

Hosea 6:1-11 (2)

Hosea had preached one of the great sermons of the OT, movingly calling for the people's repentance (**Hos. 6:1-3**). Tragically, for all the gospel truth and the moving appeal in Hosea's words, they went largely unheeded by his hearers.

Summary

In Hosea 6:4-11, the prophet's call to repentance goes unheeded and the Lord, in accommodated language, expresses bewilderment and wrath.

1. Apparent Bewilderment Revisited vv. 4-5

God cannot be anything than that which He is and cannot be changed or moved in his being to be something that He is not already.

So, how can God ever be spoken of in terms of being moved or experiencing frustration? (**Hos 6:4**). This is accommodated language; anthropopathism.

God does not undergo emotive change in his divine essence. This is said of God as would be said of a man in this situation to show the foolish nature of Israel's behavior. The problem was not only the Israel's idolatry and sin, but the offensiveness of the people's love (**Hos. 6:4b**). They were guilty of covenant-breaking with the God of grace. For this reason, God's response of judgment was severe (**6:5**).

2. Rejected Outward Show vs. 6

The light of God's judgment revealed the shameful nature of Israel's half-hearted religion. The people did not wholly renounce the Lord. They continued to bring sacrifices in His Name but their sacrifices were offered without the heart of covent faithfulness. Hence, God declares his rejection of the outward act of religion without a heart of true faith and covenant love (**Hos 6:6**).

How often our worship is like that? Jesus took up the words of **Hos 6:6** in his conflict with the false religious elite of his day (**Matt. 9:13; 12:7**).

Does Hosea 6:6 render biblically ordered worship (RPW) meaningless?

No, since the Lord himself ordained the sacrificial worship of the Old Covenant just as He does the elements of New Covenant worship today.

As the Israelites presented portions of lambs and goats they were mistaken, however, to think they were giving something to God. Likewise, today, sermons and sacraments are not ultimately something that Christians do for God but what God does for us. What we offer to God are true and faithful hearts that desire to know him and do his will. We offer him the fruit of his mercy in our lives as we show mercy to one another.

3. Remembered Broken Covenant vs. 7

God is not surprised by Israel's faithlessness (**Hos. 6:7**). As Adam broke the covenant stipulations, so the people of Hosea's day had broken the covenant made with them at Sinai. **Hosea 6:7** is an important verse for covenant theology. It explicitly uses the term "covenant" to define God's dealings with Adam in the garden in Eden (**Gen 2 & 3; Rom 5:12-14**).

Israel's sin followed precisely in the footsteps of sinful Adam (**Hos 6:7**).

We should remember that we, too, are the offspring of Adam.

God does not forget that Adam broke his covenant, or that we are Adam's cursed offspring. We therefore need a new covenant head, whom God provided in his Son, Jesus Christ, "the second Adam" (**1 Cor. 15:45; Rom 5:19**).

It was faith in the promised Messiah, Jesus, that God desired from Israel, in the form of sacrificial lambs and it is faith in Christ alone that will rescue sinners today from our own sins as well as our covenant curse with Adam.

4. Seen Covenant Breakers vv. 8-11

The remaining verses of Hosea 6 outline the moral atrocities that Israel performed together with the spiritual apostasy through idol worship.

Two cities are specifically mentioned, both of which had a notable history past and present that warranted judgment. First, Gilead, is a city of evildoers, tracked with blood (**Hos 6:8**). Secondly, Israel's violent depravity was so advanced that even the priests were involved (**Hos. 6:9**). **Shechem** was a notable place in the history of the tribe of Levi, Israel's priest (**Gen. 34:25**).

The key statement occurs in Hosea **6:10**, where the Lord declares, "In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing." The main point of this chapter is that God did not see the people turning to his mercy through faith in his promised messiah but rather he saw Israel's horrible sin. These things the Lord would not overlook. He would respond in wrathful judgment.

5. Appointed Harvest vs. 11

Time had run out for the northern kingdom but there was still a day of grace for Jerusalem if the people there took heed, repented, and returned in faithfulness to the Lord.

The Bible employs the imagery of harvest in two ways. First, it speaks of the ingathering of believers into the great harvest of the Savior, bringing into heaven the great host of those who are forgiven and clothed in white (**Matt. 9:38**). Secondly, the Bible also uses the same imagery for the sending forth of angels to bring sinners like bundles of weeds to be cast into fire (**Matt 13:30**).

As it was for Judah, so it is true for you that "a harvest is appointed."

The question is: What kind of harvest will it be?