

This lesson, lesson number 10, continues God's outline to Israel for the judgment that they are about to face. Actually, we will learn in this lesson that judgment, though seemingly small, has already started. God has already in previous chapters outlined the *sin* of Israel. God is so good He will never bring judgment without reason and without warning. He is so merciful He will always first ensure that people understand their failures. Israel has sinned in many ways. They have sinned in their personal life by turning to more pleasure of the flesh. They have sinned in their spiritual life by following false gods and turning their back upon the true living God.

Why is the scripture of this lesson relevant to society today? God has not changed and cannot change. If God judged Israel for fleshly whoredom and spiritual whoredom, He will also judge America and other nations likewise. Thus, we can study the book of Hosea knowing for certain that judgment is coming to this society. I truly believe that judgment will fall after the rapture. God will, any moment, take His remnant of believers safely to heaven. Then, the second flood of judgment will fall. As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man. What is the world like today? It is like it was in Noah's day. When God had placed Noah and his family safe in the ark with his family, God sent judgment. When the true believers are gathered safely in the rapture judgment will fall.

Israel knew better regarding their sin. How? They had the Law of Moses and the good prophets to preach to them the Word of God. America and the world have the Bible and good preachers to preach to them. We stand without excuse. Judgment is on its way. The first flood was a flood of water. The next flood will be a flood of fire.

The book of Hosea was written somewhere around 785 B.C. That was almost 2800 years ago. The issues in this book are as relevant today as they were back then.

(verse 8)

Cities mentioned in verse 8, Gibeah, Ramah, and Bethaven, belong to the tribe of Benjamin in the South. This verse eight indicates since they are just south of the northern kingdom, these three cities will be placed on *military alert*. We are always reminded in the Word of God that sin has a tendency to spread. That is one reason God has to stamp it out with judgment. Others near to the sin start sinning as well. Mom and dad, you cannot walk in sin and not have a negative influence upon your children

who are innocent. One spouse cannot walk in sin without the fruit of the sin influencing the spouse walking with God. So, while the northern kingdom is involved in sin, their neighbors to the south become interested in sin. It was reported on the news this week that a teenage celebrity used an illegal drug in a video aired on TV. That very week sales of that drug skyrocketed! Does that illustrate my point as to the bad influence the Northern kingdom, Israel, has on the Southern kingdom, Judah? So, God, not being a respecter of persons, must bring judgment on both kingdoms.

Do you know why society is in the mess it is in? The generation before us swapped God for a lake, their Bible for a camper, and praying for watching TV.

Note the phrase "*after thee, oh Benjamin.*" This is the battle cry used in the day of Joshua. It will be re-activated in the time of the judgment of God upon the northern kingdom by the invasion of the Assyrians. The southern kingdom is to ready for battle.

(Verse 9-10)

Ephraim, the northern kingdom, faces total desolation. The Assyrians will come from the north and move southward when they invade. The result will be total desolation of the northern kingdom. Ephraim, the northern kingdom, will become a wasteland, a heap of rubble. When this happens, the door is open for similar judgment to fall upon the tribe of Benjamin in the southern kingdom. The invaders will come from the north southward invading the north and not stopping there, but pressing onward and attacking the southern kingdom.

The princes of Judah, the southern kingdom, were corrupted men that invited the same hand of God's judgment upon the southern kingdom as was going to fall upon the northern kingdom. Verse 10 likens the princes of Judah to those who would "remove the bound." "Bound" speaks of boundary stones used to mark property lines. Today we use stakes and fences most commonly. Moving boundary stones was clearly forbidden in the Law of Moses and carried a curse. We read in Deuteronomy 27:17 "*Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, amen.*" Moving your neighbor's property line was a form of theft punishable by the Law of Moses. By the way, how much property has been stolen by crooks willing to steal by moving property bounds? I suppose today it's harder to do because we require by law all property boundaries to be surveyed and recorded in the courthouse. This is a good law; not all laws are bad. In the old days, much property was in dispute or stolen because someone moved the property line. Neighbors have shot at one another over property lines. In the days of Moses' law such a person was to be cursed for moving his neighbor's landmark. He was a thief. A man that will do this is still a thief.

The princes of Judah were thieves. Why? They were moving the spiritual boundaries. Do you see that happening in this day in which we live? “Oh, a little liquor won't hurt you as long as it's done in moderation.” “Everybody else is doing it so it's okay if I do it.” But with God, whatever was sin in grandpa's day is sin today. If you moved your neighbor's boundary in grandpa's day you were a thief that went to jail. If you move my property line today you are a thief that goes to jail. You see, the **laws of God do not change**. If it was wrong 100 years ago, it's wrong today. Just how hard is that concept for this educated society to grasp? The princes of Judah were guilty of allowing the people to move their moral and spiritual boundaries. Do you understand what the Scripture is saying?

Judah, the southern kingdom, is in trouble just as is the northern kingdom, Israel. God never shows favoritism. God promises to pour His wrath upon the southern kingdom of Judah as if He were pouring out water. The word “wrath” in the Hebrew comes from a root word signifying “to overflow.” God's judgment upon Judah's leaders will be like unto a flood or waterfall. He chastises sin in believers, even some by death. I Corinthians 11:29-30 reads *“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”* Sleep means “dead” as in graveyard dead! Yes, all sin is detrimental to God, but there are some sins that are *out-of-bounds* with God. They will cost you your life!

(Verse 11)

We note in verse 11 the stubbornness of God's people. Ephraim, the northern kingdom, is in trouble because they were stubborn. They are described as *“oppressed and broken.”* The initial phase of God's judgment is already upon Ephraim as Hosea speaks unto them. The moment a child of God steps out of God's will into sin, I am convinced there will be a small voice speak “you shouldn't do that.” Initially, judgment may be small and seem slight. So, though the Assyrians have not yet come to plunder and destroy, Israel is *“oppressed and broken.”* Sin never pays- it collects. Though Israel is experiencing the beginning of God's judgment, they continue to willingly walk after *“the commandment.”* This means they were determined to pursue idols and follow the commands of men instead of God. Do not overlook the word *“willingly.”* This *“commandment”* refers to King Jeroboam's idolatrous acts as leader of Israel. Turn to I Kings 12:26–33 and read this passage. The passage speaks about how Jeroboam as head of the Northern Kingdom directed the people that “there was no need to bother to go to worship the Lord at Jerusalem.” Jeroboam said to them “I'll save you the trip and I will construct for you two golden calves and you can worship them.” He placed one in Bethel, and the other he

placed in Dan. Well, Israel followed his recommendation *willingly*. Remember that word? They never went to Judah and Jerusalem to worship the true and living God upon the altar of God. They stayed close to home and bowed to and brought sacrifices to the calves of the king.

This was a *willing* sin. There are times when men are trapped in sin unexpectedly. They are taken by surprise. It is yet another matter to sin *willingly*. The Bible gives this warning “to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is a sin.” Israel knew not to bow down to the calves made by the king. Had they not learned anything from God's judgment in the wilderness when they bowed down to the golden calf made by Aaron? You bet, they knew better! So, we classify their sin as “willing.” To be trapped in sin is one matter, but to calculate sin is another matter. Ephraim was stubborn. One thing that every person should fear about straying from the Lord is the stubbornness that the Devil can place in your heart when you get involved in sin. Today it is easy to say “if I ever stray in sin, I will rush back to God.” Don't say that! Neither you nor I can ever estimate the stubbornness and pride Satan can instill in our heart over the matter of sin.

The elders of Israel and perhaps many of the people had read this verse: Deuteronomy 8:19 reads “*And it shall be, if thou at all do forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.*” God put the instruction and warning in **writing!** What else can God do?

(verse 12)

Verse 12 begins with the word “therefore.” God is about to act. Because the people have been corrupt and idolatrous, the Lord will discipline them. Are you familiar with the moth? How about the mothball? The “moth” is an insect that loves to eat clothing. The moth eats slowly. In days gone by we placed mothballs in the closet to drive them away so they would not damage the garments. Perhaps you have seen a garment were a moth has eaten a hole in the garment. They make no noise. You don't even know they are present. They are small. Yet, if given enough time, a moth can destroy a coat. God is going to destroy Ephraim as a moth would eat a garment- slowly but surely.

What does God have in store for the house of Judah, the southern kingdom? “Rottenness.” God will use rot to destroy the southern kingdom for their sin. Like Ephraim, the northern kingdom, Judah the southern kingdom will die a slow death. Few things rot overnight. The rotting process takes time. When a body is planted in the earth, in a short while the skin worms appear. Over a period of time the skin worm devours, and the body rots away. Moths and rot can destroy churches. Moths and rot can

destroy individuals as well as families. Churches and individuals and families do not often die overnight. Generally, they die in the fashion of the destruction of rot and the moth.

(Verse 13)

When Ephraim saw his sickness from the moth and Judah his wound from the rot, they went to the wrong doctor for help. They knew there was a problem. If you have been saved and participate in sin, don't act innocent and dumb. You are deceiving no one but yourself.

Where did Ephraim go for help? He went to the nation of Assyria! Why did he not go to God? How many times have we discussed how that sin causes a person to lose common sense and make stupid decisions. Ephraim cried "King Jareb, I am feeling sick, will you please help me?" "What is wrong, Ephraim?" Ephraim may have replied "it seems something is slowly eating at me." "*Jareb*" means "warrior or adversary." This can be likened to a drunkard realizing that alcohol is destroying him, and he goes to the Devil who gave him the alcohol and says "ol' Devil, this alcohol is killing me. Please help me." You may say "this sounds ridiculous." I agree. But remember what we have already discussed how sin destroys our common sense and causes us to make horrible decisions.