

Pastor Grady Covin
 The Mission
 February 25, 2026

Hosea Chapter 5

If you have your Bibles with you, you can turn with me to Hosea chapter 5. Hosea chapter 5. And this evening we're going to be looking at the entire chapter and then three verses into chapter 6.

These verses just seem to logically all go together and so we're going to study them as one unit tonight.

**5 :1, "Hear this, O priests!
 Take heed, O house of Israel!
 Give ear, O house of the king!
 For yours is the judgment,
 Because you have been a snare to Mizpah
 And a net spread on Tabor.**

**2 The revolvers are deeply involved in slaughter,
 Though I rebuke them all.**

**3 I know Ephraim,
 And Israel is not hidden from Me;
 For now, O Ephraim, you commit harlotry;
 Israel is defiled.**

**4 "They do not direct their deeds
 Toward turning to their
 God, For the spirit of harlotry is in their midst,
 And they do not know the Lord.**

**5 The pride of Israel testifies to his face;
Therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity;
Judah also stumbles with them.**

**6 “With their flocks and herds They shall go to seek the Lord,
But they will not find Him;
He has withdrawn Himself from them.**

**7 They have dealt treacherously with the Lord, For they have
begotten pagan children.
Now a New Moon shall devour them and their heritage.**

**8 “Blow the ram’s horn in Gibeah, The trumpet in Ramah!
Cry aloud at Beth Aven, ‘Look behind you, O Benjamin!’**

**9 Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke;
Among the tribes of Israel I make known what is sure.**

**10 “The princes of Judah are like those who remove a
landmark;
I will pour out My wrath on them like water.**

**11 Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, Because he
willingly walked by human precept.**

**12 Therefore I will be to Ephraim like a moth, And to the
house of Judah like rottenness.**

**13 “When Ephraim saw his sickness, And Judah saw his
wound, Then Ephraim went to Assyria And sent to King Jareb;
Yet he cannot cure you, Nor heal you of your wound.**

**14 For I will be like a lion to Ephraim,
And like a young lion to the house of Judah.
I, even I, will tear them and go away;
I will take them away, and no one shall rescue.**

**15 I will return again to My place
Till they acknowledge their offense.
Then they will seek My face;
In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.”**

**6:1, Come, and let us return to the Lord;
For He has torn, but He will heal us;
He has stricken, but He will bind us up.**

**2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will
raise us up, That we may live in His sight.**

**3 Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord.
His going forth is established as the morning;
He will come to us like the rain,
Like the latter and former rain to the earth.**

Let’s pray.

So last time in chapter four, Hosea was bringing God's charge against His people. If you'll remember it was like we were in a court room, and we were hearing from the prosecutor as he brought all these legal charges against the defendant. And of course God was the prosecutor and Israel was the defendant.

And here in this chapter he describes for us the impending judgment that is about to take place against Israel and the northern kingdom; and eventually, of course, it will take place in the southern kingdom as well.

And in this first verse it's very clear as to who he is talking to. He's speaking to three groups. He's speaking to the priests, who are the so called religious leaders, and then he's speaking to the house of Israel, which represents the people; and then lastly he's speaking to the king or the political leaders in the nation. And so that includes pretty much everybody.

And he says in no uncertain terms, judgment is coming, and it's coming upon all of you. And there'll be no escape for anyone. No-one is innocent.

And He says, judgment is coming upon you, because you've become a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread on Tabor. And here he's using the picture of hunting for birds to describe how the priests are misleading the people.

Back then, when they would hunt for birds, they would spread out a net on the ground. And they would throw some bird seed or whatever in the middle, and when the birds would come down, they'd release this spring and the net would fold up and the birds would be caught in the net.

And he said, that's what's happening with the leadership of Israel, they've been a snare to the people. They've thrown out the seeds of wickedness, and the worship of false idols, and especially the worship of the golden calves that were brought in by Jeroboam and they've ensnared the people.

And the reason God was so upset about all this, is because He knew the future. He knew what was going to take place after the reign of Jeroboam as a result of what these evil leaders had introduced to the people.

And if you look at the kings that reigned after Jeroboam, they all followed in his footsteps to some degree. Out of the 18 kings of the northern kingdom that would follow, all eighteen, at least to some degree, were godless leaders.

And so he says, God's judgment is coming, especially upon the leadership. Because while they should have been leading the people in godliness, instead they've become a snare. They've set a trap for the people.

And then in verse 2, he mentions the revolters. These are the people who have turned away from the God. These are the people who were supposed to be God's faithful people, but they weren't.

And He says they too have a responsibility in all this. They're deeply involved in the slaughter and so I rebuke them everyone.

Now, what's he mean when he says 'they were involved in the slaughter'?

Well, more than likely, he's referring to the slaughter of the animals that they were bringing as so called sacrifices. They were bringing these animals and sacrificing them, thinking that they were somehow honoring God. But because it was a superficial sacrifice, and not a sacrifice from their heart, they were just butchering or slaughtering all these animals for no real purpose. It was all for show.

And what God is saying is that, "You don't really care about me. This is not an act of worship. You come and you kill these animals and you think I ought to be pleased. But then you go on and you live your life of sin just like before and yet you think I'm supposed to be good with that.

But God says, I know your heart. I know your true motives. And I know you're just trying to pull the wool over my eyes. But guess what? It's not working.

And it doesn't work today. People can come to church and drop their offering in the offering plate and they can get up and sing the words to songs that are supposed to bring honor to God, and they can listen to the sermon, but if they leave church with the same sins that they came with, and leave unaffected by the presence of God, and the word of God, then they've just wasted their time. They've not come to worship God. They've come to check off a box.

And God's not going to look at people like that as worshippers. He's going to look at them just like He looked at the Israelites, as butchers or slaughterers.

You see the purpose of the sacrifice was to cause a person to look at that animal and say to himself, "this is what I deserve". This death that this animal's about to suffer, is the punishment **I** deserve for **my** sin.

And the purpose was to cause a person to be broken over their sin and to confess and to repent. But they weren't broken over their sin. They were just going through the motions like so many do today. And they were just checking off a box. And saying, "There God, I did my duty and there it is, take it, or leave it.

Well, God left it. He wouldn't accept it, because it wasn't genuine.

And some folks today try and do the same thing. They try and pass off a worship that's not genuine, but God knows the difference. And it won't work and He won't accept it. Not yesterday, not today and not tomorrow!

And then in verse 3 He says, I know, Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me. For now, Ephraim, you commit harlotry. Israel is defiled.

Ephraim was the lead tribe in the northern kingdom of Israel. And many times Israel is referred to as Ephraim.

Now, Ephraim if you'll remember, was one of Joseph's two sons. The other was Manasseh. And the twelve tribes of Israel were made up of all the sons of Jacob, which Joseph was the third born.

Now, normally the first born son in a family would receive a double portion, or a double inheritance, and in this case that would have been Reuben. But Reuben sinned and so he was disqualified. Next was Simeon,

but Simeon also sinned and was disqualified. And so Joseph, being third in line, became the one would receive the double portion.

But if you look through the list of the twelve tribes, you won't find a tribe of Joseph, because there is no tribe of Joseph. Joseph's tribe became two tribes because he was the one to receive the double inheritance. And the way that worked is that Jacob, Joseph's father adopted Joseph's two sons, and they would receive Joseph's portion.

And so Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's sons make up the double portion. And because Ephraim is the larger of the two, the northern kingdom of Israel is sometimes called by his name.

Also Jeroboam came out of that tribe. And of course he was the one who would lead them into idolatry and sin.

So he says, I know Ephraim; and Israel's not hidden from me.

In other words, they may think they're getting away with all this stuff. And they may think that God doesn't see, or that God's so far away that He doesn't really notice what we're doing.

But God says, I know exactly what you're doing!

And so that's why he just denounced their sacrifices. He said, I know what you're doing when you come before me with all these animals. You're not coming to worship me. You're worshipping idols. You're harlots. You're prostituting yourselves by selling yourselves to the gods of other nations. And so He says, **all of Israel is defiled.**

And then in verse 4 **He says, and they don't turn or repent.**

And the reason they won't repent is because they have a spirit of harlotry is in their midst. They don't have the spirit of God. They don't know the Lord! And in essence they're demon-possessed. This is a demonic

spirit that they have invited in. And it has such a hold them, that they **can't** repent! It's as if they don't even know the Lord anymore.

And they're just like Gomer, Hosea's wife!

How was it that she could just go off and live with other men and forget her husband like that?

It was because she had forgotten all about the God who had redeemed her, the God who had set her free, and took her out of Egypt. And by going off like she did, it was as if she was a stranger to God.

And we see people like that all the time. We see people who have never been saved who are obviously possessed by Satan, but we also see Christians sometimes, who used to walk with the Lord, but they've walked away from the Lord and they've opened the door for Satan by giving in to some sin or addiction and now they're so oppressed by demons that they're unrecognizable as a child of God.

And Israel had done the same thing. They were blinded by their sin.

And then in **verse 5 It says, the pride of Israel testifies to his face, and therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity. And then He says that Judah also stumbles with him.**

And this "pride of Israel" here is more than likely referring to Israel's pride in themselves. Now, sometimes they were called the "pride of Israel" because they were the pride of God's eyes, but here I believe God is referring to their own pride or their own self-sufficiency, which of course God hates.

And in essence, what they're saying, is that we don't really need God. We can do things our own! We can figure all this out on our own! And so they wouldn't cry out unto God. And towards the end of this chapter, we're going to see how it will be their own pride that will testify against them.

So God says, you didn't cry out to me, because you thought you were self-sufficient and you thought you didn't need me. And the result is going to be that Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their iniquities. In other words, the entire northern kingdom will fall.

But then he says, and Judah also will stumble with them. And of course we know that will happen just like God has said, when the Babylonians will come and take over the southern kingdom of Judah and destroy the temple and exile the people. And that will occur or did occur in 586 BC.

And then in **verse 6, he says, and with their flocks and herds, they shall seek the Lord, but they will not find him. He has withdrawn himself from them.**

Again, their going to bring their flocks, and their herds as an offering to the Lord, and they're going to seek the Lord, because they're gonna realize they're in trouble, but it's going to be too little, too late.

God says, but I'll be far from them. And I won't receive their offerings.

And so again, we see that we can't buy God's favor. God doesn't need our money or our possessions! God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, along with the hills! And so God doesn't need anything we have.

All God wants from us is a broken heart. All God wants, is for us to sincerely pray that prayer that King David prayed in Psalms chapter 51. And I love this passage of scripture.

**Psalm 51:10, Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.**

**11 Do not cast me away from Your presence,
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.**

**12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.**

**13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
And sinners shall be converted to You.**

**14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your
righteousness.**

**15 O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth
Your praise.**

**16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it;
You do not delight in burnt offering.**

**17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not
despise.**

God doesn't want our external sacrifices. God wants our heart. But when we're not willing to give that to Him, like these stiff-necked Israelites, God says, they'll seek me, but they won't find me, because I've withdrawn myself from them.

And in **verse 7**, he gives us more evidence of their rebellion. And He says, **they've dealt treacherously with the Lord.**

Again, they've turned aside. They've not kept their covenant with God. They've broken their covenant, and like Gomer, they've given birth to illegitimate children, or begotten and pagan children.

In other words, the children of the children of Israel are illegitimate, because they've been raised up in idolatry. The Israelites were supposed to be teaching their children to love the Lord God, but instead they were teaching them to worship golden calves. And so He says, these are not my children.

These are illegitimate children, because you've not raised them in the Lord. And as parents and grandparents, we need to think about that. Are we raising our children as children of the Lord, or are we raising them as if they belong to some other God, and giving them over to the world?

And then He says in the last part of **verse 7, a new moon shall devour them and their heritage.**

Now, back in Biblical times, when you took out a loan for something, it was usually required to be paid back within a month's time. And since they didn't have clocks, or smart phones to remind them when that month was up, they used the moon to keep up with time.

And so from new moon to new moon, they knew that was a month, and so they would know when their debt would be coming due by watching the different phases of the moon.

And what God is saying here is that there is coming a time, and it's a not going to be a long period time, but rather a short period of time, when I'm going to bring judgment upon you. This isn't something way off in the future. This is something that is going to take place very, very soon; and we know from history that this judgement did come quickly.

And then in verse 8 he cries out,

**8 “Blow the ram’s horn in Gibeah, The trumpet in Ramah!
Cry aloud at Beth Aven, ‘Look behind you, O Benjamin!’**

**9 Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke;
Among the tribes of Israel I make known what is sure.**

When they would blow the rams horn, it was a signal to the people that a battle was coming. That was the way they communicated back then. Certain sounds made by the horn meant different things. And so He says, blow the horn and sound the alarm, so everybody will know that the day of

battle is coming. And they would basically go from the north to the south, and in every city, they would blow this ram's horn to sound the alarm to warn everyone that destruction was coming.

And then in the last part of **verse 9 he says, Among the tribes of Israel I make known what is sure.**

In other words, the prophet Hosea is saying, I'm showing you things that will be. These things are going to happen. With all certainty they're going to happen.

And then he says in verse 10, **the princes of Judah are like those who remove a landmark. I will pour out my wrath on them like water.**

You weren't supposed to move the ancient landmarks. God had divided up the land by lot and every tribe had their appointed place. And they weren't to sell it, or trade it and it was illegal to move these landmarks.

And God is saying, Judah who is the southern kingdom, is like people who go and move the landmarks. In other words, they too were doing something they weren't supposed to do.

And it wasn't that they were literally physically moving landmarks, but they were moving the spiritual boundaries that God had set for their lives in His covenant with them. And namely that would have been the Ten Commandments, which was the law of God. And Judah, God said, had moved the boundaries! And they had decided in their own minds what was right and wrong and so now they were gonna live by their own rules, instead of God's rules.

In other words, they had added to and subtracted from the word of God and from the law of God.

But God didn't tell them the law to just up and abandon it. And He didn't give them the authority to change it. Just like He doesn't give us the authority to add to or take away from or change His word today. And so God says, I'll pour out my wrath on them like water.

And we all know how devastating water can be. When those floods this past year washed away that girls camp in Texas. That was sudden and violent and devastating and deadly. And that's the picture that God is painting here for the Israelites. His judgement is going to be certain and swift and very destructive.

And then in verse 11. He says Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked by human precept.

And so Ephraim is being oppressed, or broken. And God's judgment is coming, and the reason it's coming, is because they've not walked by the statutes of God, but rather by their own human precepts.

And rather than obeying God's law they were obeying Jeroboam's law. And rather than worship God, they were worshipping these golden calves that Jeroboam had set up.

And then he begins to describe what their suffering will be like, and in **verse 12, he says, therefore I will be to Ephraim like a moth, and to the house of Judah like rottenness.**

Not too long ago, clothes were made of natural fibers, like cotton and wool and silk. Today they're made using man made fibers. But they used to be natural and so people would have to keep moth balls in their closets to keep the moths from eating holes in their clothes. Some of you remember that I'm sure.

Well, when these moths would get in your closet and eat your clothes, they were very quiet about it. In fact, you probably wouldn't even know it until you went to put on your shirt and it looked like somebody had shot it with bird shot.

And so this is the idea of something that's very quiet, but very destructive. And what God is saying, is that this is what I'm like to Israel and Judah. I'm just quietly eating away at them. And it's me doing it, it's not somebody else doing it. I'm the One quietly destroying my people, both the northern tribe and the southern tribe, from the inside out.

But then in verse 13 he describes how both Ephraim and Judah respond? He says, they see what's going on, they see they're being destroyed, Ephraim sees his sickness, and Judah sees his wounds, and they both recognized there's something going wrong, but then it says, Ephraim goes to Assyria and appeals to King Jared the king of Assyria.

In other words, when they saw what was happening in their land, they went and they cried out to the king of Assyria and they ask him to come help them. They said, look, we're being bullied by all these other nations, and we're having all this trouble in our land, so we want you to come and be our savior.

But God says, the king of Assyria can't help you, because he's not the one bringing judgment down on you! I am! I'm the one who's bringing judgment. And so if you think you can escape my judgment by some human means, then you're mistaken. The king of Assyria can't cure what ails you.

And then He says, before I was like a moth and a worm, quietly behind the scenes bringing judgment, but now I'm going to be like a lion.

Verse 14, For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, And like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear them and go away; I will take them away, and no one shall rescue.

In other words, I'm going to rip and tear you apart, and then I'm going to take you away.

Just like a lion after he killed his prey would tear it apart and take back some of the meat to his lion's den to eat later or to feed to his cubs. And then He says, nobody can take you out of my mouth. In other words, there is no human rescue. When God brings judgment upon a people, there is no place to run and hide. And there's no other God you can cry to.

When God makes up His mind to bring judgment; there's no-one or no thing that can stop Him.

He says, You can't run to your false gods. They're not going to do you any good. My judgment **will** come upon you.

And then in **verse 15, he says, I will return again to my place,** like a lion going back to his den, and He will stay there until they acknowledge their offense.

He says and **Then they will seek my face. In their affliction, they will earnestly seek me.**

He says, I'm going to do this until they come back to Me, and until they stop going to these other kingdoms and to these other gods. And He says, and I'll wait until that day.

Well, truth is, He's still waiting. Because they've yet to come back to Him, at least permanently.

And then it continues in chapter six.

In verse one it says,

1 Come, and let us return to the Lord; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.

2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.

So when God's judgment comes, and they realize there's no place else to go, and that they can't use their own resources to put off the hand of God, and when they realize that no other kingdom is going to come to their rescue, then and only then do they cry out, to God for deliverance.

They finally come to their senses and they say, **come, let us return to the Lord.**

Let us return to the God of Israel, the God of our fathers. We know that it is God who has torn us apart, but we also know that it is God who will heal us. This same God that pours out judgment, is the same God who is merciful and gracious to those who repent.

And so they say to themselves, let's turn back to Him. We believe again in His mercy, and so let's turn back to Him, instead of all these other folks.

And then it says, and **after two days, He'll revive us. On the third day, he'll raise us up that we might live in his sight.**

And the idea here is that they believed their judgment would be short lived. They believed that because they had returned to God and repented that it wouldn't be very long before they would be restored.

But just like that principle we so often use on Friday night tells us.

The consequences for our sin is not up to us; it's up to God. And it's incalculable. In other words, we can't know, or determine what they will be.

Well, the truth is, the nation of Israel as a whole has still not fully returned to the Lord, nor will they until the end of time, when Jesus comes back.

But thank God many individuals, including many Jews have turned to the Lord for salvation, and thank God, anyone Jew or Gentile can turn to Him and be saved, if they're willing to humble themselves and believe the word of God, and believe that Jesus died for their sins, and will confess their sin and repent of their sins and follow Christ, anyone can be saved.

And if someone would sincerely pray that prayer tonight, God is faithful and just to hear your prayer, and He is more than willing to save you and give you a brand new life. And in a just a few minutes when we come to the altar if there's someone here tonight who needs Jesus, all you have to do is pray that simple prayer and Jesus will save you. If you need help just grab hold of somebody's hand and ask them to pray with you. Most anybody here can lead you in that prayer.