

WHAT SHALL I DO UNTO THEE?

TEXT: HOSEA 6:1-11

Introduction:

1. Like most of the other Old Testament prophets, Hosea's prophecies look beyond his day all the way down to the second coming of Christ. For example, Hosea 6:1 refers to the future restoration of Israel (cf. 1:10, 11).
2. Hosea 6:1-3 is Israel's response to God's call to repentance (5:15).
3. This prophecy was recorded over 700 years before they crucified their Messiah, and the children of Israel still have not repented (cf. 6:4, 5).
4. One preacher said the theme of Hosea 5 is "God Withdrawn" and the theme of Hosea 6 is "God Dismayed."
5. In Hosea 6:4 the LORD is speaking specifically to Ephraim (representing Israel) and Judah, but these words can be applied to all people -- Jews and Gentiles, lost sinners and disobedient Christians.

I. FUTURE PROMISE (6:1-3)

1. God had judged them. "He hath torn" (6:1; cf. 5:14). But He also will heal and bind their wounds after they truly repent.
2. Hosea 6:2 is a fascinating verse. Many expositors connect it to Ezekiel 37, which describes the restoration of Israel.
3. According to the LORD, a day is like a thousand years. Psalm 90:4 says, "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."
4. Second Peter 3:8 says with the Lord "a thousand years (is) as one day."
5. Therefore, these Scriptures could be an indication of how close we are to seeing Hosea 6:2 fulfilled, now that "two days" have passed since Calvary. I would not press this too far but it is interesting.
6. However, one interprets Hosea 6:2, it is clear that Israel's resurrection as a nation will be based upon our Lord's resurrection on "the third day."
7. But there will be no restoration of Israel until there is true repentance. Their "goodness" did not last long – it was "as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away" (6:4; cf. 13:3).
8. True repentance is not shown until we get to chapter 14, the last chapter. There the nation repudiates its idolatry and acknowledges its

need of God's grace. It will be fulfilled when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back to establish His kingdom.

II. INSINCERE WORSHIP (6:4-6).

1. The beautiful prophecy regarding the restoration of Israel is followed by a plea from God to turn from their evil ways (6:4).
2. The LORD says, "O Ephraim (Israel), what shall I do unto thee?" (6:4). G. Campbell Morgan said of 6:4, "In these words we hear the sob of the heart of God after these people."
3. Their goodness was "as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away" (6:4). Many inconsistent and unstable Christians are like that. They are up and down. Their church attendance is hit and miss.
4. Many church members are lost because they have never truly repented of their sin. Many others are saved but are not right with God because they have not repented of some unconfessed sin.
5. The Bible teaches repeatedly that God judges sin (6:5). Because Ephraim (Israel) and Judah had been unfaithful, God "hewed them by the prophets" (6:4, 5).
6. John the Baptist said, "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt. 3:10).
7. God's judgments "are as the light that goeth forth" (6:5). But the Bible says that men hate the light and love darkness. Insincere worshippers substitute hypocritical rituals for true piety (6:6).
8. They brought their sacrifices, but they did not evidence piety (cf. Isaiah 1:11-14; Micah 6:6-8).
9. This has always been a problem and it is condemned frequently in the Bible. First Samuel 15:22 says, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."
10. David prayed in Psalm 51:16, 17, "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."
11. God desires mercy, and not sacrifice; "and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings" (6:6b). This refers to the experiential knowledge of God and not merely a theoretical knowledge of God.
12. Israel had lost this knowledge of God and therefore were in trouble with the Lord (just like the USA today – cf. Hosea 4:6).

III. INEVITABLE JUDGMENT (6:7-11).

1. God made a covenant with the nation Israel on Mount Sinai, but they transgressed it, and "they dealt treacherously" against the Lord (6:7).
2. S. Franklin Logsdon said, "So deeply had pretense penetrated their lives that they could disobey or ignore the unchangeable commands of the LORD as unprincipled men in the world break contracts with one another (v. 7). The LORD charged that this was treacherous dealing against Him on the part of His people" (*Hosea*).
3. Christians often make promises to the Lord but have not kept them. Perhaps some of you promised the Lord that you would read the Bible through from Genesis to Revelation but have not done it.
4. Perhaps some of you promised God that you would be more faithful in prayer and church attendance, but you have slacked off.
5. Perhaps some of you have promised to give more in your tithes and offerings, but you have failed to do so.
6. Perhaps some of you have made a commitment to go out knocking on doors but have not gone out. Be faithful, don't procrastinate!
7. Hosea 6:8-10 describe the horrible and disgusting behaviour of those who should have known better. Idolatry, murder, lewdness, occultism, whoredom – it is hard to imagine God's people being guilty of these sins.
8. Gilead, a city greatly favored by God, had become a city of iniquity, and polluted with blood. The lewd, ungodly priests were "as troops of robbers," plundering those they should have led in the right way; living in uncleanness, instead of in God's holy ways.
9. The religious leaders caused the people to err, and led them astray from the paths of truth. (6:8, 9).
10. God sees everything. He says, "I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel..." (6:10). He sees into your house and mine as well. What does He see?
11. God has a harvest of judgment ready for Judah (6:11). This will not be fulfilled until the great tribulation.

CONCLUSION:

1. One of the key verses is Hosea 6:6. Our Lord quoted it twice (Matt. 9:13 and 12:7). In both passages, He is rebuking the religious hypocrites, the Pharisees.

2. In Matt. 9:13, the emphasis is on repentance. There can be no salvation without repentance. And there can be no spiritual growth without repentance.
3. At the gateway to the famous Parthenon in ancient Athens there stood an altar dedicated to "Tears." It was a place where the penitent and grief-stricken bowed and cried their hearts out.
4. Although this may have provided some temporary relief, there can be no lasting remedy until there is genuine repentance.
5. For many people, their repentance is "as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away" (Hosea 6:4).