

# Hosea

## Chapter 9

**The LORD Will Punish Israel 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. 2 Threshing floor and wine vat shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail them. 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. 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. 5 What will you do on the day of the appointed festival, and on the day of the feast of the LORD? 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. 7 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. 8 The 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. 9 They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah: he will remember their iniquity; he will punish their sins. 10 Like grapes in the wilderness, I found Israel. Like the first fruit on the fig tree in its first season, I saw your fathers. But they came to Baal-peor and consecrated themselves to the thing of shame, and became detestable like the thing they loved. 11 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 pal planted in a meadow; but Ephraim must lead his children out to slaughter. 14 Give them, O LORD—what will you give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. 15 Every evil of theirs is in Gilgal; there I began to hate them. 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. 16 Ephraim is stricken; their root is dried up; they shall bear no fruit. Even though they give birth, I will put their beloved children to death. 17 My God will reject them because they have not listened to him; they shall be wanderers among the nations.**

**9:1–9** Hosea speaks. (TLSB)

**9:1** This verse begins a section that was probably spoken at a harvest festival, such as the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:33–43; Dt 16:13–15). (CSB)

*exult not.* Given the seriousness of the warnings, this was no time for making merry. (TLSB)

*prostitute's wages.* Not to be taken literally, but in the sense of spiritual adultery. (CSB)

*on all threshing floors.* Since the threshing floor at threshing time was a man's world—the threshers stayed there all night to protect the grain and feasted at the end of the day's labors—prostitutes were not uncommon visitors (see Ru 3:2–3 and notes). (CSB)

The large, flat, open areas where grain was threshed were also used for religious ceremonies honoring Baal. Israel was expecting “wages” from Baal for its adulterous worship, i.e., its ritual prostitution. (TLSB)

**9:2** *new wine shall fail them.* Far from receiving bounty in return for its worship of pagan idols, Israel will find the vines so bare that the grapes produce hardly any wine. (TLSB)

**9:3** *land of the Lord.* The promised land, which the Lord claimed as his own (cf. Lev 25:23; Jos 22:19; Jer 2:7; Eze 38:16; Joel 1:6). (CSB)

The same Lord who had given Israel the Promised Land was about to take back this blessing. (TLSB)

*Ephraim.* Israel, the northern kingdom. (CSB)

*Egypt ... Assyria.* Israel was threatened with exile to the lands it depended on—where the temple sacrifice could not be offered. (CSB)

*unclean.* A foreign country was unclean. What grew there was likewise unclean, because it was the product of fertility credited to pagan gods (see Eze 4:13). (CSB)

Ritually unclean, because the crops could not be grown in the Lord's land or be consecrated with the firstfruits offering (Dt 26:1–11).

**9:4–5** Living as captives in a foreign country would totally disrupt the worship rituals prescribed by the Lord. (TLSB)

*mourners' bread.. defiled.* Those who ate mourners' bread would themselves become unclean. *for their hunger only.* Defiled bread would still serve to relieve physical hunger. (TLSB)

**9:4** *mourners' bread.* Unclean, like bread in a house where there had been a death (see Nu 19:14; Dt 26:14; Jer 16:7). All who touched it became ceremonially unclean. (CSB)

Bread touched by a mourner who had been in contact with a dead body was unclean (Nu 19:11–22). (TLSB)

*not come to come to the house of the LORD.* In exile Israel would have no place (not even those places established by Jeroboam I; 1Ki 12:28–33) where she could bring sacrifices to the Lord or celebrate her religious festivals (v. 5). (CSB)

Defiled bread could not be brought into the Lord's temple.(TLSB)

**9:5** Feast of Booths, an autumn harvest festival, was an esp joyful occasion. (TLSB)

**9:6** *Egypt.* Some in Israel fled from destruction by going to Egypt (cf Jer 44:1). However, they found no lasting refuge there. (TLSB)

*Memphis.* The capital of Lower (northern) Egypt. (CSB)

Egyptian city famous for its pyramids and huge graveyard. Many expatriated Israelites were buried there. (TLSB)

*nettles...thorns.* Cf. a similar threat against Edom (Isa 34:13). (CSB)

Weeds with jagged leaves, covered with stinging hairs. (TLSB)

**9:7** *recompense.* The punishment on Israel is payback for rejecting the Lord and rebelling against His Law. (TLSB)

Reflects what many in Ephraim were saying about Hosea's prophetic warnings. (TLSB)

Hosea responds to this charge of being a fool by asserting that he, a righteous man full of God's Spirit, is at wit's end because of the people's sin and hatred. (TLSB)

**9:8** *watchman*. See Isa 56:10; Jer 6:17; Eze 3:17; 33:2–8. (CSB)

*snare ... hatred*. Israel showed only hostility toward the watchmen (the true prophets) whom God sent to warn his people of the great dangers that threatened (see Jer 1:19; 11:19; 15:10; Am 7:10–12). (CSB)

A fowler is one who hunts birds by setting traps. Hosea feels as though he is a hunted man in Ephraim. (TLSB)

*hatred*. The prophet, who by rights should have been loved for proclaiming the Lord's Word, is hated. (TLSB)

**9:9** *corrupted*. The word used of the Israelites who worshiped the golden calf (Ex 32:7; Dt 9:12; 32:5). (CSB)

*days of Gibeah*. A reference to the corrupt events of Jdg 19–21. (CSB)

Refers to the appalling sexual crime committed years earlier by some residents of Gibeah. These Benjaminites, thwarted in their attempt to rape a visiting Levite, abused the man's concubine all night until she fell dead. As a consequence, all Israel attacked the tribe of Benjamin, killing 25,000 men (Jgs 19:1-20:48). (TLSB)

*he will remember*. Sins unrepented of are remembered, as well as the accumulated sins of generations (see 13:12). (CSB)

**9:10–13** The Lord speaks. (TLSB)

**9:10** The covenant relation is traced back to the desert (see 2:14–15; 13:5; Dt 32:10). (CSB)

*grapes ... fig*. Refreshing delicacies (see Isa 28:4; Mic 7:1). The images used here (grapes in the desert, early fruit of the fig tree) beautifully convey God's delight in Israel when she, out of all the nations, committed herself to him in covenant at Sinai. (CSB)

The Lord likens Himself to a traveler in the wilderness who unexpectedly finds a vineyard. Such was His initial pleasure in the first Israelites. But that feeling changed as Israel became more and more apostate. (TLSB)

*Baal Peor*. A shortened form of Beth Baal Peor. Peor was a mountain (Dt 3:29). Baal Peor refers to the god of Peor (Nu 25:1–4) and was used interchangeably with Beth Peor, "the temple of Peor" (see Dt 3:29; 4:3, 46; Jos 13:20). Hosea refers here to the incident in Nu 25. (CSB)

Mountain in Moab, c 12 mi NE of the northern end of the Salt Sea. (TLSB)

*consecrated themselves to the thing of shame*. Refers to the episode in which Israel joined with the Moabites in worshiping Baal (Nu 25:1–3). This worship may have included child sacrifice (cf Ps 106:37–38). (TLSB)

*thing they loved.* A baneful consequence of idolatry is that the worshiper begins to resemble his or her idol. Cf Ps 115:8. (TLSB)

**9:11** *Ephraim's glory.* Her large population and prosperity. The punishment fit the sin. Prostitution produces no increase (see 4:10). (CSB)

*glory shall fly away.* Israel enjoyed renown among the surrounding nations, but that glory was fleeting. (TLSB)

*no birth, no pregnancy, no conception!* One of the most devastating results of sin is its effect on children. The birthing process is traced backward to show how life will be turned upside down when war descends on Israel. (TLSB)

**9:12** *to them.* To the children. (CSB)

**9:13** Israel's glory days have been compared to a productive vine, a fruitful fig tree (v 10), and a thriving palm (v 13). In those days, God's faithful people did right and so produced much fruit, including children. But when the invading Assyrians strike, Ephraim's children will be mercilessly slaughtered. (TLSB)

**9:14** Hosea did not pray out of hateful vengeance against Israel, but because he shared God's holy wrath against her sins. (CSB)

Hosea asks the Lord what He will give His people. He then prays that the Lord will grant His people a lesser evil than seeing their children slaughtered—no children at all. (TLSB)

**9:15** *Gilgal.* Across the Jordan River from Baal-peor; it was the site of Saul's inauguration as the first king. It long served as an illegitimate worship center, even after the temple was built in Jerusalem. Cf Am 4:4. (TLSB)

*hate them.* Hbr verb involves rejection and distancing (cf v 17). (TLSB)

*drive them out of my house.* As the unfaithful wife was driven from the husband's house, so Israel was driven from God's "house"—i.e., his land (see 8:1 and note). (CSB)

The Lord threatens to divorce Himself from Ephraim on account of the people's incessant wickedness. (TLSB)

*My house.* The entire Promised Land. Cf 8:1. (TLSB)

**9:16** Cf Ex 34:7. The Lord permitted Assyria to conquer Israel, inevitably causing innocent children to be put to death for the sins of their parents. (TLSB)

**9:17** *My God.* Hosea's words alone, for God was no longer Israel's God. (CSB)

*wanderers.* Like Cain (Ge 4:14–15). (CSB)

God's people will be dispersed, first by the hands of the Assyrians and later the Babylonians. These exiles fulfilled the prophetic warning, spoken as early as Moses, that apostasy would cause the Lord to scatter His people. (TLSB)