

## Hosea Chapter 5

Verses 1-5: This chapter begins by addressing three groups, the priests, the “house of Israel,” and the “house of the king”.

**Hosea 5:1 "Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment [is] toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor."**

Hosea addressed the priests, the people and the royal family; the 3 imperatives demand attention. The religious and civil leaders had entrapped the people (compare 6:9; 7:7).

“Mizpah” and “Tabor” were prominent sites of Baal worship. There was a Mizpah of Benjamin in the south and a Mizpah of Gilead, east of the Jordan. Tabor was located in the north. Depending on which Mizpah is in view, the land is depicted as sin-ridden from south to north, or from east to west, in other words, sin was everywhere.

This is speaking of this judgment being not just on the people, but the king, as well. The sin in the land was so great; it had even reached the priests. Places that had been a great advantage to them, like Mizpah and Tabor, had now been converted into places to worship false gods.

**Hosea 5:2 "And the revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I [have been] a rebuker of them all."**

The revolvers are all those that have cast off the law of God, both in matters of religion and civil government.

"Are profound": Dig deep to hide their counsels, or have taken deep root since their apostasy from God, and revolt from the house of David.

"To make slaughter": All their religion is but a butchering of cattle, no sacrifice to God; or, which is worse, a murdering of men.

"Though I" Hosea, “have been a rebuker": A preacher, who ill the name and word of God have sharply inveighed against their brutish religion and their bloody slaughters.

"Of them all": None that have been guilty have escaped the reproof; I have declaimed against idolatrous priests and bloody usurpers, such as were in those times, Shallum, Menahem, and Pekah.

It appears, there was much opposition to going up to Jerusalem to worship. There were people, who had revolted against God, lying in wait to kill them, as they passed by Tabor and Mizpah.

**Hosea 5:3 "I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, [and] Israel is defiled."**

Ephraim, the tribe so called, as distinguished from "Israel" here and the other nine tribes. It was always foremost of the tribes of the northern kingdom. For four hundred years in early history, it, with Manasseh and Benjamin, its two dependent tribes, held the pre-eminence in the whole nation. Ephraim is here addressed as foremost in idolatry.

"Not hid from me": Notwithstanding their supposed profound cunning (Hosea 5:2; Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19).

"Now": Though I have been a rebuker of all them (Hosea 5:2), who commit such spiritual whoredoms, thou art now continuing in them.

Ephraim was the most prominent of the tribes of Israel. Just as many times, Judah was spoken of as both the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, and other times was separated out, so is Ephraim. It appears, Ephraim was even more idolatrous than the other tribes. They had received the right hand blessing, so perhaps they were also, more responsible.

**Hosea 5:4 "They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms [is] in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD."**

"They": Turning from a direct address to Ephraim, he uses the third person plural to characterize the people in general. The Hebrew is against the Margin, their doings will not suffer them" the omission of "them" in the Hebrew after the verb being unusual. The sense is, they are incurable, for they will not permit (as the Hebrew literally means), their doings to be framed so as to turn unto God.

Implying that they resist the Spirit of God, not suffering Him to renew them; and give themselves up to "the spirit of whoredoms", in antithesis to "the Spirit of God" implied in "suffer" or "permit" (Hosea 4:12; Isa. 63:10; Ezek. 16:43; Acts 7:51).

We see in this verse, not only were they practicing idolatry, but they had the spirit of idolatry, as well. They have turned their will over to evil, instead of to God. Plain and simple, they have fallen in love with false gods and left the One True God.

**Hosea 5:5 "And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them."**

"Pride of Israel doth testify to his face": Israel's pride in idolatry provided self-incrimination (compare 7:10).

The words "Ephraim" and "Israel" are interchangeable here.

God had blessed Israel and Judah above other nations. Instead of this humbling them, they had become very proud, and thought themselves better than others. They had become so proud, they believed they could do anything, and God would still bless them. They had brazenly worshipped false gods. They thought they were above sin.

Verses 6-7: Her religious sacrifices and monthly festivals no longer brought divine favor, only judgment. God “has withdrawn from them” (see note on 4:17).

**Hosea 5:6 "They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find [him]; he hath withdrawn himself from them."**

They shall seek to make their peace with God and to induce him to be favorable to them by a multitude of sacrifices; but they shall not find their expectations answered. This is spoken of the people of Judah, mentioned in the latter part of the foregoing verse. Who, though they attended the temple worship, yet did it without any true sense of religion, for which the Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah particularly reprove them.

The prophecy seems to look forward to the times of Hezekiah and Josiah, declaring that the attempts of those God fearing kings to reclaim the people from idolatry, and to restore the true worship of God, would fail of any durable effect, and would not avail to reverse the doom pronounced upon the guilty people.

“But they shall not find him”: Whilst he might have been found they would not seek him, now as a punishment, and to leave them remediless, God will not be found of them; he will not either accept a sacrifice, or pardon their sin, or return to save them.

All of the sacrifices they would make now would be totally unacceptable to God. God warned them of the danger of worshipping false gods, and they had not taken heed. Now, it is too late.

**Hosea 5:7 "They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions."**

If the statement “the New Moon shall devour them” is the correct translation, it probably means that these festivals, which had become tainted by Israel’s disobedience, would be additional cause for God’s judgment (see Isa. 1:13-14). Another option is to translate it “[God] the New Moon [festival].

God had forbidden His people to marry the heathen people around them. This is possibly, where they picked up their practice of worshipping false gods. This could also be speaking of their unfaithfulness to God, and then their children being unfaithful to God. The fact that a month is mentioned here, could be telling them that it would be just a short time until the enemy would come and overcome them. Note that God has to allow this to happen. They could not attack God's people without God's permission.

Verses 8-15: “Gibeah, Ramah,” and “Beth-aven” are cities belonging to the tribe of Benjamin in the south. They will be on military alert.

“After thee, O Benjamin:” the battle cry used in the day of Joshua will be reactivated.

“As a moth ... as rottenness:” Because God took His presence from Israel, His judgment will eat away at His nation slowly but surely.

**Hosea 5:8 "Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, [and] the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud [at] Beth-aven, after thee, O Benjamin."**

The enemy was already upon them and thus her watchmen were to sound the alarm (Num. 10:9).

“Gibeah ... Ramah”: Located on Judah’s northern border with Israel.

“Beth-aven” (Bethel). situated in southern Israel (4:15). All three were strategic defense cities.

“Benjamin”: Used to refer to the whole southern kingdom.

These places mentioned are the line of attack. It shows the progression of the battle. The cornet was an instrument that could be heard from great distance, and the silver trumpet was blown to call the people to battle. Beth-haven was a place near, and the trumpet could be heard by Benjamin.

**Hosea 5:9 "Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be."**

It shall not be lightly rebuked, nor even more grievously chastened; it shall not simply be wasted by famine, pestilence, and the sword; it shall be not simply desolate, but a desolation, one waste, in the day of rebuke, when God brings home to it its sin and punishment. Ephraim was not taken away for a time; it was never restored.

“I have made known that which shall surely be”: "Doubt not that this which I say shall come upon thee, for it is a sure saying which I have made known;" literally, one well-grounded, as it was, in the mind, the justice, the holiness, the truth of God. All God's threatenings or promises are grounded in past experience.

So it may also be, as though God said, "Whatever I have hitherto promised or threatened to Israel has come to pass. In all I have proved Myself true. Let no one then flatter himself, as though this were uncertain, for in this, as in the rest, I shall be found to be God, faithful and true."

This just speaks of the surety of the coming battle and their captivity. God has given them ample warning, and they have not taken heed.

**Hosea 5:10 "The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: [therefore] I will pour out my wrath upon them like water."**

“Judah” had followed in the sinful footsteps of Israel. Hosea compared Judah’s greedy princes to those who move boundary stones in order to steal land from others. The Law condemned this practice (Deut. 19:14; 27:17).

“Remove the bound”: Boundaries, marked by stones, could be easily moved at night. Moving them was tantamount to stealing land from a neighbor (Deut. 19:14; 27:17; Prov. 22:28; 23:10). Worse, Israel’s leaders were moving spiritual lines established by God (compare verse 11).

This is speaking of a time when God's fury has come up in His face, and He has poured His wrath on His unfaithful. It appears, they had moved the landmarks, that God had strictly forbidden them move. This automatically brings judgment from God.

**Hosea 5:11 "Ephraim [is] oppressed [and] broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment."**

He is delivered over to oppressors by God’s just judgment. Such were Pul and Tiglath-pileser, kings of Assyria. Archbishop Newcome distinguishes between these phrases thus.

“Willingly walked”: It was not forced upon them, they did it willingly. Though there was a law commanding, yet there was in the people a forwardness and too great a readiness, to comply and obey that law which made idolatry the establishment in the ten tribes.

“After the commandment”: To forbear going to the temple, and to worship the calves at Dan and Beth-el, as Jeroboam son of Nebat required.

God allowed Ephraim to be oppressed and broken by his neighbors, as judgment from God for his unfaithfulness to God.

**Hosea 5:12 "Therefore [will] I [be] unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness."**

Hosea used similes to create vivid pictures of God’s wrath toward both kingdoms of sinful Israel (Job 13:28). God’s judgment would slowly but surely bring about the demise of both Israel and Judah, much like “moths” and “rottenness” slowly eat away at an object until it is destroyed. The sinner overlooks this erosion of his conscience and character. Only God can awaken him to his condition.

A garment riddled by a moth is ruined. The moth eats away at the material, until it is of no use. "Rottenness" speaks of decay from within. For a long time, Judah's rottenness will not show. This is saying, their destruction will not come instantaneously, but will be progressive until they are destroyed. We certainly know this to be true with Judah, because Babylon took many years to totally destroy them.

Verses 13-15: Instead of asking God for help, Israel turned “to Assyria” (2 Kings 15:19-20; 17:3-4), but even this powerful nation could not save them from God’s wrath. Only when they truly repented to God would the people be saved.

**Hosea 5:13 "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah [saw] his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound."**

“King Jareb”: “Jareb” means “warrior” and refers to the king of Assyria, to whom Israel (2 Kings 15:19-20), and later Judah (2 Kings 16:5-9), turned to for help.

It appears from the verse above, that Ephraim and Judah became aware they had a problem. The sad thing was that Ephraim did not go to God with the problem, but went to the Assyrians. Neither was willing to admit that their problem was because of their worship of false gods. The world has no answers to problems then or now. The worldly king Jareb was no help at all.

Verses 14-15: Foreign assistance would be of no value, since the Lord was orchestrating punishment at the hands of the Assyrians. He would remove Himself until “they acknowledge their guilt” and “seek My face” (compare 3:5).

**Hosea 5:14 "For I [will be] unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, [even] I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue [him]."**

“As a lion”: First the trans-Jordanic tribes, then additional provinces, and lastly the whole population, were carried away as in the teeth of a beast of prey (compare Amos 3:6). Assyria is here referred to as represented by Tiglath-pileser. A similar fate overtook Jerusalem (in 587 B.C.), at the hands of Babylonia, in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chron. 36:4-10; 2 Kings 24:10-16; 2 Kings 25:1-11).

None shall rescue him: none have courage to attempt or power to affect a rescue, the prey must hopelessly perish; so it will be with Ephraim and Judah, when God appears as a lion against them.

The destruction of Ephraim is actually a little worse than the destruction of Judah. Perhaps that is why God speaks of Himself as being as a lion to Ephraim, and a young lion to Judah. The young lion would not do as much damage as the lion. Notice that God tells them of the many battles that will take place, when He says; He will "tear and go away". This is a judgment of God, and no one will be able to stop it.

**Hosea 5:15 "I will go [and] return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early."**

Tenderness blends with judgment, and insulted love bleeds and hopes. The image of the lion is dropped. Jehovah speaks of “His own place”, Heaven. He will cause all manifestations of His

regard for them to cease till “they suffer punishment, and seek my face,” and, like the prodigal in the flush of a new morning, will arise and go unto the Father.

“Till they acknowledge their offence”: Till they confess and humble themselves for their sins.

“And seek my face”: Me their God, my mercy, and my law; their Sovereign as well as Savior.

“In their affliction they will seek me early”: In deep distresses they will, at least some will, seek me diligently, as indeed they did at the end of Judah’s seventy years’ captivity.

This speaks of the time being extended for their captivity. The lion tears at its victim and then carries it away. The lion then goes to his den and rests. This is also, what this is speaking of here. God will allow all of these terrible things to happen to them. He will not intervene and stop it, as He has in the past. It is such a shame that they have to be in such destitute condition, before they reach out to God. The captivity is to cause them to repent and turn back to God. God will not seek them, they must seek Him. Because of the great affliction, they will seek God sooner than they would, had they not suffered so greatly.

### **Hosea Chapter 5 Questions**

1. Who is verse 1 addressed to?
2. Name two places that they had turned into places to worship false gods.
3. What were the revolted opposed to?
4. Why is Ephraim spoken of separately from Israel?
5. Why was it even worse for Ephraim to stray from God?
6. What had they done, that was even worse than practicing idolatry?
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Israel doth testify to his face.
8. What effect should it have had on Ephraim and Judah, when God blessed them above others?
9. They thought they were above \_\_\_\_\_.
10. What effect would their sacrifices have on their relationship to God?
11. Who had God forbidden them to marry?
12. What does the mention of a month in verse 7 indicate?
13. Blow ye the \_\_\_\_\_ at Gibeah.

14. What instrument was blown to call them to war?
15. What does verse 9 speak of?
16. Why was God so angry with them in verse 10?
17. The oppression by Ephraim's neighbors was for what?
18. God will be to Ephraim as a \_\_\_\_\_.
19. He would be to the house of Judah as \_\_\_\_\_.
20. Who did Ephraim seek help from, when he saw his sickness?
21. Was he any help?
22. What was the difference in the destruction of Ephraim and Judah?
23. What does the statement "tear and go away" mean?
24. Where does God go, when all of this is happening?
25. When will God help them?