

## **HOSEA**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Hosea chapter 7 as we continue our study through the Word of God. And keep in mind that Hosea is speaking to the Northern Kingdom of Israel and He is warning them of the coming judgment of God because of their wicked ways and their refusal to repent and get right with God. In fact, Hosea is speaking of their spiritual death which will lead to their captivity by the Assyrians.

But through this all we also see God calling out to them to repent of their ways, to return to Him so that this judgment will not come upon them. But they refused to listen and captivity was coming. With that said let's begin reading in Hosea chapter 7 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

### **HOSEA 7**

#### **VERSES 1-3**

1. As this chapter opens up we see the heart of God to heal the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He wanted to restore the people. But they had turned so far from God that He could not heal them but had to judge them to eventually restore them.

Many Christians put themselves in that same predicament. God wants to heal them, restore them but they put themselves in sinful conditions and God will chasten them not because He hates them but loves them and wants them to return to Him. And sometimes they have to get to the end of themselves before they will look up and return and that is true here with the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

From the King to the common people wickedness filled the land and there was no concern about it. Much like we see in America today! Laws were passed back then to encourage this kind of activity, laws that were in opposition to God.

And we see that today. We see people applaud the right for women to kill their unborn babies and they call it “Pro-Choice!” Well, that is true except for the child, no one asked the child what they wanted to happen to their lives.

We see the flaunting of the homosexual, the gay lifestyle to the point that if anyone says anything against this behavior it is a hate crime! And look how fast the laws have been changed to promote gay marriage!

We see the legalization of drugs in America as well as prescription drugs that just keep people numb. And there are many other things that people are involved in and the politicians, the lawmakers are rejoicing over this. And yet, God is broken over what He sees and judgment will come, not might!

And it is interesting that they willfully forgot that the Lord not only saw their sin but He remembered their sin, or as verse 2 says, **“They are before My face.”** God is fully aware of all that is going on. All things are open and naked before Him, you can’t hide anything from the Lord!

Listen to what Asaph said in Psalm 50 regarding the wicked, those who trample over the Words of God. Beginning in verse 16 we read, **“But to the wicked God says: ‘What right have you to declare My statutes, or take My covenant in your mouth, Seeing you hate instruction and cast My words behind you? When you saw a thief, you consented with him, and have been a partaker with adulterers. You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son. These things you have done, and I kept silent; you thought that I was altogether like you; but I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes. Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God.’”** Psalm 50:16-23.

These people lived their wicked lives and they felt no conviction regarding their actions. They even thought that God condoned their sins because they were getting away with them. Make no mistake about it, God’s judgment upon the wicked is coming and all their sins will be set before them!

And for the Northern Kingdom of Israel, they lived a life of hypocrisy. They may have seemed very religious, very spiritual but they were not and as I have said, God saw their wickedness!

Listen to what God says of the Northern Kingdom of Israel as we read on, how He saw them and it was far different from how they saw themselves!

VERSES 4-7

1. Israel was inflamed with this desire, with this passion to go after idols like the coals of a freshly stoked fire, ready to bake bread. And keep in mind that leaven is symbolic of sin and the oven we might say is our passions, for many will say they are “burning with passion” or really just lust!

And here we see our passion’s burning hot towards the pursuit of evil and we place in the middle of that, the leavened dough, our sin, looking for satisfaction in our lives. And if that is what you are searching for, if that is where you are looking, you will never find it for true satisfaction is only found in Jesus!

Imagine, they thought they could walk in sin and walk with God and in the end it was her passions that devoured her. The heat that the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the people thought they could control ended up burning them as the judgment of God came upon them!

2. And when God says that “**they are all adulterers**” He is not only speaking of physical adultery, which was a problem, but also spiritual adultery as they said they loved the Lord and yet were going after other god’s!

Not only was their sexual immorality going on but the leaders were drunk with wine, we would call it alcoholism. Not much has changed, we have not learned the lessons from the Northern Kingdom of Israel and we are doing what they have done.

And think about it, when people and nations turn from God there is moral decay which eventually leads to anarchy. That is what we see in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Think about this for a minute. Between 752 B. C. and 732 B. C. they had 4 Kings assassinated, in only 12 years!

Zechariah reigned only 6 months before he was assassinated by Shallum.

Then Shallum reigned only 1 full month before he was assassinated by Menahem.

Then Menahem reigned for 10 years and he was not assassinated.

Then Pekahiah reigned, but only for 2 years before he was assassinated by Pekah.

And Pekah reigned 20 years before he was assassinated by Hoshea. And keep in mind that Pekah set up a rival government east of the Jordan River in Gilead in 752 B. C. before he assassinated Pekahiah in 740 B. C. and started ruling in Samaria before he was overthrown, assassinated in 732 B. C. (See II Kings 15).

And in the midst of this anarchy in Israel, no one is calling upon the Lord! Now wait a minute, in Hosea 5:6 we are told that they sought the Lord with their flocks and herds, so how can the Lord say that “**There is none among them who calls upon Me**”?

Because it was an empty ritual. Their hearts were far from God and thus, all that they did the Lord did not accept. You can't say that you love your wife while you are cheating on her and that is exactly what they were doing with the Lord!

#### VERSES 8-10

1. Notice the comparison here. Ephraim or the Northern Kingdom of Israel has mixed itself up with other people and thus, they are like “**cake unturned**” or “*half-baked cake.*” Think of it like a pancake. If you don't turn it over one side will be burned and the other side will be raw. Thus, it is good for nothing.

Thus, the Lord is saying don't be like a half-baked pancake but be pure, don't mix yourself up with those who will draw you away from the Lord! And that is a big deal today in Christianity. We partner with the unsaved for a good cause but does God need unsaved people to help Him out? Of course not. And in the end, it is our faith that is compromised and it is happening a lot today!

A good example of showing what can happen when you are in with a mixed multitude of people is found in Exodus 12:37-38 as the children of Israel were leaving their bondage of Egypt. God was delivering them from the world but as we see, they brought some of the world with them and it hurt them.

Starting in verse 37 of Exodus chapter 12 we are told, "**Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds - a great deal of livestock.**"

They brought non-Jews, Gentiles with them and they were a weakening element in their lives. You doubt that? In Numbers chapter 11 the people were complaining about the Manna they were eating, the bread from heaven. They wanted meat instead, dead things.

And in Numbers 11:4 we are told, "**Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: 'Who will give us meat to eat?'**"

The mixed multitude stirred the hearts of the people to move away from the Lord, to complain about the things that God had given them and to go after things that God desired them not to have, dead things! And they did not bring these Gentiles to the Lord but these Gentiles caused the children of Israel to doubt the provision of God and to move away from God!

We even see this idea of coming out in the New Testament as Paul picks up on this idea of not being mixed together with unbelievers. He said in II Corinthians 6:14-18, **“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”**

You see, they will only bring you down! Now, obviously we need to speak to unbelievers, to share Christ with them. We also have friends that are unbelievers as well as family members who are not believers. I am not saying avoid them but they can't be your close friends for what kind of advice would they give to you?

You shouldn't date or marry an unbeliever, that is a disaster. There is no such thing as date witnessing or missionary dating. And the way we need to look at this is like this. A boat is useless unless it is in the water and it does great in the water until the water gets into the boat, and then it is sunk!

The same is true for Christians, we will do fine in the world until we let the world get into us, and then we too are sunk! God wants us to be pure, and the world will not move you in that direction!

2. Now as they moved away from the Lord they didn't even realize what was happening to them, they were oblivious to it. We are told that their strength left them, they had aged quickly, judgment had come and they still refused to turn to the Lord.

Like so many today, they were oblivious to what was going on around them, what they had become. As I look at this nation and granted it was never totally a Christian nation, but as I look at the immorality that has permeated our nation I see people that just are accepting it, they no longer see it as a problem. And look at the strength of this nation, how it has deteriorated, how it has weakened!

In chapter's 13-16 of Judges we see the story of Samson. He was born to deliver the children of Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. He was a man of great potential but the lust of the flesh got in his way, he filled himself with the things of the world and distanced himself from God till finally we read in Judges 16:20 that Samson “... ‘did not know that the LORD had departed from him.’”

And the Philistines ended up capturing Samson and he was blinded, bound in chains and had to grind at the mill! In other words, Samson was blinded to his sin and it end up taking him into captivity, it bound him and every day he went around grounding that grain and this was just grinding at him.

And many Christians try to be close enough to the world and close enough to the Lord and that just does not work, you will fall! And many times, like Samson, they are living their lives not knowing that they have moved away from the Lord until they are totally in bondage to sin, blinded to what they have done, going around in circles, and the strength of the Lord has left them. If you find yourself in that condition don't do as Israel did, but return to the Lord, He is waiting!



3. Now in regards to a nation, one writer put it like this,

No nation can survive for long when it actively turns away from God. The experience of Israel shows that material prosperity is not enough to sustain a culture. Without godliness at the core, a society has to keep propping itself up with expensive yet unreliable crutches. Sooner or later, though, moral weakness will bring it down – proud and foolish to the end.

- Earl D. Radmacher; Ronald Barclay Allen; W. Wayne House,  
Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary, Hosea 7:4-7

How true that is. This nation is rotting from the inside and it will eventually permeate all of society. The church today is being pressured to accept the homosexual lifestyle and many are succumbing to this pressure. Don't mix yourself with the unsaved, they will bring you down. Share the Gospel with them but don't get entangled in their lifestyle!

#### VERSES 11-12

1. We saw in the previous verses that God said that they were like a "**cake unturned**" or "***half-baked***" and now He says that they are like a "**silly dove, without sense.**" What is that about?

If a dove has a nest with eggs or little babies and someone comes by she will act like she has a broken wing and fluttered about. She is trying to lure you away from her nest to protect her young. But in doing that she is letting you know her nest is close by and endangering her young and herself!

So how does this relate to Israel? Because Israel went to other nations for help instead of the Lord. They were fluttering towards Egypt and then towards the Assyrians but it didn't matter who they went to because the Lord said, **“Wherever they go, I will spread My net on them; I will bring them down like birds of the air; I will chastise them According to what their congregation has heard.”** Hosea 7:12.

They could not escape God by running to other nations and God is chastening them because He loves them not because He hates them. He wants to draw them back and keep them from danger.

And with the knowledge of God they had the greater responsibility, they knew what God wanted, how He was to be served. They should have known better or as the end of verse 12 says, **“I will chastise them According to what their congregation has heard.”**

The same is true for us as Christians. With greater knowledge comes greater accountability. I remember as a kid, since I was the oldest, my parents would say, “You should have known better. You are older than your brother!” That is the idea here, they should have known better and so should we as Luke 12:48 tells us, **“But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”**

VERSES 13-16

1. Israel saw their sin or I should say the consequences of their sin and instead of repenting and drawing close to God they wailed on their bed, which did nothing for them. They did not cry out to God but it almost seems like they blamed God for what was happening to them instead of looking at their own lives, their sin! Instead of crying out in repentance before God, they are just crying out.

And when you think of all that God has done for them, made them a people who were not a people, delivered them from bondage, sustained them in the wilderness, brought them into a land flowing with milk and honey, defeated their enemies, prospered them, and now they are running from Him, it makes no sense.

2. Here in verse 16 we see this “**deceitful bow**” spoken of. Obviously, a deceitful bow is not a good thing because as the arrow is shot it can go in any direction, it is not something you can trust in.

And that is how their lives were, like a deceitful bow that when shot it missed the mark that God had established. And how true that is today. The mark is perfection and outside of Christ our bow is deceitful, it will miss the mark. But as God gets a hold of our lives, He cleanses us from our sin and we hit the mark of perfection not because of us but because of Him. And the results of their actions, their failure to turn to the Lord, is bondage, the same as ours is outside of Christ!

**HOSEA 8****VERSES 1-6**

1. Keep in mind that trumpets were used to gather the people together, to call an assembly as well as preparing them for war. And the trumpet here is the Shophar. But this call is not for the Jewish people or the Northern Kingdom of Israel!

No, this call is to the Assyrians who will come down upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel like an eagle and devour them, which did happen! But how could this happen when it says in verse 2 that they will cry to God, **“My God, we know You!”** Because their actions spoke differently. If they truly knew the Lord then their life would reflect that relationship with Him but it didn't!

They were professors of God but not possessors of God! He was not the Lord of their lives. It was empty lip service they were giving Him. It is as Micah 6:8 tells us, **“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”** In other words, if you are truly walking humbly with God then it will be seen in how you treat others, how you live out your life!

And their life was the problem. You see, as much as they had some knowledge of God we truly see where their heart was really at, in total rebellion against God. You see, God said one thing and they did another.

Remember when the nation was divided into the Northern Kingdom of Israel under the leadership of Jeroboam and the Southern Kingdom of Judah under the leadership of Rehoboam. Jeroboam set up two golden calves to worship, one in Dan in the northern part of the kingdom, and the other in Bethel in the southern part of the kingdom.

And listen to what Jeroboam said to the people that he was leading. In I Kings 12:28-29 we are told, **“Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!’ And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.”** And we are told that this became a sin for the people, they got caught in this trap and they did not get out before the judgment of God came upon them!

And in verse 5 where it says, **“Your calf is rejected, O Samaria!”** Wood said that it can be literally translated, “your calf stinks.” That is what God thought about this idol they had made!

And here we see the cry of God, **“How long will it be until they attain to innocence?”** And to put it in our vernacular or our language we would say, *“When will they ever learn?”* God is going to have to destroy these idols in their lives and He does the same with us, those idols we have built and we look up to! That is what it will take to help them to learn this lesson, captivity and the destruction of these idols they held on to for their help! Keep in mind that idols are nothing more than the works of man’s hands that come from the imagination of man’s heart, which is evil. No wonder God wants us to get rid of these things!

#### VERSES 7-10

1. This idea of sowing to the wind and reaping the whirlwind is that they thought this judgment was worse than the sin that they committed. They sowed to the wind, they sinned but on return they got a twister!

Obviously that is not true. God does not give us all that we deserve, He seasons His judgment with mercy and we should be thankful for that! But it does not mean that His judgment is not devastating, we just don't get all that we deserve.

For the Northern Kingdom of Israel, their lives are empty, they are unfruitful and judgment is coming upon them like a whirlwind. If you have ever seen how destructive a tornado is, the path of debris left all of the place, that is what is going to happen to Israel as they are picked up out of their land and scattered amongst the Gentiles! This once great nation God says that He gets no pleasure from them anymore because of their wickedness.

2. Yes they tried to hire Egypt to protect them and then even King Menahem paid a huge sum of money to Pul, King of Assyria to leave them alone. And they did for a time but that was short-lived. (II Kings 15:19-20).

You don't make deals with the enemy because you will only get burned. You look to the Lord! But here Israel is likened to a wild donkey, doing her own thing, uncontrollable, and yet they will be caught and captured.

3. Keep in mind that this judgment was a chastening to draw them back to the Lord. The Lord tells us, "**Now I will gather them; And they shall sorrow a little, Because of the burden of the king of princes.**" Yes they were going into captivity but God was going to gather them once again, which He did do! The grace and mercy of God!

VERSES 11-13

1. One of the places you will find God instructing the children of Israel that they are only to worship Him and to take down the altars to the false gods when they enter the land is in Deuteronomy chapter 12. They had the information they just didn't believe it or think it was for them and thus, they ignored it.

That should be a wake-up call for us today! God has given us His Word, and for most people it is a strange thing, it contains things that they believe don't concern them. How wrong they are. In here we find the Words of eternal life for the Scriptures testify of Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life! May we hear and may we apply the Words of God and with the power of the Holy Spirit, we will see they are life-changing!

Let's look at this a little closer for a minute because what God said to the Northern Kingdom of Israel back then He is saying to us today. Notice again what verse 12 says, "**I have written for him the great things of my law.**" God Himself gave to them and to us His Word, He wrote this for us. It is as Spurgeon wrote, "This volume is the writing of the living God: each letter was penned with an Almighty finger; each word in it dropped from the everlasting lips, each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit."

He goes on to say, "If this be the Word of God, what will become of some of you who have not read it for the last month? Most people treat the Bible very politely . . . When they get home, they lay it up in a drawer till next Sunday morning; then it comes out again for a little bit of a treat and goes to chapel; that is all the poor Bible gets in the way of an airing. That is your style of entertaining this heavenly messenger. There is dust enough on some of your Bibles to write "damnation" with your fingers."

It is as Paul told Timothy regarding the Word of God, “**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**” II Timothy 3:16-17. If you want to be complete, prepared for God to use you, then be in the Word of God for it came from the lips of God, the breath of God to us!

It is sad today that so many Christians put the Word of God down but one more from Spurgeon who lifts it up as he wrote, “The Bible treats of great things, and of great things only. There is nothing in this Bible which is unimportant. Every verse in it has a solemn meaning, and if we have not found it out yet, we hope yet to do it.” May we not forget that!

2. They were living in rebellion against God and yet offering sacrifices to God and He says that He will not accept them. You see, God is not looking for sacrifices, He is looking for obedience. Never forget that fact.

King Saul did, he forgot God and disobeyed God and it brought destruction upon his life. King Saul was to wipe out all of the Amalekites but he held back and then when he was confronted by the prophet Samuel he lied and tried to justify his actions or non-actions.

And in I Samuel 15:22-23 we are told, “**Then Samuel said: ‘Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he also has rejected you from being king.’**”



Did you notice what God likens rebellion to and stubbornness! He likens it to witchcraft and idolatry! We don't tend to think of those things that way. We use words like the person is "strong-willed." No, they are in rebellion against God and stubborn, and God says that what they are doing is nothing more and nothing less than witchcraft and idolatry! Why is God so hard? Because He does not want us playing church and doing all those empty religious activities but being obedient to Him.

3. One more point before we move on and it deals with what God had done in their lives to free them and what they did to place themselves in bondage once again. You see, God freed them from, Egypt, a place of bondage and their sin has brought them right back into it. And for us, Egypt is a type of the world and if you are living in rebellion against God, living in sin, you are in Egypt, the world, and you are in bondage to it, you are not free! It is as Jesus said in John 8:34-36, "... 'Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.'"

#### VERSE 14

1. A building without God is just a building. A person without God is just a body. It is empty, it is lifeless and God is saying that about the Northern Kingdom of Israel because "Israel has forgotten his Maker."

But not just the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the Southern Kingdom of Judah was trusting in their fortified cities but God will also bring His judgment upon them because they too turned from Him!

**HOSEA 9****VERSES 1-4**

1. It seems that during this time things were not that bad, they were enjoying the good life and thus, saw no need to repent and return to the Lord. And this good life included the worship of these idols and thus, they were living a life of spiritual adultery. But God was not going let them continue down that path.

God was going to shut down their food supply, judgment would come upon them. Yes, they were partying all night long, living life to the fullest, and because they have forsaken the Lord, He is going to forsake them.

And make no mistake about it, God wants to bless us with good things. They were living in the land of Promise and they lived to please themselves instead of the Lord. And we need to understand as well that if we turn from Him we will partake of the pig slop the world has for us. And that is what the world has for us. It may taste good for a time but there will come a time when it won't satisfy any longer.

And it does seem so obvious what we should do and yet we think if we put a few spices on the pig slop, it won't be so bad. Sorry, that is not for me. I want you to taste and see that the Lord is good, and once you do, you will never go back to the pig slop!

Now, what they offer to the Lord won't be accepted by Him and because of the food shortage, they will eat it themselves, there won't be anything to give to the Lord. You see, they have rejected the bread of life and now they are partaking of food that will leave them to hunger again.

VERSES 5-9

1. All the god's they were worshiping, all the idols they had and yet, what were they going to do when they are taken away captive? You see, what god's will you call upon? No one will help you and the land of your possession will be barren, uninhabited.

2. Now in verse 7 when it says that "**The prophet is a fool, The spiritual man is insane, Because of the greatness of your iniquity and great enmity**" they are speaking of Hosea. They thought he was crazy. They were living the good life, things were going well and now he is talking about judgment? It is as Boice commented, "They said in effect, 'Who in his right mind would prophesy a judgment like this when we are in the midst of such a bountiful harvest, in itself a proof of God's blessing?'"

But like today, judgment is coming because of the sin of the people and it doesn't matter if they agree with it or not. Yes they think we are crazy when we speak of the judgment of God just as they did with Hosea, but in the end judgment did come upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel just as the Lord spoke through Hosea. And His judgment is coming again as His Word tells us. You see, God is the righteous judge and He has been patient, He has been longsuffering but His judgment is about to be poured out!

3. Now if you don't think they were that bad then God must have been wrong in judging them! That is not correct and Hosea tells us how bad they were. You see, Ephraim was to be a watchman for the nation, protecting them from any danger, but they failed in their position and the nation was captured because of their sin. How bad were they? Worse than the days of Gibeah!

In the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of Judges we see a Levite who went after his concubine who had run away to her father's house. And his father-in-law was thankful he came after her and encouraged the man to stay another day, which lasted four days.

And on the fifth day, as evening had come, the man finally left with his concubine. As they journeyed that evening they came to Jebus, later to be called Jerusalem. And his servant wanted to stay there for it was dangerous to travel at night. But the Levite wanted to go on, he wanted to go to a place where there were fellow Jews, so they went to Gibeah.

And as they arrived at Gibeah, ready to sleep out in the street, an old man invited them to stay with him, for it was dangerous to sleep out in the open. And in Judges 19:22-30, we read what transpired, **“As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house and beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, ‘Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him carnally!’ But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, ‘No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act so wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage. Look, here is my virgin daughter and the man's concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!’ But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go. Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, till it was light. When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen at the door of the house with her hands on the threshold. And he said to her, ‘Get up and let us be going.’ But there was no**

**answer. So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place. When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel. And so it was that all who saw it said, ‘No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, take counsel, and speak up!’”**

What a horrible, horrible story. But that is not the issue, don't miss the point. God is saying that Israel is far worse than the people of Gibeah who did this monstrous act to this woman! That is how bad they had become as they departed from the Lord and that is why judgment was coming, the judgment of God!

#### VERSES 10-14

1. God says that He remembers Israel and how they were faithful to Him. They were like grapes in the wilderness or the firstfruits on the fig tree, an unexpected blessing you might say. And as fruitful as God's people were, they were not fruitful any longer!

And the reason that they are not fruitful any longer is their sin, their spiritual adultery that caused them to get into all kinds of wicked practices. And the Lord likens what they are doing now to what happened in Baal Peor in Numbers 25.

This was the place where the children of Israel were engaged in sexual immorality with the women of Moab and the Midianite women which brought the judgment of God upon them and they did not learn the lesson, they are once again involved in these sins.

And God's judgment was coming upon them. They started out in a beautiful land but it will be left desolate. Their birth rates will drop, they will be taken into captivity, and all they have will fly away as quickly as a bird because of their impurity! God loved them, reached out to them, and they rejected Him. Now the Lord is giving them what they want, life without Him!

They did not want the Lord so the Lord is going to drive them out of the land, they are going into captivity. They had freedom in the Lord but apart from Him there is no freedom!

#### VERSES 15-17

1. As we saw back in Hosea 4:15, God despised the city of Gilgal because it had become the center of Idolatry in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In Hosea 12:11 we are also told, "**Though Gilead has idols - Surely they are vanity - Though they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal, Indeed their altars shall be heaps in the furrows of the field.**"

This place which once was where the prophets of God were trained under the prophets Elijah and Elisha, II Kings 2:1 and II Kings 4:38, had now become a center of false worship. Thus, God is going to drive them out of His house, the land that God had given to them. In a sense He was evicting them!

And all their sexual promiscuity that brought about children, God says that He is going to close their wombs, they would not bear children because it was really the Lord who opened their womb and gave them children, not these false gods as they found out!

Thus, "**My God will cast them away, Because they did not obey Him; And they shall be wanderers among the nations.**" Hosea 9:17. And that is exactly what happened because they did not obey the Lord!

This lesson is for us as well, that we need to not only listen to the Lord but obey what He is telling us. Remember what Jesus said to the 7 churches in Asia Minor in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. In Revelation 3:22 we are told, **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”**

Why did the Lord repeat this 7 times in these letters? I think He is trying to tell us something! In other words, hear and obey the Words of God and you are on the right path, the path that God wants you on, and there is no other place you would want to be! As James said, **“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”** James 1:22.