

In the previous lesson, God took Israel into His court. In verse one they were guilty of three things: no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God. These were sins of **omission**. The sins of **omission** (no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God) led to the sins of **commission**: swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery. As stated in the previous lesson 6, sins of **omission** lead to sins of **commission**. Applying this message of Hosea, as preached to Israel, unto our own Christian life we must take knowledge that when we forget truth, mercy, and knowledge of God we have begun a descent into sinful living.

(Verse 3-5)

Un-repentant sin always has consequences. Israel must answer to God. In verse 3 the consequences of sin is “*therefore shall the land mourn*” and the inhabitants “*shall languish.*” The nation is turned upside down. Society will become a state of chaos, according to the prophesy of Hosea. There is violence increased upon the land.

We note also that the wickedness of men affects the entire environment and natural world. The selfishness and greed of men cause them to disregard the effects of their actions on others including the environment and the animal kingdom. Verse 3 advises us that the sins of Israel will be visited upon the beast of the field, the fowls of the heavens, and the fish of the sea. When man gets involved in sin, the innocent suffer! Man’s sin has polluted the earth and brought extinction of certain species of animals that God put here. This is an example of the carelessness of men.

The apostle Paul wrote of the pain being endured by creation in Romans 8:22 “*For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*” In this verse, nature is pictured as a woman’s suffering in the agony of childbirth. One day in the glorious millennial, creation will be redeemed just as man has been redeemed. Sin will be removed from the ground, from the vegetation, from the animal kingdom. A glorious earth will result!

In verse 4 Hosea tells people not to accuse, blame, or point their fingers at one another when the land begins to mourn and when men begin to reap the consequences of God's judgment. Blaming others for your problems will not solve the problem, especially when you are at fault.

We note in this verse 4 that there is turmoil in the religious realm. The priests are involved in strife. The priests are corrupt, for they have led the people in the way of idolatry. Now, with verse three and four we see that 1) mankind is in turmoil, 2) the animal kingdom is in turmoil, and 3) the religious kingdom is in turmoil.

What a mess! In all honesty, a lot of the blame for the sins of the people lies with religious leaders. Men no longer preach against sin and extoll the virtues of righteous living. It is unthinkable that the preacher would stand behind the podium and call on people to be “holy as God is holy.” We’ve led people to believe that anything is acceptable as long as it is done in moderation or with good intentions. Shame on the religious leaders for their role in the demise of America.

Verse 5 summarizes the collapse of the nation. The prophets are guilty. They shall fail. The Lord says He will “*destroy thy mother.*” “Mother” refers to the nation of Israel or Jerusalem as the mother of individual Israelites. Much of the blame for Israel’s failure lies with the priests and prophets.

(Verse 6)

The cause of the destruction is given in verse six- “*my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*” Looking back at verse one of this chapter we saw in God’s indictment of Israel that they had no “*knowledge of God*” in the land. Psalms 9:17 reads “*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*” What is destroying America? America is being destroyed by our lack of knowledge of God. God founded America. God birthed America. Our forefathers loved and believed in God. They read his Word. They memorized the Scriptures and placed them into their heart. Look at us today. The average adult in the Baptist Church cannot have a discussion about John 3:16. We know who won the Grammy’s. We know who won the Super Bowl. We know who won the World Series. The lack of knowledge of God in our churches is stunning. Can you believe that there are saved people who do not attend Sunday School where we learn about God? Can you believe there are people who say they are saved who do not come back on Sunday night and Wednesday night because they apparently don’t want any knowledge of God?

The word “*destroyed*” can be translated “*undone.*” Without knowledge of God we come apart. Without knowledge of God we become unraveled. Man is made in the image of God and for the glory of God. Therefore, without God man becomes unglued. Christians can fall apart spiritually, mentally, and emotionally when they forget God. Are you falling apart because of your lack of knowledge and hunger for the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you spiritually on-track or side-tracked in your Christian life? Matthew 22:29 reads “*Jesus answered and said unto them, ye do err; not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.*”

“*Because that thou hast rejected knowledge*” leads us to know that Israel’s rejection of the Lord’s knowledge was *willful*. God promises that He “*will also reject thee.*” God also promises because they reject the knowledge of God that He will also remove

the priesthood. God promises that because they have forgotten the knowledge of God He “*will also forget thy children.*” When a people reject God, God will: 1) reject the individuals, 2) reject the religious organization, and 3) reject the family. What has torn the family apart today? Why do more than one-half of the marriages terminate in divorce? In America the family is shredded because of departure from God. What is your attitude toward God? What is your attitude toward the Bible? What is your attitude toward the church? What is your attitude toward God's family?

(Verse 7)

There are many ways in which Israel had been increased. They had been increased in *wealth*. They had increased in *knowledge*. They had increased in the *religious kingdom* with more priests and prophets and elders and synagogues and churches than ever before. Yes, “*they were increased*” in: knowledge, wealth, and in religion. Yet, the more knowledgeable, wealthy, and religious they became the more sinful they became. America is smarter than ever before. America is wealthier than ever before. America is more religious than ever before. However, the Bible confirms that America stands in no better condition than Israel in the days of Hosea. Why? America has *forgotten* God. We want Him out of our schools. We want Him out of our courthouses. We want him out of our homes.

(Verse 8)

“*They*” refers to the priesthood and the religious leaders. “*They eat up the sin of my people.*” The priesthood has backslid like the people. The priesthood, instead of setting an example for the people, condoned and blessed their sin. Does that sound like America today? There is tremendous pressure on religious leaders to conform to this world. How can you lead a group of people when you are unpopular in their eyes? How can you benefit in your leadership role unless you are approved by the people you lead? The president or the senator does things favorable to the people to gain popularity. However, the preacher can't do that! Yet, some are! Today in America the pulpit has compromised. What you do in your relationship and walk with Jesus Christ as your savior is your business and it is between you and Him. I cannot make people do that which is right. However, God forbid any man stand in this sacred place of the pulpit and condone and bless and applaud the sins of the people. Jeremiah 5:30-31 “*A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?*”

“*They set their hearts on their iniquity.*” The priests set their hearts on the sin of the people. “*Set their heart*” means in the Hebrew “*crave, to breed, passion.*” These men in the priesthood craved the sin of the people for it was profitable unto them. The

priests never rebuked sin but turned their heads to sin and prospered from it. God forbid, yet the Scripture verifies the priests had a passion to prosper from the sin of the people. Do you recall in history when the Catholic Church sold indulgences? For a price one could purchase a permission slip which allowed you to sin. The church profited from it. The priesthood profited from it. Here in Israel the priesthood is profiting from the sin of the people. The same is true in America. One message on sin and hell and repent or perish and judgment to come would empty the mega-churches of this day.

So, instead of trying to lead the people out of sin, the priests encouraged sinful living in order that they themselves may profit. The Bible speaks clearly in John 10:12-13 about preachers who are hirelings and not true shepherds. How can a religious leader stand and approve the sins of the congregation?

(Verse 9-11)

Verse nine reads *“there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their doings.”* The phrase “like people, like priest” indicates there is no difference between the sinner and the priest. The priests and the people stand on level ground in their guilt in regard to sin. So, thus saith the Lord, *“I will punish them for their ways.”* The priests and the people had a corrupting influence on each other. The same hand of God that falls in judgment upon the sinful people will fall upon the sinful priests, for God is not a respecter of persons.

Be not deceived, man cannot prosper in sin. Have you been saved? Are you a child of God? If so, sin won't work. You may get what you want today, but you still will not be satisfied. Sin only makes you hungry for more sin. Lust only makes you hungrier for more lust. Greed only makes you hungrier for more greed. Where in God's word is it said that sin satisfies the soul of a child of God? Any child of God who ever strayed into sin and then comes back to God will say “that lifestyle never satisfied me.” A person who is a child of God and has strayed from God into sin will testify those were miserable days in their life. Sin's sweetness soon sours. The pleasures of sin only last for a season. When you leave the Lord out of your life, your dreams, desires, and efforts are poured into a bag that has holes and you are left with nothing. I know folk today who are walking in sin as children of God and are in mire of the hog-pen. They are not content. They never will be until they leave the path of sin. Why? Sin was never intended to satisfy one of God's children. Listen to Haggai 1:6 *“Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but you have not enough; ye drink, but you are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.”* And listen to Hebrews 11:25 where Moses said *“Choosing*

rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” Listen to Romans 6:21 “what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.”

Verse 10 says *“they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase.”* The chief Canaanite gods, Baal and Asherah, represent the power of fertility and sexual reproduction. Israel stooped so low as to integrate sex and religious worship. Whoredom became a part of their religious rituals. Male worshipers had sex with female temple prostitutes called priestesses. Young women wishing to bear children had relationships with a male priests. Yet God said their efforts to increase fertility would not succeed. How can God bless sin? God will never lead you to do something contrary to His Word. Write that down.

Look at the close of verse 10. Why is Israel in this mess? *“Because they have left off to take heed to the Lord.”* Their eyes were not upon the Lord. He was no longer their master. Unless you want God's wrath upon your life, you had better focus your life on His will for your life.