

**THE BOOK OF HOSEA**  
**Lesson 16, Chapter 9**

So as not to get lost in the forest, not seeing because of the trees, we need to gather ourselves in the study of Hosea and remember something foundational. It is that what we are reading about and (hopefully) learning from, is entirely an outcropping of God's immutable principles set in stone before the pillars of the world were established. Certainly, while Hosea's prophecy addresses a specific condemnation of the Northern Kingdom for their idolatry that occurs in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., but with a hope for a future restoration, it shows us what idolatry actually *is* on both an earthly, fleshly level, and also on a spiritual level. It shows us that idolatry not only exists among pagans, it can and does exist among God's set apart people (often without any actual awareness of it). We see that idolatry, first and foremost, comes from an unfaithfulness of God's people expressed in both thoughts and actions, stemming from an ignorance of, or disobedience to, His commands and laws. Thus, carving little wooden images and setting up cult worship sites are but examples of idolatry, not the full scope of its definition. We also see how God's longsuffering patience with the people He loves most has a limit. Further, what happens when that limit is exceeded. Perhaps even more frightening is that acceptance by God of our repentance, after a long time of sinning, must never be taken as a given. In fact, even if in one sense God does accept it, that in no way means that dire and tangible consequences for our crimes against Him will be pardoned or averted.

When we read Hosea, (when properly translated and interpreted in its historical context), it isn't hard to apply so much of the sad picture that is being painted about Israel to our modern 21<sup>st</sup> century world (especially the developed Western world), and in some cases to the Church. Even so, the bigger picture that is much more than similarity of circumstance is that we are getting a much-needed glimpse into the mind of The Father about how He processes and reacts to the bad behavior of those who insist they are loyal to Him. He doesn't wink at sin one time, and then react harshly the next. His justice is fair and even handed. He provides generous advanced notice and warning. Neither culture nor time in history matters because Yehoveh never changes through the ages. Therefore, it is important for us to watch and identify the God-patterns as they are revealed and played out; these things don't emerge only in specific moments in history

like markers placed along a timeline, only to later retreat and subside or, as some doctrinal beliefs erroneously claim, they disappear altogether replaced with a whole new type of justice administration.

Open your Bibles to Hosea chapter 9.

**RE-READ HOSEA CHAPTER 9:7 – end**

We concluded last week with verse 6. The first several verses of chapter 9 are the announcement that far from divine punishment being a distant future possibility for Israel, the first stages of it have already begun. Already crop failures are appearing, and Israel feels the pressure of enemies bearing down on them from both the north and south. Their reaction to these discomforts and insecurities is to double-down on their sacrifices to the Baals in hopes of seeing returned prosperity. We read of Israel's government running around trying to form unwise alliances with Egypt or Assyria...whichever will have them...for national self-protection. Yehoveh mocks these feeble attempts because not only are they precisely the wrong things to do, only increasing their sin, they also are useless because nothing can deter what God has already determined is to happen.

Therefore, verse 7 begins:

**CJB Hosea 9:7 *The days of punishment have come, the days of retribution are here, and Isra'el knows it.***

In addition to making it clear that the punishments are already underway, it is also stated that Israel is aware of it. But, what Israel "knows" is not what they actually believe. They know... they have been told... because Hosea has told them. Historically speaking, this was likely written during, and referring to, a time of respite from their enemies for Israel that took place between 748 and 733 B.C. In other words, attacks by Judah on Israel's territory to their south, and incursions into their northern territory by Assyria, tapered off during perhaps a 10 year or so period of time such that Ephraim/Israel thought that the worst was over and a return to normalcy was underway. This lull in fighting gave them a false hope, which made them inclined to dismiss the doomsday message brought to them by Hosea. Centuries earlier, Moses had spoken the following prophetic words:

**CJB Deuteronomy 31:28-29** ***28 Assemble for me all the leaders of your tribes and your officials, so that I can say these things in their hearing, calling heaven and earth to witness against them- 29 because I know that after my death you will become very corrupt and turn aside from the way that I have ordered you, and that disaster will come upon you in the acharit-hayamim, because you will do what ADONAI sees as evil and provoke him by your deeds."***

No doubt, Israel had either dismissed these words as having no application to them, or they had strayed so far from their Hebrew biblical faith for so long that they no longer remembered them. And so now, as was Moses' warning ignored, Hosea's is thought to be nothing but foolishness. The last half of verse 7 says:

**CJB Hosea 9:7** ***... [yet they cry,] "The prophet is a fool, the man of the spirit has gone crazy!" Because your iniquity is so great, the hostility [against you] is great.***

The prophet this speaks of is Hosea. What we are reading about is a very rare instance in Hosea of exposing what the people of Israel are actually saying about what it is that they have been told by God's prophet. Because of an extended period of relative peace, the people and leaders of Israel say "this prophet is a fool". The term "man of the spirit" is actually a derogatory epithet that arose when the Israelite prophet colonies (the **Nevi'im**) were established. These **Nevi'im** went into trances, spoke ecstatically, played instruments, and behaved in weird ways that at first were thought to identify them as especially chosen holy men who were acting "in the spirit", but later were more thought to be kooks. So, Hosea was more or less lumped in with that group. Big mistake. Israel determined that Hosea's words couldn't be taken seriously, and the current improvement of their economy and lack of war confirmed it for them.

The Hebrew word **meshuga** is actually used to describe the peoples' opinion of Hosea; it means crazy. It refers to a person who has lost all grip on reality. To say Israel didn't believe Hosea is to put it mildly. God responds to this atrocity by saying: **Because your iniquity is so great, the hostility [against you] is great.** That is, because you (Israel) are such great sinners, then the hostility against you (Hosea) by them is all the greater. The more hardened their minds to God's truth

they become, the more they demonize and vilify the truth-tellers. They don't want to hear him... they don't to hear what they don't want hear... so because they don't have a credible response to Hosea they "cancel" him by labeling him a nut job. And Believers, I think I can confidently predict that as the days grow darker in wickedness in our era, and as God is driven from our institutions and societies, you, too, will be canceled and labeled when you try to tell others the truth. Know it and prepare for it, because it is inevitable.

Verse 8 is quite difficult to decipher because there are certain nuances to the wording that are strange. We could spend much time here with me explaining the technical issues, but I think I'd rather simply tell you what Ibn Ezra, an 11<sup>th</sup> century Jewish Bible scholar, said is the way this verse ought to be taken, and I am in agreement with him because it best fits the ongoing context. Here is how he says we should take this:

"The seer of Ephraim is with his God. The prophet is a fowler's trap on all of his paths, an embodiment of hatred in the temple of his God." What Hosea is referring to is Israel's false prophets as they operate within the cult of the religion of the Northern Kingdom. So, Hosea was presented in the prior verse as God's legitimate prophet (who is being shunned and mocked by Israel and called "crazy"), but the prophets the people are listening to and thought to be wise are false and they themselves are deceived. Thus, what the people believe is what these false prophets are telling them because they prefer to believe it; it was no doubt a much happier message than what they are hearing from Hosea. Wow; there is an entire sermon within this thought alone. I'll be brief.

The truth is that secular or religious, people prefer to believe whatever it is they want to hear. The popular teachers and religious leaders all throughout history, as in the present, aren't necessarily the truth tellers; rather they are the best marketers. Find out what the people want, and give it to them. The people will come in droves to have the validity of their wants and dreams repeated week after week. One of these great marketing lies that is used by some of the most known Christian evangelists of our time is the so-called Prosperity Doctrine. That is, if you believe in Christ, then God's job is reduced to fulfilling all your material desires. Another deception is that the more you give to that evangelist, God will multiply your finances in like fashion, so you come out ahead of the game. You

give in order to get. Another is the false belief that trust in Yeshua gives us boundless liberty, which is defined generally as doing anything we want to do. Within that credo, sin is either erased from our reality and thus not even a possibility, or we can ignore sin because Jesus's capacity to forgive and pay for it has no limit.

People don't want to believe the worst about their future. This is why obvious danger signs can be hanging from the rafters in the most vibrant colors, but they go unseen and unheeded. Reasonable preparation can go wanting because it is easier to think that disaster won't actually affect us. People don't want to hear of God's displeasure or of the possibility of His wrath; they only want to know about an all-merciful God that is a kindly grandfather who loves and provides. But the truth is, both of these attributes of God are true at the same time and whenever we overemphasize (or even dismiss) one over the other, we are committing idolatry. We are attempting to conform God to our image, rather than adapting ourselves to the God who is. This is what Israel had been doing for a very long time, and such behavior become the accepted norm. Thus, anyone who called it into question (as Hosea was doing) faced anger and isolation from people who liked things as they were. But those who went with the flow (the false prophets) and gave the people what they wanted to hear, were applauded and admired.

In verse 9, God is comparing the current Israel with a terrible and infamous event from the past. While we can't be 100% certain that the terrible incident at Gibeah as recorded in Judges 19 is the one being referred to, and that perhaps there was something more recent to Hosea that had happened in Gibeah, the gang-rape that led to the death of a concubine, and then her master cutting her dead body into pieces, is the most likely scenario. So even if Israel has but faint memory of this past horror, God has not forgotten it. Just as He remembers this atrocity from centuries earlier, He is also not forgetting Israel's recent unfaithfulness towards Him. As a result of God not forgetting Israel's sins, so their sins are in the first stages of being punished. There is also a more practical reason that Israel's sins are, and must be, punished. Sins for them...just as they are for us today... are but the violations of God's covenant with them. That definition of sin did not change with the advent of Christ. The violations of God's covenant (the sins) had already occurred; they were anything but hypothetical. It can be seen in a similar way to saying that it is against the law to rob a bank.

Once you have robbed a bank, there's no going back on it. You can't go back in time and reverse history. What's done is done, whether you regret it or not. The penalty you'll pay for bank robbery cannot, then, be merely overlooked or forgotten. All sins, just like all crimes, are by definition "in the past". They have to have already occurred before there is an actual violation. So just as the violation itself becomes etched in stone, so must God react to the covenant violation with the associated and written-down covenant penalty, regardless of when it happened, and that is precisely what has been going on from the first words of Hosea's book.

Verse 10 shifts gears a little, moving well into Israel's past. And in this case, it is all of Israel that is being referred to as opposed to the primary subject of Hosea's book, Ephraim/Israel. As Gruber notes, one might be able to characterize Israel's time in the wilderness on their exodus journey as a honeymoon. The problem is, during that honeymoon a crisis erupted upon Israel's arrival at a place called Baal-Peor. The first thing we must notice is that the metaphorical description of Israel at that time (grapes in the wilderness, and the first bearing of figs on a tree) is that their very adoption by Yehoveh as His set-apart people is of the rarest occurrence in the history of the world. He has chosen only one people, and still has chosen only one people as His own. So, the event of the exodus is sort of depicted (almost romantically) as a man on a journey through a barren desert who suddenly comes upon a beautiful grape vine; welcome but nothing one could have expected. The second metaphor is of him spotting the very first ripe fig on a fig tree; a signal that finally the season for fruit-bearing has arrived. This, to Middle Easterners, was always a most joyful and welcome development; something they had been waiting for with much anticipation. What is being described is of the happiest and most positive nature...a one of one event... and it is likened to the attractiveness of Israel to God. And yet, that attractiveness lasts only so long as a relationship of respect, love and faithfulness lasts. The question then becomes: by what standard...by what measure... is that respect, love, and faithfulness determined? The answer is: obedience to the Law of Moses. The Covenant.

Prior to the incident at Baal-Peor, Israel was so very special for God. The apple of His eye. The most unique people ever to inhabit planet earth. Unfortunately, at

Baal-Peor the people of Israel committed apostasy by dedicating themselves to what the Bible called **bosheth**.

**CJB Numbers 25:1-5** *Isra'el stayed at Sheetim, and there the people began whoring with the women of Mo'av. <sup>2</sup> These women invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, where the people ate and bowed down to their gods. <sup>3</sup> With Isra'el thus joined to Ba'al-P'or, the anger of ADONAI blazed up against Isra'el. <sup>4</sup> ADONAI said to Moshe, "Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them facing the sun before ADONAI, so that the raging fury of ADONAI will turn away from Isra'el." <sup>5</sup> Moshe said to the judges of Isra'el, "Each of you is to put to death those in his tribe who have joined themselves to Ba'al-P'or."*

**Bosheth** means shameful or shamelessness. However, as is being suspected by more and more experts on the ancient Semitic languages, it may be that the name for the god that Israel devoted themselves to at that place was **bosheth**, and from the memory of that incident the name **bosheth** eventually became a colloquial term meaning shameful.

The sad fact for Israel is that their history is one of (at best) equal parts proper devotion to Yehoveh and rebellion against Him. Somehow, like the faithful Hosea, the faithful husband (Yehoveh) continued to love and care for the unfaithful Gomer (unfaithful Israel). But, eventually enough was enough. What was the result of Israel's apostasy at Baal-Peor? **They became as loathsome as the thing they loved.** The honeymoon was ruined, and from that moment forward Israel was not the same in God's eyes. It was never that He demanded or expected a perfect Israel. But He did expect loyalty for the unparalleled position He had placed them in as His one and only set-apart people; they couldn't even do that for more than short bursts of time.

Verse 11 brings up the unhappy reminder that God can reverse Redemption History. Sometimes Christians look upon their moment of salvation as that time that they are given a fire insurance policy that can neither be modified nor revoked for any reason. The Bible, Old and New Testaments, tell us a different story. Sincerity of commitment to God is the prerequisite, and the ongoing requisite, for a redemptive relationship with Him. So much of Hosea is about God refuting Israel's claim of commitment to Him. They believe that commitment is



all wrapped up in their rituals and the outer displays of their faith. God says not so fast. He looks to the heart, and if He sees something there other than what is claimed, then the claim falls to floor... as a useless vessel...shattered and now worthless. Yes, fellow Believers, Redemption History (as unsavory as it might seem, and as much as it is usually denied from the pulpit) can be reversed if the so-called trust turns out to be no actual trust at all. Never fall for the concept of "pretenders"; people who had pretended to believe, but didn't. Israel was not pretenders; but they were deceived and faithless. A person can sincerely commit to Christ, time passes, and then they adopt of a way of life and belief that reflects anything but a proper commitment or understanding of who God is. That person was never a pretender; they simply became faithless and fell away. At one time they believed, but later on they didn't. At one time they were faithful, at another they ceased to be. That was Israel. Therefore, in what can only be a reversal of situation, verse 11 likens Ephraim's glory to a bird who flies away. Recall what I explained a few lessons ago. In the ancient Hebrew way of thinking, "The Glory" was simply another name... even another manifestation... of God in the same way they thought that Wisdom was. So, it's not Israel's glory (in the sense of some kind of glorification that characterized Israel) that flew away. Rather it was Israel's God, Yehoveh...The Glory... that flew away like a bird. He departed and separated Himself from Israel (as He has been threatening to do). The result is a reversal of Redemption History, and specifically it is said that within Israel that will be no birth, no womb, no pregnancy. The Rashbam (who lived from the late 11<sup>th</sup> to the late 12<sup>th</sup> century) said that this refers to what is spoken of in Exodus 1.

**CJB Exodus 1:7-19** ***<sup>7</sup> The descendants of Isra'el were fruitful, increased abundantly, multiplied and grew very powerful; the land became filled with them. <sup>8</sup> Now there arose a new king over Egypt. He knew nothing about Yosef <sup>9</sup> but said to his people, "Look, the descendants of Isra'el have become a people too numerous and powerful for us. <sup>10</sup> Come, let's use wisdom in dealing with them. Otherwise, they'll continue to multiply; and in the event of war they might ally themselves with our enemies, fight against us and leave the land altogether." <sup>11</sup> So they put slavemasters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built for Pharaoh the storage cities of Pitom and Ra'amses. <sup>12</sup> But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more they multiplied and expanded, until the Egyptians came to dread the people of Isra'el <sup>13</sup> and worked them relentlessly, <sup>14</sup>***



***making their lives bitter with hard labor- digging clay, making bricks, all kinds of field work; and in all this toil they were shown no mercy. <sup>15</sup> Moreover, the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was called Shifrah and the other Pu'ah. <sup>16</sup> "When you attend the Hebrew women and see them giving birth," he said, "if it's a boy, kill him; but if it's a girl, let her live." <sup>17</sup> However, the midwives were God-fearing women, so they didn't do as the king of Egypt ordered but let the boys live. <sup>18</sup> The king of Egypt summoned the midwives and demanded of them, "Why have you done this and let the boys live?" <sup>19</sup> The midwives answered Pharaoh, "It's because the Hebrew women aren't like the Egyptian women- they go into labor and give birth before the midwife arrives."***

Because a "return to Egypt" motif is so apparent in Hosea's writings, the Rashbam has come to a very clever conclusion that now, since Yehoveh has like a bird flown away from Israel, the blessings of fertility that the Hebrews experienced even in Egypt on account of Him, are reversed. Now Israel has neither birth, nor womb, nor pregnancy. Children are stillborn, women don't become pregnant, they experience miscarriages that until then were somewhat rare for Israelites as compared to other people. Fertility had begun to greatly decrease all because Yehoveh had distanced Himself from Israel due to their apostacy.

This theme extends to verse 12. There is a hint of a threat that because of Ephraim's inability to have children to replace the aged and dying, they may become extinct as a people. So, an additional infertility curse is that even if the women should birth children, many will die before they ever reach adulthood (here meant as before the age of child-bearing capability). The idea of God abandoning Israel for some unspecified amount of time is reinforced at the end of this verse as God says how full of woe Israel will be when He turns away from them.

Moving on to verse 13, we find that something must have occurred in its transmission because it doesn't make a lot of sense the way it has come down to us. Thus, there are several different attempts in different Bible versions to interpret the verse. I won't go through the several possible ways that certain Hebrew letters were copied down wrong, that could change a couple of words that might make it more understandable. Ibn Ezra took the view that we need to

take verses 11 through 14 as a kind of a unit, and therefore to understand them all in the same context. If he is correct (and I do think it is a good solution), then the best way to translate verse 13 is something like this:

“As for Ephraim, as I saw with respect to Tyre, which was planted in a meadow, also Ephraim must bring out his children for slaying”. Even this is awkward, but it can be deciphered a little better. The idea is the Ephraim/Israel is leading its children (their offspring) into apostasy and therefore into calamity and destruction by committing essentially the same kinds of sins that their forefathers committed at Baal-Peor. This highlights something I said to begin today’s lesson, about looking for the God-patterns in Hosea. Generally speaking, when someone who vows to be part of God’s covenant breaks the terms of that covenant, it can produce truly awful results in one’s home, and among one’s family. The particulars of this are unimportant, because the variety of ways these sins can occur, and the variety of circumstances they can occur in, and the way it plays itself out are nearly infinite. But... the pattern and principle reveal that the consequences for breaking God’s covenant for someone who has joined him or herself to it will ultimately affect more than only yourself. We, indeed, are each responsible before God only for our own sins and not those of others (whether our parents, siblings, or any other relative). But... that doesn’t mean that the sins of others... especially within a family... won’t have a terrible effect on those in that family who are otherwise innocent of them. Those Israelites who lived during and before the Assyrian exile were who were being directly punished for their sins against Yehoveh. Yet, the hundreds of generations that have come from them in the ensuing 2700 years have also been adversely affected.

Verse 14 again shifts gears and now we have the Prophet, himself, speaking. And like verse 13, this one can also be a little difficult to decipher. However, S. Yona (a biblical Hebrew scholar) says that clearly there is a recognized literary structure to this verse called staircase parallelism that helps us to get the meaning. However, what happens here is that this particular parallelism is unique in that there an intervening question that is inserted. Without getting into this complex ancient Hebrew literary structure, here’s how we can understand this verse.

First, we get an incomplete request from Hosea: it is “give to them”.

Second, there is a pause where a rhetorical question is inserted: it is "what shall you give to them?"

And third, the incomplete request that opened the verse is completed when we read "give them womb that miscarries and breasts that are dried up".

So, to make better sense to our ears, we could reword this to say: "You (God) shall give to them (Israel) wombs that miscarry and breasts that won't produce milk to feed the babies". Thus, as we pull this verse and some previous ones together, then we get the prophetic declaration that the population of Ephraim/Israel can expect to be decimated by 3 factors: 1) the failure of babies to survive child birth, 2) miscarriages, and 3) women being unable to become pregnant whether that is theirs or their husband's fault.

With verse 15, God once again speaks. We now move from the past (the past from Hosea's perspective) to his present. It is because of the kinds of things that go on, and have gone on, at Gilgal (a cult site where illicit worship takes place), that proves that Israel has done anything but improve from the more ancient times. As a reminder, where is Gilgal? It is directly across the Jordan River from Baal-Peor. Gilgal at first (when Joshua led Israel across the river into the Promised Land) was a good and proper religious site for worshipping Yehoveh. However, over time, it deteriorated. It remained one of the most prominent of the many worship centers for the Northern Kingdom right up until Israel's exile. But by Hosea's day, it was seen as pure evil by God because it had come to symbolize all that was wrong about this manmade, hybridized religion that had been created. It was everything that God hated.

There was also something else that happened at Gilgal that we must not overlook and, I think, plays a strong role in Hosea's pronouncement.

**CJB 1 Samuel 11:14-15** ***<sup>14</sup> Then Sh'mu'el said to the people, "Come, let's go to Gilgal and inaugurate the kingship there. <sup>15</sup> So all the people went to Gilgal; and there in Gilgal, before ADONAI, they made Sha'ul king. They presented sacrifices as peace offerings before ADONAI there, and there Sha'ul and all the people of Isra'el celebrated with great joy.***

Here is where Israel's first king, Saul, was installed. It would be fair to say that God's attitude towards this was "this whole king thing was never my idea, anyway". So, while Israel was ecstatic to finally join with the gentile world by also having their own king, Israel's God was not particularly for this because He knew where it would lead. The idea being expressed here is that the monarchy of Israel was always doomed to failure. It had been so since their very first king (Saul was a disaster almost immediately). And now the terrible Menahem son of Gadi was in power, and he was perhaps even worse than King Saul. So, from God's perspective, Gilgal was the source of all of Israel's evil because it was there that the monarchy was first formed.

We see, then, when God says in verse 15 that it was the wickedness of their deeds (at Gilgal) it means the wickedness of Israel's kings. So, Yehoveh says He is going to expel them from His house. "His house" or "Yehoveh's house" is referring to the land where Israel lives; the land God gave to them to occupy. The land had never ceased to be His; Israel was only given the gift of inhabiting the land, in much the same way that Adam and Eve were given the gift of living in the Garden of Eden; but it certainly didn't belong to them. And since a nation's leaders essentially represent the people as a whole, then the blanket statement of evil applied to the leaders extends to the whole population.

God says that He will no longer "love" them. We have to not take this in modern the Western concept of the term "love". For us, "love" is a warm feeling, usually romantic or even erotic. In biblical times, love first and foremost conveyed a sense of bonded loyalty. Thus, it was common to refer to people "loving" their king. They didn't often even like their kings. Rather, it meant that they were loyal to the king. So, now, in the reverse, God's loyalty to Israel that had been formed by the covenant agreement at Mt. Sinai, has been set aside... for the time being. The Lord will no longer show Israel that same loyalty (that same love) because Israel has been terribly rebellious and unfaithful.

Verse 16 says: ***<sup>16</sup> Efrayim has been struck down, their root has been dried up, they will bear no fruit. Even if they do give birth, I will kill their cherished offspring.***

Perhaps the most important thing to notice here is the verb tense. Not that Israel WILL be struck down (by God) but that it already has been. Their root being dried up is indeed a metaphor but also an expression. Their root goes all the way back to Abraham, the first Hebrew. However, in likening Israel to a plant, their condition is as a dying nation. Branches of a plant can be pruned off to save it; but when the root is dried up, the death of the plant is assured. Thus, the plant (Israel) has lost all means of bearing fruit (good fruit). The fruit being spoken of is descendants; a continuation of their families. God says this fruit of family, so cherished, will also be killed off. This is a threat that has already been made in earlier verses; however, when something is repeated, it is because it is being emphasized.

Verse 17 reverts to Hosea speaking. Sometimes Hosea quotes God, sometimes Hosea speaks for himself. The final verse of this chapter says bluntly that God is casting Israel aside for the reason that they did not listen to Him. How did God speak to Israel? He did it through His covenant with them. God's written Torah is how God spoke to Israel, and how He speaks to all who want to worship Him. So, Israel's punishments are well-earned and just because they wouldn't listen to God in how to walk in His ways. Honestly, to translate the Hebrew word used here to "listen" completely misses the point. For modern Westerners, listen mostly means passive hearing. The Hebrew is *shema*, and it means to hear and obey. Take the "obey" part out and *shema* loses its meaning.

I will close today with something Douglas Stewart wrote in his commentary on Hosea because it well sums up what has happened.

"Their (Israel's) coming calamities are their own fault. If they had not been blatantly unfaithful, even in their worship, if their deeds had not been evil, or their officials not rebellious, if they had not refused to listen to Yehoveh when he called them to repentance, the situation could have been different."

This is a life lesson that I pray we all learn well and heed. We'll open up Hosea chapter 10 next time.