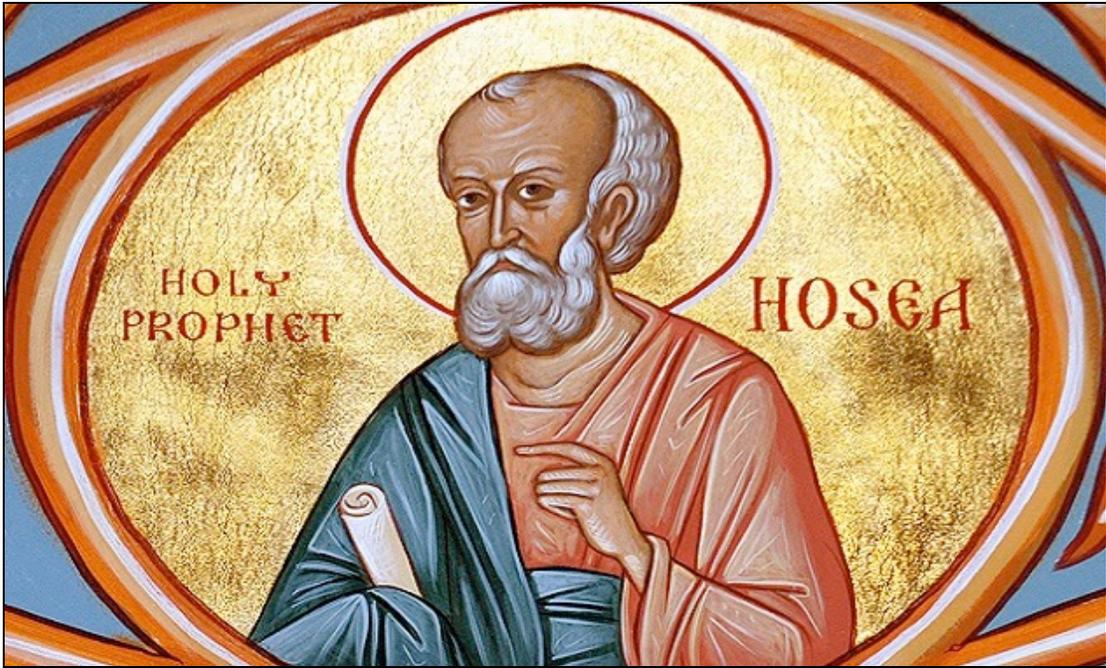


# HOSEA 8-10: REAPING WHAT THEY SOWED



T. M. MOORE

*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

*Hosea 8-10: Reaping What They Sowed*

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## Hosea 8-10: Reaping What They Sowed

The horrors and sadness that were about to be unleashed against the people of Israel were nothing more the result of their own sinful choices.

Israel broke covenant with God, rejecting His Law and turning to pagan ways. Now they would learn what a foolhardy decision this had been. God loved His people, but He would not abide their wallowing in pagan ways. A day of restoration would come, but only after judgment had taken its toll.

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We hope you find this study of Hosea instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

T. M. Moore, Principal  
[tmmoore@ailbe.org](mailto:tmmoore@ailbe.org)

## 1 Self-Made

*Week 6, Monday: Know God? No God.*

The people of Israel protested Hosea's message of judgment, insisting that they "know" God. But Hosea declared that the god they "know" is no god at all. They have rejected the true God and His covenant and Law, and now they must bear the consequences of their self-made religion.

*Read Hosea 8*

*Meditate on Hosea 8.1-6*

1. Israel's major problem is outlined in verses 4-6. What began with Jeroboam I as a matter of political expediency had become a way of life, with the people devoting themselves to all manner of pagan "no-gods" (v. 6). These pagan idols, made of silver and gold, were not the deities themselves, but symbols of them – icons representing some aspect of the *good life* they sought, whether abundant crops, fertile wombs, plenteous rain, protection from enemies, and so forth. How do non-Christians today envision the good life? What icons and symbols do they embrace as representing this? What forms does devotion to those icons take?
2. At the same time, the people insisted to Hosea that they "know God." What do they seem to have meant by this? Is mere formality a problem in churches today? Explain. Can we truly know the Lord and be devoted to no-gods at the same time?
3. Transgressing God's covenant is equated with rebelling against His Law (v. 1) and rejecting everything that is truly good (v. 3; cf. Matt. 5.17-19; Jms. 2.8-13). Is this still true today? Explain.
4. Politicians urged idols on Israel, then the idols (representing the good life) they embraced led them to appoint their politicians (v. 4). Does this have a familiar ring to it?
5. All this devotion to idols caused Israel to veer from God's holy and righteous and good Law (Rom. 7.12). How did God respond to this course of action (vv. 1, 5, 6)? Does God still do this today (Heb. 12.3-11)?

*Summary*

Israel was making-up life as it went along, accumulating idols to ensure this, that, or some other aspect of the good life for themselves. In the process, while they held on to some awareness of God, and perhaps even some forms of devotion, they gave themselves to those which were no-gods, and came under the judgment of the Lord. Let the people of God today beware.

*Closing Prayer*

Will the LORD cast off forever?  
And will He be favorable no more?  
Has His mercy ceased forever?  
Has *His* promise failed forevermore?  
Has God forgotten to be gracious?  
Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? *Selah*  
And I said, "This *is* my anguish;  
*But I will remember* the years of the right hand of the Most High."  
I will remember the works of the LORD;  
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.

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I will also meditate on all Your work,  
And talk of Your deeds.  
Your way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary;  
Who *is* so great a God as *our* God?

Psalm 77.7-13

*Observations, notes, questions:*

## 2 Sow the Wind

*Week 6, Tuesday: The fruit of bad choices*

Israel's coming calamity would be nothing more than the consequence of her own bad choices. The wages of sin were about to be paid.

*Read Hosea 8*

*Meditate on Hosea 8.7-14*

1. Meditate on the first part of verse 7. What does this mean? The Apostle Paul picks up this language in Galatians 6.7, 8. How does he employ this image?
2. What does it mean to consider the Law of God a "strange thing" (v. 12)? What would this look like in our day?
3. Foreign nations were preparing to "swallow up" Israel and everything she had. This would happen through warfare, subjugation, and captivity, and it would be the fruit of Israel's having compromised with those nations and their gods and morality. Is the Church in our day in danger of being "swallowed up" by the surrounding culture? In what ways? Why?
4. God's people are forgetful of Him (v. 14). How does this happen? How does it affect the people of God? How can believers help one another to remember the Lord and His covenant (Heb. 10.24)?
5. Hosea explained that the judgment coming upon Israel would be God remembering their sins and punishing them accordingly (v. 13). How does the punishment of Israel point forward to the coming of Christ?

*Summary*

Israel was about to receive from God only what they had invited upon themselves. They might forget Him and seek the good life by means of pagan no-gods and compromises in their morality, but God does not forget His Word (cf. Deut. 28). What He has promised, He will remember, keep, and fulfill, and this remains as true today as it was for Israel in Hosea's day.

*Closing Prayer*

Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD;  
Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me.  
For innumerable evils have surrounded me;  
My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up;  
They are more than the hairs of my head;  
Therefore my heart fails me.  
Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me;  
O LORD, make haste to help me!  
Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion  
Who seek to destroy my life;  
Let them be driven backward and brought to dishonor  
Who wish me evil.  
Let them be confounded because of their shame,  
Who say to me, "Aha, aha!"  
Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;

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Let such as love Your salvation say continually,  
“The LORD be magnified!”

Psalm 40.11-16

*Observations, notes, questions:*

### 3 Exile to Assyria

*Week 6, Wednesday: Back to slavery*

The name *Egypt* held ominous and frightening metaphors for the people of Israel. Egypt was the place of enslavement, oppression, and death. But Israel had become enslaved to the no-gods and ways of Assyria and other nations, so now He would let out their tether and lead them back to enslavement again.

*Read Hosea 9*

*Meditate on Hosea 9.1-9*

1. Meditate on Leviticus 18.24-30. Comment on the dangers of ignoring God's Law and failing to live within His covenant.
2. Apparently (v. 4), the people of Israel were still offering sacrifices to God and worshiping Him. How did He regard their worship? Why? Is there in this a general principle to guide us in worshiping God?
3. According to verses 7-9, how had the prophets of Israel failed the nation? Rather than help the people into the liberty of God's Law (Jms. 2.10-13), they had instead ensnared them (v. 8). How? Does this still happen today?
4. Hosea referred to the prophets as "watchmen." Meditate on Titus 1.5-11. What are the duties of the watchmen ("overseers") of God's churches today?
5. Assyria is the "new Egypt" for Israel. If the Church today were to fall into judgment, what would be the nature of our "Assyria"?

*Summary*

Hosea continues his message of judgment against Israel because the nation has violated God's covenant and rejected His Law. The prophets of Israel bore large responsibility for this disaster, for they were sent to watch over the flock of the Lord according to His Law. Preachers and teachers in churches today bear this same responsibility (Jms. 3.1).

*Closing Prayer*

Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;  
And attend to the voice of my supplications.  
In the day of my trouble I will call upon You,  
For You will answer me.  
Among the gods *there is* none like You, O Lord;  
Nor *are there any works* like Your works.  
All nations whom You have made  
Shall come and worship before You, O Lord,  
And shall glorify Your name.  
For You *are* great, and do wondrous things;  
You alone *are* God.  
Teach me Your way, O LORD;  
I will walk in Your truth;  
Unite my heart to fear Your name.  
I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,  
And I will glorify Your name forevermore.

*Hosea 8-10: Reaping What They Sowed*

Psalm 86.6-12

*Observations, notes, questions:*

## 4 You Become What You Love

*Week 6, Thursday: No glory, no children*

Israel sought the favor of pagan no-gods, and surrendered to the horrible practices and wicked ways those false deities prescribed. She forfeited both her glory and her children; therefore, her future is one of hopelessness, misery, and despair.

*Read Hosea 9*

*Meditate on Hosea 9.10-17*

1. Meditate on verse 10, especially the last clause: “They became an abomination like the thing they loved.” How could God tell what they loved? How can we tell today what people love?
2. Why is it inevitable that we become like that which we love? Israel loved the ways of pagan no-gods rather than the ways of God, marked out in His Law. By rejecting the Law and embracing idols, they showed the devotion of their hearts. Can we neglect the Law of God today and expect to love Him as He commands (Matthew 22.34-40)? What does someone look like who is *not* neglecting the Law of God (cf. Ps. 1; Ps. 119.9-11, 112)?
3. Israel had “sown” here children to the pagan no-god, Molech, by offering children as sacrifices on Molech’s altar. They did this to earn the favor of this heinous no-god – an act of convenience which, at the expense of temporary pain – the sacrifice of a child – was supposed to bring wellbeing on the nation. We don’t sacrifice children to Molech these days. But in what ways do people “sacrifice” their children on the “altars” of paganism, so that they are “swallowed” by pagan culture and ways? Why do they do this? What do they expect to gain from this?
4. When God “found” Israel (v. 10) she was a people fraught with the promise of plenty. What causes the glory of God to “fly away” (v. 11) from someone, or from a church?
5. Israel sacrificed her children, so God would give them children no more (vv. 11-14). They forfeited fruitfulness in the Lord, so He would make them forever unfruitful (vv. 15, 16). The “went away to Baal Peor” (v. 10), so God will “cast them away” forever. Sow the wind, reap the whirlwind. Love wickedness, suffer its consequences. How might Hosea preach this message to churches today? What applications of these ideas would he call us to make?

*Summary*

The heart is the heart of the matter in the life of faith: We become what we love (Prov. 4.23). Israel had let her heart go out to paganism, rather than to God, Who had redeemed and brought her to Himself. Desire for pagan no-gods led to love of pagan ways, even at the sacrifice of moral decency and innocent children. You cannot glorify God and follow pagan ways, no matter how hard you try. God Himself will not permit it.

*Closing Prayer*

You have brought a vine out of Egypt;  
You have cast out the nations, and planted it.  
You prepared *room* for it,  
And caused it to take deep root,  
And it filled the land.  
The hills were covered with its shadow,  
And the mighty cedars with its boughs.

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She sent out her boughs to the Sea,  
And her branches to the River.  
Why have You broken down her hedges,  
So that all who pass by the way pluck her *fruit*?  
The boar out of the woods uproots it,  
And the wild beast of the field devours it.  
Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts;  
Look down from heaven and see,  
And visit this vine  
And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted,  
And the branch *that* You made strong for Yourself.  
*It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down;  
They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.  
Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand,  
Upon the son of man *whom* You made strong for Yourself.  
Then we will not turn back from You;  
Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.

Psalm 80.8-18

*Observations, notes, questions:*

## 5 Ashamed

*Week 6, Friday: Days of shame coming*

The more God blessed Israel, the more she credited pagan no-gods for her bounty, and the more she lost her heart to idols. Now God would show His power against false gods, leaving His people to languish in shame – the fruit of her own sinful choices.

*Read Hosea 10*

*Meditate on Hosea 10.1-6*

1. Meditate on verse 1. Do you think we're as careful as we should be to ascribe to God the praise and thanks due Him for all our daily blessings and bounty? Explain.
2. A "divided" heart is a "guilty" heart, and a guilty heart can expect the corrective discipline of God (Heb. 12.3-11). How can we guard ourselves against a divided heart?
3. Verse 3 has a comic/tragic sense to it. How do you understand this verse? How would you state this verse in terms relevant to our situation today?
4. Meditate on verse 4: Good intentions and solemn promises to "do better" are like weeds in the garden. We won't bear any lasting fruit to the Lord unless we are rooted and grounded in *His* covenant, and the soil of our hearts is richly sown with His Law and Word. Jesus may have had this verse in mind as He spoke the parable of the soils (Mk. 4.1-20). Explain.
5. What is the opposite of shame (v. 5, last phrase)? What does it mean to "receive shame" and to "be ashamed" (v. 6)? Why was this appropriate for Israel?

*Summary*

Israel's choices, rather than leading to freedom, glory, and fruitfulness in the Lord, would result in captivity and shame. A divided heart led to a destroyed nation. Israel's "own counsel" (v. 6) was her undoing. It has always been thus (Prov. 14.12).

*Closing Prayer*

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

While I live I will praise the LORD;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

Do not put your trust in princes,

Nor in a son of man, in whom *there is* no help.

His spirit departs, he returns to his earth;

In that very day his plans perish.

Happy *is he* who *has* the God of Jacob for his help,

Whose hope *is* in the LORD his God,

Who made heaven and earth,

The sea, and all that *is* in them;

Who keeps truth forever,

Who executes justice for the oppressed,

Who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners.

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The LORD opens *the eyes of* the blind;  
The LORD raises those who are bowed down;  
The LORD loves the righteous.  
The LORD watches over the strangers;  
He relieves the fatherless and widow;  
But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.  
The LORD shall reign forever—  
Your God, O Zion, to all generations.  
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 146

*Observations, notes, questions:*

## 6 God's Desire

*Week 6, Saturday: Israel's judgment was God's doing*

God wanted to be very clear: Israel's plight was not because her politicians had failed her, or her no-gods didn't come through as hoped. God was moving against her, according to His promise and will. He was chastening and binding her, and she – and Judah – needed to be very clear about this.

*Read Hosea 10*

*Meditate on Hosea 10.7-11*

1. Kings and leaders of all kinds are merely agents of the Lord's will. How can you see this in verses 7-10, as well as in all our study of Hosea thus far? Is this still true today?
2. "When" is it God's "desire" to "chasten" His people (v. 10)? How should we expect to see this in our day? Does coming under the chastening hand of God mean, for the Christian, that He is finished with us? Why not?
3. Verse 11 is a powerful imagery of slavery: reduced to a beast-like status and made to do the bidding of others. How is this a good way of thinking about all sin?
4. What value is there for Christians today in studying a prophet like Hosea?
5. What primary lessons from Hosea are beginning to take shape in your own thinking?

*Summary*

God brings His people to chastening, not because He despises them, but because He loves them, and He longs to see them forsake their foolish ways and return to Him. This can be easy to lose sight of in the midst of harsh prophetic words. But we must always remember that God is acting according to His promises and love for His people, whatever He does. Only thus will we learn to trust and love Him as we should.

*Closing Prayer*

*Make haste, O God, to deliver me!*  
Make haste to help me, O LORD!  
Let them be ashamed and confounded  
Who seek my life;  
Let them be turned back and confused  
Who desire my hurt.  
Let them be turned back because of their shame,  
Who say, "Aha, aha!"  
Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;  
And let those who love Your salvation say continually,  
"Let God be magnified!"  
But I *am* poor and needy;  
Make haste to me, O God!  
You *are* my help and my deliverer;  
O LORD, do not delay.

Psalm 70

*Hosea 8-10: Reaping What They Sowed*

*Observations, notes, questions:*

## 7 Sow a New Crop

*Week 6, Sunday: Sow differently to reap differently*

God counsels His people to seek Him and sow a new way of life for the generations to come. Here, in the face of imminent judgment, is a message of hope and a promise of restoration.

*Read Hosea 10*

*Meditate on Hosea 10.12-15*

1. Summarize all that Israel had “sowed” to bring God’s judgment upon the nation (v. 13). Be as specific as you can from what we’ve seen thus far.
2. Trusting in men rather than God was Israel’s big mistake (v. 13). How can we know when we are trusting in men rather than God? When our churches are doing so?
3. Hosea depicts God as very active in history, culture, and even international affairs. Is this still true? Explain.
4. Mediate on verse 12. What was God promising His people on the other side of judgment? Why did He bother to do so? The generation of Hosea’s day would not realize this promise in their lifetimes. What does this teach us about how we must think about the promises of the Lord?
5. “Sow”, “break up”, and “seek”: Explain what each of these verbs requires of us today.

*Summary*

God is God, and He will defend His honor by bringing judgment to bear against those who dishonor Him. But He will fulfill His promises, precisely as He has promised, in His way and time. Repentance must begin even before judgment falls, for thus we put ourselves in line to enjoy the promised restoration of the Lord.

*Closing Prayer*

O God, You have cast us off;  
You have broken us down;  
You have been displeased;  
Oh, restore us again!  
You have made the earth tremble;  
You have broken it;  
Heal its breaches, for it is shaking.  
You have shown Your people hard things;  
You have made us drink the wine of confusion.  
You have given a banner to those who fear You,  
That it may be displayed because of the truth. *Selah*  
That Your beloved may be delivered,  
Save *with* Your right hand, and hear me.

Psalm 60.1-5

*Observations, notes, questions:*

*Hosea 8-10: Reaping What They Sowed*

*Questions for discussion*

1. Why is the book of Hosea relevant to Christians today?
2. Explain the difference between the heart and the mind. What role does each play in the life of faith? How had the people of Israel failed to guard their minds and hearts? What can we learn from their mistakes?
3. What seem to be the most important message from Hosea for church leaders in our day? Why?
4. What are the most important messages for church members from Hosea? Why?
5. What's the most important idea or lesson you take away from Hosea 8-10?

*Glory to Glory*

As we look into the mirror of Scripture, we want to see God's glory and our own condition before Him. Then, yielding to the Spirit to teach, convict, and transform us, we can grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Did you see yourself in any ways in Hosea 8-10?

What do you learn about God and His glory from these chapters?

What new directions or "next steps" is the Spirit leading you to take?

*Prayer:*

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Thank you.