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The Mission  
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## Hosea 8

If you have your Bibles with you, you can turn with me to the book of Hosea, Hosea chapter eight, as we continue our studies through the book of Hosea. Hosea chapter eight, and we'll be going through the entire chapter tonight Lord willing.

**Hosea 8:1 “Set the trumpet to your mouth! He shall come like an eagle against the house of the Lord, Because they have transgressed My covenant And rebelled against My law.**

**2 Israel will cry to Me, ‘My God, we know You!’**

**3 Israel has rejected the good; The enemy will pursue him.**

**4 “They set up kings, but not by Me; They made princes, but I did not acknowledge them. From their silver and gold They made idols for themselves—That they might be cut off.**

**5 Your calf is rejected, O Samaria! My anger is aroused against them— How long until they attain to innocence?**

**6 For from Israel is even this: A workman made it, and it is not God; But the calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces.**

**7 “They sow the wind, And reap the whirlwind. The stalk has no bud; It shall never produce meal. If it should produce, Aliens would swallow it up.**

**8 Israel is swallowed up; Now they are among the Gentiles Like a vessel in which is no pleasure.**

**9 For they have gone up to Assyria, Like a wild donkey alone by itself; Ephraim has hired lovers.**

**10 Yes, though they have hired among the nations, Now I will gather them; And they shall sorrow a little, Because of the burden of the king of princes.**

**11 “Because Ephraim has made many altars for sin, They have become for him altars for sinning.**

**12 I have written for him the great things of My law, But they were considered a strange thing.**

**13 For the sacrifices of My offerings they sacrifice flesh and eat it, But the Lord does not accept them. Now He will remember their iniquity and punish their sins. They shall return to Egypt.**

**14 “For Israel has forgotten his Maker, And has built temples; Judah also has multiplied fortified cities; But I will send fire upon his cities, And it shall devour his palaces.”**

**Let’s pray.**

So we're still in this larger section in which Hosea is bringing God's covenant lawsuit, if you will, against His people. And up until now, he's come at this in a number of ways. But His goal in all this seems to be to remind the people of Israel what they've done wrong, and to explain to them that there is a judgment coming their way for their sin.

And you might wonder why God through His prophet Hosea just keeps going over and over the same things, but He's trying to bring the people to repentance.

He's like a parent. You know how sometimes you tell your child again and again and again, and you warn them of the consequences, over and over and over; well that's what God is doing here. And psychologists might

tell you that you should never do that, and that you shouldn't tell your children more than twice to do something or not to do it. Because they say, at that point, you're not teaching them to obey, you're just teaching them how to count!

And they may be right about that to a certain extent, but parents most of the time, have the same heart toward their children, as God has for us. And it's because you're gracious and merciful, and you don't really want to have to draw a line in the sand and discipline them. What you really want is for them to be obedient.

And so you just keep explaining to them, and you keep warning them, but if that fails, then eventually they'll leave you with no choice. And there's nothing else you can do. And so this is what God's doing, He's warned them time and time again and they haven't responded; and so He's saying, I'm running out of options here. There's nothing else I can do. You're giving me no choice, because you won't make the right choice.

But here in this moment, He's still showing His mercy, and He's still warning them to wake up, and to realize this terrible position they're in.

And this time he starts off in verse 1 by saying,

**Set the trumpet to the mouth.**

This blowing of the ram's horn, again is to tell folks to get ready for battle. And why do they need to get ready? Because he says, **he shall come like an eagle against the house of the Lord.**

In other words, God has declared a war against his own people, and He's bringing His army against them. And He's trying to wake them up, and cause them to see that they're in great danger, but they don't see their danger.

They're just like many of us, when we're caught up in our sin. We get used to it, and we get comfortable with it, and we don't even see what's so bad about it, because we're so used to it. And we can't see the consequences that are about to come upon us because of our unwillingness to admit our sin.

And so here, God's trying to wake Israel up, and so He calls for the ram's horn to sound the alarm, to let everyone know that the battle's coming, and that God, like a swift eagle, or like a bird of prey, is about to come down upon his people.

And it says here that He's coming down against the house of the Lord.

Now, that's not talking about the temple, or some church building. No, He's talking about the people, and here He's including both the north and the south kingdoms. Both Israel and Judah are in view here. And though He's been speaking mostly to the northern kingdom of Israel, here in this particular verse He's considering both the southern tribes and the northern tribes.

Because together they make up God's house. This is his dwelling place. This is the land where he decided to put his name. And these are his people.

And so God is bringing war against his own family, his own people? And then He tells us why in the last part of verse 1.

He says, **Because they have transgressed My covenant And rebelled against My law.**

To rebel against the law of God is to transgress the covenant of God. You may remember in the book of Deuteronomy towards the end of the book, God gave the law to the Israelites a second time. And the reason He gave it a second time is because the people who heard it the first time had

all died in the wilderness. And so this another generation. And so it's recited a second time.

And we're given this long section towards the end of the book, in which God tells them that if they will obey the law, then here's all these good things that will come upon you. And He lists all these blessings that He will pour out upon his people.

But He also tells them that if they transgress the covenant, then here's a list of curses that will fall upon you. And so here, once again, God is sending Hosea, to act more or less as His prosecuting attorney. And he's saying, here's the charge. You've not kept the covenant. You've rebelled against God's law and so you've transgressed God's covenant.

And what did God tell you would happen if you transgress His covenant? He told you that in no uncertain terms that the curses would come! In other words, there are consequences to your disobedience.

Then in verse 2 it says, that

**2 Israel will cry to Me, 'My God, we know You!'**

This of course is their defense as God bring these charges against them. They say, but God we know you. We're your people. You can't bring a curse on us, we're your chosen people. And come judgment day, Jesus said the same thing is going to happen with people who know about Him, but don't truly follow Him. They too are going to claim to have done all these good things in the name of the Lord, but because they did them in their own strength and because they never truly had a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ, He's going to say to them, "I never knew you".

And then in verse 3

**3 Israel has rejected the good; The enemy will pursue him.**

The good here could possibly refer to God himself, because only God is truly good. But it could also, and is more than likely referring to the blessings of the covenant. Because blessings are a good thing. The blessings which God promised were good, but Israel has rejected those good blessings, and they've chose rather to reap the curses instead.

And then He tells them, He says, **the enemy will pursue you.**

And if you go back and read about the curses in Deuteronomy, this is exactly what God says will happen. He says, nations that speak a tongue that you don't know, they will come, and they will take you far away. The enemy will come in one direction, and you'll flee in seven other directions. And that's what has happened.

God says, You've rejected my covenant. You've transgressed my covenant. You want nothing to do with the good. You could have had the good. You could have had blessings, if only you would have obeyed me, and loved me with all your heart, and your soul, your mind, and your strength, and loved your neighbor as yourself.

All these good things were set before you. They were your birthright, because I entered into this covenant with you, but you didn't want it, at least not enough to do your part.

And then he starts to summarize what they've done. He says, in verse 4,  
**4 “They set up kings, but not by Me; They made princes, but I did not acknowledge them. From their silver and gold they made idols for themselves—That they might be cut off.**

Remember, in the north, they're not under the sons of David as a king. The northern tribes had rejected the Davidic kings. The southern kingdom had David, and then they had Solomon, and then they had Solomon's son,

Rehoboam. But the ten northern tribes rejected Rehoboam, David's grandson, and instead they followed Jeroboam.

Now, God had promised David that there would always be a son of David over the house of Israel. And so that's who was supposed to be the king over the northern kingdom as well, but they rejected that. That's why they split into two separate kingdoms.

So he says, you've set up your own kings, you've set up your own princes. Well, evidently they didn't realize the seriousness of that decision. They didn't realize that in rejecting the Davidic kings, they were rejecting God's covenant, but even more serious, they were rejecting the Messiah. They were rejecting Jesus Christ.

Then he goes on, and he says, from their silver and gold they made idols for themselves that they might be cut off.

And then in verse 5

**5 Your calf is rejected, O Samaria! My anger is aroused against them— How long until they attain to innocence?**

**6 For from Israel is even this: A workman made it, and it is not God; But the calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces.**

So now, he gets to the other great charge. Not only have they rejected God's king, but they've also rejected God's cult. And when I say God's cult, I mean God's religious system. The Old Testament, and the Levitical worship was the cult of Yahweh. These are the things you're supposed to do.

There was a specific place you were supposed to worship. God said, I will pick a place, I will put my name there, and that's the only place you're to gather for worship. And at this point, that place was at the temple in Jerusalem. Earlier, it was in the tabernacle. And they were only to come to God with their sacrifices through the priesthood of Aaron in this certain

place and in the manner prescribed by God and nothing else was permissible.

But they were just doing whatever they wanted to do wherever they wanted to do it. They didn't like being part of God's cult. They wanted their own cult. And so they set up their golden calves to worship, but they were still **claiming** to worship God.

And they said we're still worshiping God, we're not worshiping a false god, or a different god, we're still worshiping you Lord, we're just using this golden calf as an aid, because we don't want to worship you the way you've directed us to worship. We want to worship you the way we want to worship you.

And so they used their gold and their silver to make all these idols and they worshipped God in their own way; and God says, for that, you're going to be cut off.

He says, **Your calf is rejected, O Samaria. My anger is aroused against you!**

And then He tells them what will happen to the golden calf? He says, it's going to be broken to pieces, just like the first golden calf when Moses came down from the mountain, and Aaron and the people were worshiping the golden calf that they and Aaron had made.

And Moses gets angry, and he breaks the stone tablets on which God had written the Law, and then he has the golden calf burned in the fire, and then ground up into dust, and then the dust is thrown into the water, and he makes the people drink of the bitter water.

And God's reminding them here, that just like the first golden calf had no power to bless or curse, these golden calves they're making are no

different. They have no power to bless or to curse either. They're made from their imaginations, just like the other ones were.

And then He reminds them how these idols provoke God to anger, And he cries out, **how long until they attain to innocence?**

In other words, how long will they go their own way and when will they come back to worship Me according to My word, instead of just doing their own thing?

And then he starts to speak a little bit about the judgment that's about to come.

**7 “They sow the wind, And reap the whirlwind. The stalk has no bud; It shall never produce meal. If it should produce, Aliens would swallow it up.**

**8 Israel is swallowed up; Now they are among the Gentiles Like a vessel in which is no pleasure.**

So what do you get when you sow the wind? You reap a whirlwind. In other words, things just get worse. And what He's saying is that the consequences of their sins will be worse than their sin, because what they reap will be much worse than what they sowed. So much worse that it will destroy them.

It's as if they're sowing but nothing grows; it doesn't even bud. And even if it should bud, and even if there should be some food grow, look what happens to it?

Strangers will come and steal it all. And not only will your crops be wiped out, but you'll be wiped out as well.

The whole nation, not just their food, the whole nation's going to be swallowed up.

Why?

Because they've rejected God's covenant and because of that God has rejected them. He said, "You were supposed to be different. You were supposed to be set apart from all the other nations, but you've become just like them.

So now you're like a vessel without honor. You're no longer precious in my sight. You're no longer my prized possession.

Now, I look at you and you look like all the rest of the nations. And so I've cut you off! You're no longer under my blessing.

And then he goes back to the charges again in verse 9.

**9 For they have gone up to Assyria, Like a wild donkey alone by itself; Ephraim has hired lovers.**

**10 Yes, though they have hired among the nations, Now I will gather them; And they shall sorrow a little, Because of the burden of the king of princes.**

So he looks at all these political alliances they've been making with other nations to try and get protection for themselves, which included Assyria. And since Assyria's up in the north, he says they've gone up to make an alliance with Assyria, so that hopefully Assyria won't destroy them.

And instead of relying on God to care for them, they go to Assyria, and they try and make a peace treaty with them instead.

And he says, they're like a wild donkey, or a stubborn mule, and they're being foolish, because when God has had enough, and He decides once and for all to send judgment, they're going to be out of options.

They're not going to be able to go to anybody else and ask for help. They're not going to be able to go out and hire another nation to protect them from God's judgment.

And God says, what you really need to do is repent! You need to stop entering into all these agreements or peace treaties with other nations and you need to turn back to Me.

And remember, this is all building on the original theme, which if you'll remember was the relationship between Hosea and Gomer.

And just like Gomer was unfaithful to her husband Hosea, and went after other lovers, Israel too has become unfaithful to God. And they've committed spiritual adultery by going to all these other nations instead of relying on God.

And then in verse 11

**11 “Because Ephraim has made many altars for sin, They have become for him altars for sinning.**

What He's saying is that Israel shouldn't have made all these other altars. The only altar they were to worship at was at the temple in Jerusalem. But they've made all these other altars and they claim they're for worship. But He says, no, they're just altars for more sin. And the more of them you make; the more your sin increases. And again, this is another example of how they were determined to worship however they wanted to worship.

And then he says in verse 12,

**12 I have written for him the great things of My law, But they were considered a strange thing.**

He says, I've given them my law, and my instruction and so they ought to know better. It's not like they've not been told. They know how to worship; and they know **where** to worship! They have no excuse!

God says, I gave you my word, but you've treated my word like a strange thing. You want the blessings, and my word tells you how to receive

those blessings. And you want my protection and my word tells you how you can receive that protection. And you say you want to worship, and I've told you how to do that as well. But you treat all these things as if they're strange things.

And in verse 13 he says,

**13 For the sacrifices of My offerings, they sacrifice flesh and eat it, But the Lord does not accept them.**

In other words, they're making all these sacrifices, but they're not really doing them for God. And they're not doing them in the way God told them to do them or **where** He told them to do them.

Remember, and he's talked about this before. He said, all these sacrifices and all these offerings, you're not really offering them to Me. You're worshiping yourselves.

You just want to do your own thing. You're just trying to pay me off to get me to look the other way. He says, but I don't accept your offerings, because you're not offering them the way I told you to. I didn't tell you to take your offerings to Dan and Beersheba, and worship with golden calves. I told you to go to Jerusalem and to make your offerings through the priests of Aaron.

But instead you're do it your way and I'm not going to accept it.

And that problem still exists today in many churches. People somehow think they can worship God in whatever manner they want to.

But God hasn't changed. And even though we live in the day of grace, God still has something to say about the way we worship. And though that's a sermon for another day, it's one that we all need to hear and understand. And God's word has plenty to say about how we're to worship.

And God says, whatever I tell you in my word, that's what I want you to do. And if I haven't told you in my word I want you to do it, then don't do it.

In other words, don't get creative. Because when you get creative, I don't accept it.

And we have several examples in the Bible of times when God wouldn't accept the worship of certain people because they didn't worship in the proper manner.

And no doubt, much of the worship in the modern church today is not being accepted by God. God sees it and He says, I've never asked for this. I never asked for a laser light show, or a rock concert.

You know some folks might think these things are a good idea, and they might really like those things themselves, but you know what? It's not about what we like. In fact, that's the problem. It's not about what we like or what we think would make for a good worship service.

A lot of folks think God's only concerned about who we worship and not how we worship. But God says, if you're not worshipping my way, then you're wrong. And when you worship with that kind of an attitude, you're not worshipping God, you're worshipping yourself. You're doing what you want to do, not what God wants you to do.

And so God is chastising them and He says I'm not going to accept your worship.

He says, **And I will remember their iniquity and punish their sins. They shall return to Egypt.**

And then finally in verse 14.

**14 "For Israel has forgotten his Maker, And has built temples; Judah also has multiplied fortified cities; But I will send fire upon his cities, And it shall devour his palaces."**

The idea of temples here would be better translated as palaces. In fact, in the last sentence of this verse, it is translated that way.

So Israel has rejected God's care and they've built their own fortified cities, and they've built all these massive palaces, and they think, now we're okay. We've fortified everything and we have all these walls around us and we've made all these alliances with some of the most powerful nations around us and so we're okay.

But remember how this chapter started? It started with the blowing of the trumpet. The trumpet sound that warned that war was coming.

And so what are they saying?

Well, they're saying, "let it come". We're ready! We're good. We're safe! We can take it. We've fortified ourselves. We're untouchable!

It's like when people say, I don't care what God does. He can send whatever consequences He wants to send. I've got money enough to buy my way out of anything. I've got friends in high places. I've got power. What's God gonna do to me that I can't handle?

Well, all I can say to folks like that is, God have mercy on you and especially on your soul. Because nothing you have is safe, if God wants to take it away, including your life.

And here in this story almost everyone of these folks, both in Israel and later on in Judah, lost everything. And many lost their lives.

Their fortified cities were burned to the ground. Their palaces were destroyed and dismantled stone by stone. And they were exiled to foreign lands and separated from their loved ones and they lost everything they had, because they rejected God's care and God rejected them.

They trusted in themselves, and their own fortified cities, and their own palaces. And they trusted in the nations around about them, and tried

to make a peace treaty with Assyria, and they tried to make a peace treaty with Egypt, and they looked to these foreign nations for protection.

And their only hope of safety was to be under the watchcare and protection of God. But they rejected that.

And that's why he said, you've rejected your maker. You've rejected the One who chose you, the One who pulled you out from among all these other nations and made you a special people.

You've violated My covenant by rejecting Me as your God and all the good and all the blessings that only I can give. And the only thing left; is for the curse to fall upon you.

Well, I hate to end on a sour note, but that's where we are tonight. It's ended badly for the people of Israel because they've rejected all the good that God wants to give them. And the real sad thing is, we see that happening all around us don't we? People rejecting the goodness of God and choosing instead to go their own way.