

**The Smackdown from Hosea
Hosea Trolls Israel
Hosea 9:1 – 17**

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We have been hearing from YAHWEH about His disappointment in His people, the people of the northern kingdom, Israel. The indictment from Him has been thorough.

Hosea will now take what He has heard from YAHWEH and the divine council and provide an explanation for all, just in case Israel did not get it the first time. It ties into some of the lessons learned in his personal dealings with the infidelity of his wife, Gomer.

Hosea has learned how to deliver a smackdown.

Life has been good for the past few years in Israel. Under Jeroboam II, there was military security, ample food, and money for all. The nation had ceased following YAHWEH decades earlier, they were religious, but prosperity created a false security in the nation. They had been warned, but prosperity lulled them into thinking all was good.

It was all fake, all of it. Reality was to be found in YAHWEH and following Him, not in chasing after a bunch of no-gods. God had promised through Moses what to look forward to and what good, or bad decisions would yield.

Deuteronomy 11:26–28

“Today I am giving you the choice between a blessing and a curse- a blessing, if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; but a curse, if you disobey these commands and turn away to worship other gods that you have never worshipped before.” (GNB)

But things had been good in Israel. They even had taken down their number one opponent, Judah. They were prosperous and that was an obvious sign of blessing...right?

The earthly prosperity of the people and kingdom was no security against destruction. Because Israel had fallen away from its God, it should not enjoy the blessing of its field-produce, but should be carried away to Assyria, where it would be unable to keep any joyful feasts at all. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 77)

Hosea delivers the smackdown direct from the divine council. He begins by trolling Israel who is in the middle of harvest.

Why should they not enjoy themselves? They had been blessed with an excellent harvest and, following all the hard work of gathering it in, we see them in this passage joyfully celebrating ‘harvest home’. Well, at least, they were having a great time until Hosea arrived on the scene. (Bentley 2000, 141)

Hosea throws cold water onto the worldly celebration taking place in Israel.

Hosea 9:1–6

“Do not rejoice, Israel, with jubilation like the nations! For you have been unfaithful, abandoning your God. You have loved the earnings of unfaithfulness on every threshing floor. Threshing floor and wine press will not feed them, And the new wine will fail them. They will not remain in the LORD’S land, But Ephraim will return to Egypt, And in Assyria they will eat unclean food. They will not pour out drink offerings of wine to the LORD, Nor will their sacrifices please Him. Their bread will be to them like mourners’ bread; All who eat it will be defiled, Because their bread will be for themselves alone; It will not enter the house of the LORD. What will you do on the day of the appointed festival And on the day of the feast of the LORD? For behold, they will be gone because of destruction; Egypt will gather them together, Memphis will bury them. Weeds will take possession of their treasures of silver; Thorns will be in their tents.” (NASB 2020)

Hosea begins with urging Israel not to celebrate like the nations did. When the crops were good, the surrounding nations would attribute that to their manipulation of the gods at the end of the winter. Through sympathetic magic their prostitution had forced the gods to act, or so they thought.

To provide an example to all other plants and particularly to food crops, the Canaanite people anxiously sought to ensure that it would flourish again. But first the divinities of fertility, Baal and Ashtoreth, now down below the ground in the “dead” season, had to be induced to copulate themselves. The Canaanites sought to bring this about by what we today call “imitative magic.” They themselves gathered in these gardens to “worship” the gods by copulating together in order to encourage Baal and Ashtoreth to do likewise. (Widyapranawa 1990, 10)

The heathen considered the harvest to be the gift of the gods in return for their sacrifices. Thus they made the obtaining of material blessings the aim and object of worship. Since Israel believed that material blessings came from the Baal gods, they had given themselves over to the debased worship of their local Baal shrine. (Smith 1994, 253-254)

Was Israel worshipping solely for the purpose of material gain? Yes, and they also believe it has been working too, otherwise they would have ceased doing it long ago. There have been warnings, famines, armies rummaging through the nation, but they seemed to recover each time, or so they thought, and attributed their blessings given to them from YAHWEF to Baal or Molech.

How much better than for YAHWEH to make a point. He provides a blessing and tells them He did this, and then because they gave credit to false gods, Hosea will use it as a talking point. And about the harvest celebrations.

It was also not unusual for the celebration taking place on the threshing floors to once again involve the usage of the same cult prostitutes who were sought out at the beginning of the season. “Apparently common prostitutes as well as cult prostitutes frequented the areas where harvest and shearing festivals took place (see the comment on Gen 38:15–23). Thus Israel plays the prostitute amidst the grain, taking her hire from those gods she credited with the harvest rather than acknowledging Yahweh’s role.” (Matthews, Chavalas and Walton 2000, Ho 9:1)

Any celebration they engage in now will be short lived, as YAHWEH is telling them the gravy train is over. They have celebrated, just like all of the nations around them, engaging in prostitution. “The plentiful harvests were about to end (9:2; cf. 2:9–12). In fulfillment of several covenant curses (cf. Deut. 28:30, 38–42, 51) the Lord would take away her grain and wine (cf. Hosea 2:9; 7:14).” (Chisholm, Jr. 1985, 1398)

Hosea 9:2

“Threshing floor and wine press will not feed them, And the new wine will fail them.” (NASB 2020)

Because Israel had looked to the no-gods for those things that YAHWEH had promised, Hosea is letting them know that the curse is now in effect. Performing these acts in anticipation of the next year is not going to work for them.

The prophet envisioned Israel as a harlot committing adultery on a threshing floor by worshipping idols there. Threshing floors and wine presses were common places where ritual prostitution took place. It was through these rites that the worshippers sought to stimulate the gods to engage in sex and so bestow fruitfulness on them and their land. (Constable 2003, Ho 9:1)

All the business operations Israel was engaged in, would fail and Israel will be removed from the land.

Hosea 9:3

“They will not remain in the LORD’S land, But Ephraim will return to Egypt, And in Assyria they will eat unclean food.” (NASB 2020)

The choices made by Israel, even though they had received light from YAHWEH and knew the consequences of those decisions, have now come home. Hosea summarizes the curses for them in one sentence.

They have misused what it is the Lord has given them and attributed His blessings to no-gods. Exile to the land given wholly over to the no-gods is in order.

Moses had been very clear.

Deuteronomy 28:58–67

“If you refuse to obey all the words of this law, the things written in this scroll, and refuse to fear this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God, then the LORD will increase your punishments and those of your descendants—great and long-lasting afflictions and severe, enduring illnesses. He will infect you with all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will persistently afflict you. Moreover, the LORD will bring upon you every kind of sickness and plague not mentioned in this scroll of commandments, until you have perished. There will be very few of you left, though at one time you were as numerous as the stars in the sky, because you will have disobeyed the LORD your God. This is what will happen: Just as the LORD delighted to do good for you and make you numerous, so he will also take delight in destroying and decimating you. You will be uprooted from the land you are about to possess. The LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known, gods of wood and stone.

Among those nations you will have no rest, nor will there be a place of peaceful rest for the soles of your feet, for there the LORD will give you an anxious heart, failing eyesight, and a spirit of despair. Your life will hang in doubt before you; you will be terrified by night and day and will have no certainty of surviving from one day to the next. In the morning you will say, 'If only it were evening!' And in the evening you will say, 'I wish it were morning!' because of the things you will fear and the things you will see." (NET 2nd ed.)

They had shifted from being lovingly obedient to YAHWEH to following ritual. If we want prosperity, then we need to demonstrate this to God, and He is then obligated to show up. That is a view from the world system, not from the Lord.

Religion had turned into a magic formula which, if followed, would then result in prosperity, or so they thought.

This idea, the use of formulas, specific processes, or ritual to obtain favor with God, continues even today. We forget, just as Israel did, this is all based on His grace. We want a magic formula. There is none.

We want the magic key that lets us know that God has heard us and we will receive what it is we want.

We tend to forget about walking by faith and trusting in the Lord and please do not tell me how long Abraham had to wait or David for that matter.

Ephesians 2:4–10

"But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." (NRSV)

Examples of Ritual or Formula

- Pray the rosary – for by grace you have been saved.
- Pray the stations of the cross – for by grace you have been saved.
- Pray the Lord's prayer – for by grace you have been saved.
- Pray longer – for by grace you have been saved.
- Pray shorter – for by grace you have been saved.
- Pray using this formula – for by grace you have been saved.

Luke 18:10–14

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed about himself like this: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: extortionists, unrighteous people, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get.' The tax collector, however, stood far off and would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, be merciful to me, sinner that I am!' I tell you that this man went down to his home justified rather than the Pharisee. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (NET 2nd ed.)

About Prayer

First, prayer that meets with God's pleasure is based on trusting Him for His presence, gifts, salvation and all things. The principle has its application in the attitude when a person first comes to salvation, and also

every time of praying. If one regards iniquity in his heart, the Lord will not hear him (Ps. 66:18), and those who pray with wrong motives do not have God's smile (Matt. 6:5–8; Jas. 4:2–4). Second, a humble spirit willing to acknowledge sin and submit to God's mercy has the green light in prayer. (Rosscup 2008, 1749)

Multiple books are published annually designed to provide you the perfect formula for praying your way to favor with God. But we are saved by grace. God's unearned undeserved love for us.

Here is the truth of the matter. There is nothing you or I can do to make God love us more than He already does. There is nothing you or I can do to make Him love us less. Yes, we can disappoint Him, but He never stops loving those who belong to Him.

Israel is the primary example of why I can confidently say that. Hosea never stopped loving Gomer; God never stopped loving Israel.

And He has never stopped loving us. We hold the key by either accepting what Jesus did on the cross or rejecting it. Jesus died on the cross and then rose from the dead because of His love for us. He did that so we could be with Him forever.

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (ESV)

And if we have said yes, here is the really cool thing.

Romans 8:1

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (NRSV)

If we have acknowledged that we are sinners, believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again to provide for us salvation from our sin and declared Him to be Lord, the King of us, there is no condemnation (Romans 10:9 – 12.) Never ever.

I can blow it, but through Jesus, we are secure eternally in Him. He provided the solution for us when we do blow it.

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (NRSV)

This is exactly what Hosea wanted to see from Gomer and it is what he wants to see from Israel. Instead, he finds himself announcing coming events due to Israel being stubbornly resistant to repenting and returning to the Lord.

Hosea 9:3–4

"They will not remain in the LORD'S land, But Ephraim will return to Egypt, And in Assyria they will eat unclean food. They will not pour out drink offerings of wine to the LORD, Nor will their sacrifices please Him. Their bread will be to them like mourners' bread; All who eat it will be defiled, Because their bread will be for themselves alone; It will not enter the house of the LORD." (NASB 2020)

Where they are going is not going to be like being in Israel. They are about to obtain what they have been living like, they will find out what it truly means to live in the world among the nations. Forced to participate in their culture.

They have lived like there is no God, so they will get exactly what they have wanted. Someplace new without any of those pesky prophets to muck things up. Yes, life is about to change for Israel.

There will be no worship life in these places. Sacrifices and offerings of the land's produce will not take place; there will be no "house of the LORD" and no festival meals. The people will eat only to survive because of their hunger (v. 4). (Birch 1997, 85)

Hosea 9:5–6

"What will you do on the day of the appointed festival And on the day of the feast of the LORD? For behold, they will be gone because of destruction; Egypt will gather them together, Memphis will bury them. Weeds will take possession of their treasures of silver; Thorns will be in their tents." (NASB 2020)

We do not know what festival this is in reference to, and we do not know what specific feast of the Lord is being referenced either. The point is simple, it really does not matter. There won't be celebration, only destruction and exile.

Here in 9:6 Egypt is the historical agent of violence who will gather them, and one of its prominent cities will bury them. This is threat language, an announcement about corporate death on the horizon at the hands of a neighboring predator. It is a further illustration of life outside YHWH's land. (Dearman 2010, 241)

The people would die in a foreign land, while the riches they left behind in Israel would lie among the ruins of their homes, which would be overgrown with briars and thorns (v. 6). With rhetorical flair, the prophet warned that the Egyptian city of Memphis, a famous Egyptian burial site, would be the exiles' cemetery. (Chisholm, Jr., Handbook on the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Minor Prophets 2002, 358)

The people of Israel will be forced to leave their homes and we are given a picture of being buried in a foreign land and the places they used to live, remaining barren for so long that they become overgrown.

This is utter desolation.

The reference to Memphis as a location is also significant in that it was the entry city into the necropolis of the leadership of Egypt. Unclean to a Jew, but a place of reverence for the gentile. They would be relegated to a place where the people venerated the dead, something the Jew was specifically told not to do.

Giza Pyramids from Abusir, Near Memphis



(Bolen 2012, Used with Permission)

As Hosea continues his diatribe, we come to a section which has a wide array of possible interpretations. Much is dependent upon the language and or version of the scriptures you choose to use. The central

theme though is consistent as is the treatment of Hosea by the nation and the comparative for how wicked they truly are as they go into exile.

Hosea 9:7–9

“The days of punishment have come, The days of retribution have come; Let Israel know this! The prophet is a fool, The inspired person is insane, Because of the grossness of your wrongdoing, And because your hostility is so great. Ephraim was a watchman with my God, a prophet; Yet the snare of a bird catcher is in all his ways, And there is only hostility in the house of his God. They are deeply depraved As in the days of Gibeah; He will remember their guilt, He will punish their sins.” (NASB 2020)

The Aramaic version of the scriptures, the Targum, has the following.

Hosea 9:7–9

“The days of punishment have come, the days of retribution for sins have come. The people of the house of Israel shall know that prophets of truth were prophesying to them, but false prophets were making them stupid; because they increased your guilt and made your sin worse. The house of Israel seeks to maintain the worship of idols. As for their prophets, snares are stretched on all their paths. They multiply traps in the Sanctuary of their God. They have multiplied corruption as in the days of Gibeah. Now he will punish their sins, and call them to account for their iniquities.” (Cathcart, Maher and McNamara 1990, Hosea 9:7-9)

Hosea 9:7–9

“The time of judgment is about to arrive! The time of retribution is imminent! Israel will be humbled! The prophet is considered a fool— the inspired man is viewed as a madman— because of the multitude of your sins and your intense animosity. The prophet is a watchman over Ephraim on behalf of God, yet traps are laid for him along all of his paths; animosity rages against him in the land of his God. They have sunk deep into corruption as in the days of Gibeah. He will remember their wrongdoing. He will repay them for their sins.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Hosea is making things quite clear to Israel. The days of talking about judgement at some point in the future is now ended. The reason for that is, the time is now here. There will be no more delay. Everything they have been told by the prophets of God is indeed coming true and everything they were told by those false prophets they loved to listen to, are nothing more than lies.

They thought that Elijah, Elisha, and other true prophets were madmen, they were not. Instead of repenting and returning to the Lord, they increased the sin they committed and secured heavier judgement.

The culture of Israel had worked hard to cancel the true prophets of God. Death was a common occurrence if this was your job description.

1 Kings 18:3–4

“So Ahab summoned Obadiah, who supervised the palace. (Now Obadiah was a very loyal follower of the LORD. When Jezebel was killing the LORD’s prophets, Obadiah took 100 prophets and hid them in two caves in two groups of fifty. He also brought them food and water.)” (NET 2nd ed.)

Amos was chased to Judah, and Hosea will most likely be chased there as well.

“They shall know then that the pretenders to prophecy, who flattered them in their sins, and rocked them asleep in their security, and told them that they should have peace though they went on, however they pretended to be spiritual men (as Ahab’s prophets did, 1 Ki. 22:24) were fools and madmen, and not true prophets; they deceived themselves and those to whom they prophesied.

But why would God suffer his people Israel to be imposed upon by those false prophets? He answers, “It is for the multitude of thy iniquity which, in contempt of the divine law, thou hast persisted in, and, for the great hatred of the true prophets, that reproved thee, in God’s name, for it.” (Henry 1994, 1483)

A classic example comes from the treatment of Micaiah under King Ahab.

1 Kings 22:23–28

“Now therefore behold, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the LORD has declared disaster for you.” Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, “How did the Spirit of the LORD go from me to speak to you?” And Micaiah said, “Behold, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide yourself.” And the king of Israel said, “Seize Micaiah, and take him back to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king’s son, and say, ‘Thus says the king, “Put this fellow in prison and feed him meager rations of bread and water, until I come in peace.”’” And Micaiah said, “If you return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me.” And he said, “Hear, all you peoples!”” (ESV)

Ahab was killed, Micaiah spoke the truth as heard by him in the divine council. Even though he spoke the truth, he was made a captive. As it says in verse 8, Ephraim, the northern kingdom, had tried to snare the true prophets that God sent. “Thus there was nothing but hostility in the land of Israel between the Ephraimites and the true prophets of Yahweh. Ephraim saw nothing as a prophet and criticized the prophets for preaching what they saw, namely, coming judgment.” (Constable 2003, Ho 9:8)

Hosea 9:9

“They are deeply depraved As in the days of Gibeah; He will remember their guilt, He will punish their sins.” (NASB 2020)

Hosea ends the thought with how totally depraved Israel had become. They are no better, perhaps even worse, than the people of Gibeah were during the time of the judges. David Hubbard does a great job of discussing this.

“The historical parallel, summarized in as in the days of Gibeah, serves four purposes: (1) it underscores the ancient precedents that underline Israel’s present conduct; the depth of the rebellion is evidenced by its affinities with events four centuries earlier; such crime is in their genes; (2) it compares the present spiritual chaos to what may be the most sordid scene in the Old Testament: the gang-rape and sex-murder of the Levite’s concubine at the hands of Gibeah’s lewd citizens (Judg. 19–21; for Gibeah, see at 5:8; 10:9); (3) it recalls a number of details which tie in with the language and setting of 9:1–9:a. the old man who abandons the concubine to the Benjaminites of Gibeah was raised in Ephraim (Judg. 19:16, 25; cf. Hos. 9:3, 8); b. Mizpah, i.e. ‘watchtower’, whose meaning is closely associated with watchman plays a key role (Judg. 20:1, 3; cf. Hos. 9:8); c. Bethel, the probable setting for Hosea’s speeches in 9:1–9 is a centre of activity in the story (Judg. 20:26; 21:2); d. a pivotal part of the story’s message is the inescapability of judgment for the men of Gibeah (Judg. 20:29–48; cf. Hos. 9:9); e. the story concludes with a ribald dance in the vineyard at the ‘yearly feast of Yahweh’ at Shiloh (Judg. 21:19; cf. Hos. 9:1–2 and the comments about sexually oriented activities as part of the autumn harvest festival); and f. the summary verse of Judges 21:25 could well describe Hosea’s day with its dynastic instability (cf. 8:4) that left basic laws unenforced (cf. 4:2–3); and (4) as Wolff (p. 158) has suggested, Hosea may have counted the Levites as his allies in the struggle with the established priesthood and thus valued this story partly for the way it described the maltreatment which Levites sometimes endured. All this is a theme to which Hosea will return (10:9).” (Hubbard 1989, 171)

The conclusion for the northern kingdom per Hosea, God will remember their guilt and they will be judged.

We now see God turning to history as a way to compare Israel of the past to the present day. The rest of this chapter is a conversation that takes place between the Lord and Hosea. Hosea obviously had a discussion with the Lord about Israel, and he now relates it for us.

Verses 10 – 13 are from YAHWEH and Hosea's response is in verse 14.

Hosea 9:10–14

“I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first season. But they came to Baal-peor and devoted themselves to shame, And they became as detestable as that which they loved. As for Ephraim, their glory will fly away like a bird— No birth, no pregnancy, and no conception! Though they bring up their children, Yet I will bereave them of their children until not a person is left. Yes, woe to them indeed when I depart from them! Ephraim, as I have seen, Is planted in a pasture like Tyre; But Ephraim is going to bring out his children for slaughter. Give to them, LORD—what will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dried-up breasts.” (NASB 2020)

The conversation begins with God remembering what it was like when Israel was faithful to Him. “With an almost wistful nostalgia Yahweh recalls the beginning of Israel's life with him. It was a time of surprised joy and fresh delight for him. He remembers his emotions like a man recalling the best time of a life that is past and gone; its sweetness is reinforced by the contrast of the present. Both metaphors create this feeling of an unexpected pleasure that lives on in memory.” (Mays 1969, 132)

Grapes do not normally grow in the middle of nowhere. God speaks with loving amazement as He talks about the way Israel was in the early days. Unexpected fruit, unexpected joy, as unexpected early fruit on a fig tree.

As the Lord continues reminiscing, He then comes to an event that took place in the wilderness prior to entering into the promised land. It was there that the honeymoon ended. The nation was traveling up the eastern side of the land and had to spend some time in Moab.

Numbers 25:1

“The People of Israel at Peor When the Israelites were camped in the Valley of Acacia, the men began to have sexual intercourse with the Moabite women who were there.” (GNB)

They took part in rituals of the pagan cult of Baal-Peor, but one of its attractions was the sexual orgies involved in Canaanite religion. It was the very thing that was prompting God to call for the extermination of the Canaanites! God acted severely. About 24,000 Israelites were killed in a plague (Numbers 25:1–9; Deuteronomy 4:3; Psalm 106:28). (Eaton 1996, 144)

This event turned the nation into an abhorrence. They became detestable and this was on two levels, the same levels that existed in the Israel of Hosea. Physical adultery and spiritual adultery. “What follows from this allusion to Baal-peor and the surrender to lust is not a set of arbitrary punishments but the end-products of so squalid and treacherous a choice.” (Kidner 1976, 88)

Hosea 9:11–12

“As for Ephraim, their glory will fly away like a bird— No birth, no pregnancy, and no conception! Though they bring up their children, Yet I will bereave them of their children until not a person is left. Yes, woe to them indeed when I depart from them!” (NASB 2020)

Ezekiel describes in detail the departure of the glory of God from the Temple prior to the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon. However, the glory departed from the northern kingdom much earlier. For the northern kingdom, this has the impact of increased infertility, just as promised by Moses in Deuteronomy 28.

Israel had worshipped the fertility gods, yet now they were going to experience, as a nation, infertility. They had abused sex, engaged in infanticide, and worshipped prosperity and self. God is telling them they are about to experience infertility, a known consequence.

In our culture today, as we have already discussed, there is an affinity for abortion as birth control and lifestyles associated with self-worship (Romans 1:18 – 32). We have noticed the peculiar similarity between the culture of Israel during the time of Hosea and our culture in today. It does not end there.

On May 5, 2021, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics released data confirming that the birth rate dropped precipitously in late 2020, when most states were experiencing a major surge in coronavirus cases.

According to the new data, the birth rate in the U.S. decreased more than 6 percent in the last quarter of 2020 compared to the same time period in 2019. The data includes statistics from December 2020, which would have been when babies were born if they were conceived during the beginning of the pandemic.

Yet demographers are not sure if the decline has to do with the pandemic, or if the data is following a larger trend that has surfaced over the past couple of years. Indeed, last year marked the sixth year in a row births in America declined. The CDC said the U.S. birth rate is so low that the country is "below replacement levels" — which means more people are dying than being born. (Karlis 2021)

This is not a US problem only, but per the BBC, exists in 23 nations. (Gallagher 2020)

Abortion was the leading cause of death globally in 2021, with nearly 43 million unborn babies killed in the womb, according to data provided by Worldometer.

As of noon on December 31, 2021, there were 42.6 million abortions performed in the course of the year, Worldometer revealed, while 8.2 million people died from cancer, 5 million from smoking, 1.7 million of HIV/AIDS, 1.3 million from traffic fatalities, and 1 million from suicide.

Totaling all the deaths in the world from causes other than abortion reveals a figure of 58.7 million, meaning that abortions accounted for just over 42 percent of all human deaths in 2021. (Williams, Ph.D. 2021)

This points to a global sowing of wind that is taking place. And based on what we saw last week, we know what the results will be. So, the impact in Israel or our culture today is not surprising. This does not include the increase of disease, a promised curse, that would accompany a rather permissive lifestyle choice.

Hosea 9:13–14

“Ephraim, as I have seen, Is planted in a pasture like Tyre; But Ephraim is going to bring out his children for slaughter. Give to them, LORD—what will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dried-up breasts.” (NASB 2020)

God had planted Ephraim, the northern kingdom, in an area that was fertile and agriculturally rich, just like Tyre was to the northwest. But war is coming, and the children would become the victims. “The infants were likely killed by the Assyrians as a gratuitous act of cruelty and because the infants could not be easily exiled.” (Got Questions Ministries 2002-2013)

Then Hosea makes an observation on what the Lord has said.

Hosea 9:14

“Give to them, LORD—what will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dried-up breasts.” (NASB 2020)

The Lord then responds.

Hosea 9:15–17

“All their evil is at Gilgal; Indeed, I came to hate them there! Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of My house! I will no longer love them; All their leaders are rebels. Ephraim is stricken, their root is dried up, They will produce no fruit. Even though they give birth to children, I will put to death

the precious ones of their womb. My God will reject them Because they have not listened to Him; And they will be wanderers among the nations.” (NASB 2020)

For ibn Ezra mention of Gilgal (for its location near Jericho, cf. on 4:15 above) constitutes a reference to the situation immediately following the crossing of the Jordan when the fathers first set foot in the land. Accordingly the phrase expresses elliptically a similar contrast to that of v. 10 above. Entry into the land (Gilgal) should have elicited in the Ephraimites a proper sense of gratitude for Yahweh’s providential care of their fathers; in fact their wickedness and its consequences had prevailed to the extent that now Yahweh will banish them from the land, the gateway to which was Gilgal (cf. the Entry of Hope in 2:17; EV 15). (MacIntosh 1997, 375)

Some of the commentaries relate that there was idolatry taking place there, but we have no evidence of that provided in the scriptures. This could also possibly be another of the recent known local events that Hosea has already made reference to.

I lean towards the interpretation that they have invalidated the conditions of entry into the land. The promised land is God’s house, Zion is where He has chosen to have His temple reside and where His house will reside at the end of the Tribulation. This also helps us determine the location of Eden from Genesis.

Just as we would kick someone out of our home for acting up and not observing what we requested of them, YAHWEH does the same. He does this first with Israel.

God continues with again, the nation enduring infertility, and worse; the atrocities of the Assyrian army. This probably refers to human barrenness, agricultural unfruitfulness, and animal infertility. Even though the people bore children that were precious to them, the Lord would slay them. (Constable 2003, Ho 9:16)

Hosea 9:17

“My God will reject them Because they have not listened to Him; And they will be wanderers among the nations.” (NASB 2020)

Hosea summarizes what it is he has just heard from YAHWEH. Israel is rejected because they have refused to listen to YAHWEH. This was demonstrated over a 200+ year period.

Then we see, as promised in Deuteronomy 28, coming fulfillment that will take place after the vultures are done. They will be wanderers among the nations. This is a wandering that did not begin to end until 1948.

Hosea has simply reiterated what it is the Lord has already told Israel.

Time is up.

For those of us living today, in the last hours of the last days, we see the same warning. Time is up.

The warning has been issued and events we see today are shadows of events about to take place after His church has been removed.

The solution is simple, take advantage of the currently outstanding offer.

Romans 10:9–10

“If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved. For it is by our faith that we are put right with God; it is by our confession that we are saved.” (GNB)

Seeking God’s face is done by praying to Him. The prayer is simple.

Lord, forgive me, I agree with you that I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross for my sin and then rose from the dead. Jesus be the Lord of my life.

That's it. It is no more complicated than that.

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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