ¹³ Ephraim, as I have seen, was like a young palm planted in a meadow; but Ephraim must lead his children out to slaughter.

WAR IS COMING

Israel's idolatry results in the loss of their children. Israel's **glory** is his **children** (9:12a). Children bring a special glory: respect, joy, financial prosperity if they are brought up to work hard. But all this glory will **fly away like a bird with no birth, no pregnancy, and no conception** (9:11b). In other words, the prophet is predicting a sudden end to the happy and prosperous life enjoyed by the people of the northern kingdom. Remember the book of Hosea is written during a time of great financial prosperity and material comfort. They were having families as large as they wanted. The warning God gives through Hosea seems so far from possible. God says the **children** brought up in northern Israel will be **bereaved** (taken away in death) from their parents in some cases **till none is left**. How might this happen? Primarily through **war** with Assyria. This sense of safety and prosperity can be taken away fairly quickly. The love and legacy they have in their families can be snatched away.

At one time Israel's youth had so much potential, like **a young palm planted in a meadow**. But now it is the citizens of northern Israel that are **leading their children out to slaughter** (9:13). How are they leading their children to slaughter?

(1) Through the Baal cult. The mothers and fathers are offering their sons and daughters as human sacrifices like the pagans. (2) Through war with Assyria.

Today the war is spiritual (Eph 6:11-12ff). Our children's souls are at stake. We must lead our kids in holiness, kindness, love, and conviction. We need to see our children truly follow Christ. Going to church is not enough.

Loss of Financial Stability (9:14)

Sin promises so much. It give a false sense of security, especially when it comes to finances. Northern Israel was experiencing unprecedented prosperity at the time of the

⁷ G. K. Beale. *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), 16.

prophet Hosea. But the prophet prays for God to take away this false security from them. What is Hosea's prayer? What Hosea prays for is not the march of ravaging armies or the swinging of their swords but the cessation of birth and infant nurture. Their financial prosperity was about to be ripped away.

9:14 | Give them, O Lord— what will you give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.

Hosea's prayer was: Lord don't allow them to bare children. The very sign of prosperity was to have a big family. Now they would be left with barren mothers who could not nurse their babies. This was indicative of the horrible loss of their entire livelihood. Can you testify that sin will wipe you out emotionally, physically, and spiritually, and financially? It will strip you of your livelihood. Can anyone hear testify that if you are in Christ, that he can "restore the years that the locusts have eaten"? (Joel 2:25).

A LOSS OF GOD'S BLESSING (9:15-17)

The entire nation is being put into captivity. The curses of unbelief are being placed upon the people. From the very beginning of the founding of Israel as a nation, there were warnings that clearly outlined the blessings and cursings of God's covenant (Deut 28-29). Trust in Yahweh, and be blessed. Forsake him, and you lose everything. That's essentially the summary.

The Blessing of God's Love Removed (9:15)

The people have rejected God, so he agrees to withdraw his divine and everlasting love with a divorce decree.

9:15 | Every evil of theirs is in Gilgal; there I began to hate them [metaphor for divorce]. Because of the wickedness of their deeds. I will drive them out of my house. I will love them no more; all their princes are rebels.

Gilgal is where they rejected God as King and chose Saul. If you reject God's love, all that is left is God's wrath, and righteous hatred and indignation. **Hate**? But isn't it true that "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8)? God's love is spurned by Israel in exchange for idols. God's love now ends in some sense, says Hosea, not because God has ceased to love but because his love has been rejected.⁸ It is also important to consider that the word **hate** here is being used as a metaphor for divorce (Deut 24:3).

God explains when and where he began to consider divorcing his people: **in Gilgal** they rejected God as King and chose Saul (1 Sam 15:12-26).

Yet even in this warning God has a pattern of mercy. He threatens divorce so that they will repent and turn back to him. We see this right here in a couple more chapters:

How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? ...My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. ⁹I will not carry out my fierce

⁸ Beeby. *Grace Abounding: Hosea*, 124.

anger, nor will I devastate Ephraim again. For I am God, and not a man—the Holy One among you. I will not come against their cities (11:8-9).

This pattern exists, Yahweh says, because “I am God, and not a man,” that is, God’s patience is a chief distinction between God and man. The book itself closes with a climax of God’s solution to Israel’s apostasy.

I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them (14:4).

They deserve hate, but God will give them love. God is saying: don’t pass up my love!

The Blessing of God’s Provision Removed (9:16a)

When a believer backslides, not only do they lose the experience of God’s love but also his provision. Everything financially may begin to dry up.

9:16a | Ephraim is stricken [*blighted, withered*]; their root is dried up. They shall bear no fruit.

Don’t you know that every blessing and good “gift is from above and comes from the Father of lights” (Jas 1:17)? Forsake him, and he may remove your provision.

The Blessing of God’s Seed Removed (9:16b)

Assyria was going to wipe Northern Israel out, and war means a great loss of children.

9:16b | Even though they give birth, I will put their beloved children to death.

What does this mean? It means that the Lord will allow the foreign armies to invade. Children will die in the Israel – Assyria will have no mercy. Both parents and their **beloved children** will be **put to death by the Assyrian soldiers**. God says, **I will put them to death**, because he is the Sovereign who sends the armies.

But understand, God did not order things this way. God desires “all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4).

Israel chose to leave their children unprotected by choosing sin over God. Dear saints, don’t think like your old life. You only thought of yourself. Married people, think of how important your marriage is to the testimony of the church and to your children. Work hard to give your children a godly environment where the Spirit of God is at work.

The Blessing of a Good Testimony Removed (9:17)

Instead of Israel proclaiming the good news to the nations, they are wanderers among the nations. They are the refugees!

9:17 | My God will reject them because they have not listened to him; they shall be wanderers among the nations.

The prophecy of Deuteronomy 28:65’s curses had comes to pass:

And among these nations you shall find no respite, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot, but the Lord will give you there a trembling heart and failing eyes and a languishing soul (Deut 28:65).

God rejects them (at least temporarily) since **they have not listened** to his Word and his prophets. No longer do backslidden believers give light to the nations. Instead they are “**wanderers**” among the nations.

3. SIN'S DEFEAT (Col 2:14)

We know in the New Testament that sin is defeated. Look what Jesus did for you on the cross!

God made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross (Col 2:14).

The reason that sin is so odious, ultimately is because it steals from God's glory. God created us for his glory. And Christ came into the world to “**destroy the works of the devil**” (1 Jn 3:8). He came to defeat sin.

Hosea 9 is not the end of the story for northern Israel. Jesus comes into the world and defeats sin on the cross. He specifically goes after northern Israel.

Jesus comes in the New Testament to rescue those remaining from the northern ten tribes of Samaria. One of the great stories is the Samaritan woman. She is the leftover of the northern kingdom. What happens? Jesus confronts her sins, and she tells her whole village about Christ. The ultimate solution to the great mess of Hosea's time is solved by the Messiah.

This northern Israelite woman, like a New Testament version of Gomer: a woman who had five husbands is redeemed by Jesus. She proclaims him as Messiah. What does she do? She goes and tells the whole village who Jesus is!

Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did” (Jn 4:39).

Conclusion

Sin is defeated. Death is dead. Christ has won. God kept his promises not only to the Samaritans of Northern Israel, but to all of us today. Christ has defeated sin! He is our Living Hope.