

A major portion of this ninth lesson relates to God's judgment falling upon Israel for their sin. SIN cannot go unpunished. God has a zero-tolerance policy toward sin. Every sin has two paths: one, it will be judged or, secondly, it will be forgiven of God through the sinner's repentance. Israel refuses to repent. The preaching of the prophets seemed only to harden their hearts as the message of Moses did the heart of Pharaoh. They have shown no indication of being sorrowful for their lifestyle. They are living in whoredom and idolatry and refuse to change. Thus, God has no choice but to deal with them in the form of judgment.

### Chapter 5

(verse 1-3)

The first verse assures us that Israel is on the way to judgment. Not only are the *people* bound for judgment, but the *priests* are as well. Previous verses and chapters of this book have told us that the priests and religious leaders are involved in the same sin the people are involved in. God holds leaders accountable. If you are a parent you are a leader. God will hold you accountable for your actions as one who is responsible to direct the lives of others. Many so-called prophets and preachers involve themselves in sin and look to God for an exemption. "*Hey God, I am special.*" God grants *no* exceptions regarding sin. Religious leaders must face the same righteous, holy God as do the common folk.

God says to Israel and the priest in this verse one "hear ye this." He asked them to "give ye ear." Judgment is coming. The priest and the house of Israel are to pay attention to the words of Hosea. I believe they listened to Hosea's message, but they did not heed it. Same with America today. To listen is one matter; to heed is another matter. If they had repented we would not be reading about God's judgment due them. Thus, we are confident they have not repented nor will they repent, and God knows this.

It is said that they have been "*a snare on Mizpah*" and "*a net spread upon Tabor.*" Mount Mizpah means "lookout point." One perched upon Mount Mizpah should be there to instruct others and warn others of danger. Instead, Israel used this high point to show off their sin to others. Israel was saying "Here we are. Look at us and do as we do." Mount Tabor is yet another high mountain in Israel where Israel entrapped others in their sin.

Verse two reminds us that God has done His part in rebuking Israel, for we find the words "*I have been a rebuker of them all.*" God is fair, honest, faithful, and merciful. He never grabs one of His people carelessly and places them in judgment unless He first warns them of their wrong. What a merciful God He is. The

prophets have been used to pass the message of God to the people to turn from their sin. It has been to no avail. *“The revolters are profound to make slaughter.”* This tells us the people have deeply revolted against God and are determined to lead themselves to slaughter. They were knee-deep in sin. A *rebuker* is a teacher or disciplinary. God used the prophets to try and teach them to avoid sin. However, they would not hear or heed the words of the man of God.

Ephraim is the largest tribe in Israel and frequently it is a synonym for the northern kingdom. It may be that Hosea refers to Ephraim by name because they are the lead tribe in whoredom and idolatry. Rest assured, God knows His people and their bad as well as their good. Note the phrase *“I know Ephraim.”* Nothing is hidden from God. Adam and Eve tried to hide from God but the Lord found them. Moses tried to hide the body of the man he killed but to no avail. Achan tried to hide that which he had stolen from the Babylonians but it was discovered. I Corinthians 4:5 reads *“therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.”* God knows you better than you know yourself. He even knows the number of hairs on your head, for Luke 12:7 reads *“but even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: you are of more value than many sparrows.”*

(Verse 4-7)

In the previous chapter we touched on the topic of how the spirit of whoredom had come upon Israel. (See 4:12). A person may get off track and commit an act of sin and quickly return to God. A person may stray from God and commit several acts of sin before returning to the right path as did King David. However, if a person stays away from God long enough, the “spirit of sin” can visit them. This is tragic. When this spirit of sin moves into one’s life, it is with you every hour of the day every day of the week. The spirit of sin sleeps with you. The spirit of sin rides in your car. It goes to the workplace with you. Such is the case with Israel. They are not just committing a random, occasional act of sin, but they are living in sin.

Men brag and boast that they have power over sin. Never brag in this fashion. Some believe they can turn sin off and on like a faucet. But when men rebel long enough they are overcome by sin. They say they can overcome the wrong but the opposite happens. The phrase *“they will not frame their doings to turn unto their God”* means Israel will not and cannot forsake their sin. Israel seems to have become addicted to sin. God will punish them. Sin never pays. Repeated sin hardens one’s heart and makes sin more

convenient. It becomes harder to repent and easier to sin. How long have you been in sin? If you stay long enough, sin will get friendlier. Rest assured, payday will come! If there be no chastisement, then you are a *bastard* and not a *son*.

Verse 5 testifies once again that Israel will fall. They are headed for God's hand of judgment. So far in chapter 5 we have seen Israel behaving as a snare dragging more and more folk into sin (verse 1). Verse 4 tells us the people have taken on a spirit of sin. Now, verse five gives us another reason God's hand of judgment must fall- **pride!** God hates pride as we see in the book of Proverbs. Pride is still on the list of seven things God hates. Their pride walked up to the face of God and in His face did testify against them! This is a bold statement but one worth making- *a person stooped in pride is most likely involved in sin*. Pride says "no one tells me what to do." Pride says "it's not my fault." Pride says "what I do is no one else's business." Pride says "I will get right with God when I get ready." Pride is a dreadful disease. Look at the book of Proverbs to see the stern warning God gives man concerning the sin of pride.