

Hosea 8:1-14

From the beginning, the house of Jeroboam and the northern kingdom became illegitimate before the Lord (**1 Kings 12:28-29**); not a single king in all its history would walk in faith.

Why did this happen? Because of the sinful human tendency to self-reliance

Summary

In Hosea 8:1-14, the prophet explains the ruin of Israel in terms of three sins that would bring a storm of judgment that would blow the nation away.

1. Hovering Vulture vv. 1-3

Hosea begins with a trumpet blast designed to signal imminent danger (**8:1**).

The word for vulture can equally be translated “eagle” bringing to mind the picture of swift violence about to descend. Nevertheless, the picture of a circling vulture is also very appropriate: they were as good as dead.

The reason for this looming threat was ultimately Israel's offending God.

The people of Israel had not forgotten all about religion (**Hos 8:2**). The problem was that they no longer knew the Lord having forsaken God's Word (c.f. **Luke 6:46; Matt. 7:22-23**)

Hosea concludes with the Lord's message of judgment (**Hos 8:3**).

The "good" is God himself, together with his covenant and law; the covenant securing God's love for His people and the law molding our love for Him but in Israel's desperate worldly attempts to restore security, God was cast by the wayside, his covenant spurned and his law offended.

2. Self-Reliant Government vv. 4-6

Hosea now turns to the main categories by which Israel forsook the Lord.

First; self-reliant government (**Hos. 8:4**).

Hosea has already pointed to the violence associated with Israel's last six kings who rose to power during the last two decades (**Hos. 6 & 7**). He now shows how Israel sinned against the Lord by not asking for leaders from him (**8:4a**).

The idolatry that ensued was a by-product of this worldly leadership (**8:4b**).

Idols destroy by leading people away from the true God, often without their realizing it (**Hos 8:5**). **Hosea 8:4-6** ridicules the idea of idols common throughout the Old Testament. Consequently, the Lord prophesied, "The calf

of Samaria shall be broken to pieces" (**Hos. 8:6**). Idolatry was not the first cause of Israel's destruction: this was the self-reliance that sought a worldly deliverance in the place of trusting God in obedience. **Hosea 8:5** sums up God's attitude toward all his wayward people, in whatever generation. The final answer, however, would be given by Jeremiah (**Jer 31:31-33**). The new covenant, replacing the old broken old one, appeared in the coming of Jesus, God's Son. To follow Jesus is to renounce self-reliance by trusting Him as our Savior and receiving from him the indwelling Spirit of God to lead believers in faithfulness.

3. Self-Reliant Diplomacy vv. 7-10

The same worldly-mindedness that gave them their idolatrous rulers also led the Israelites to trust foreign powers for their security (**8:9**). It is for this folly that Hosea gives his famous proverb: "For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (**8:7a**). Israel's foolish policy would cause it to be devoured by oppressors (**8:7b**). Neither the Lord nor Assyria was fooled by Israel's duplicity, so Israel was to be swallowed up (**8:8**). The condemnation of Israel's King warns the church today against responding to cultural challenges through worldly dealings and media manipulations (**2 Cor 4:2**).

God's people have to choose between appeals to worldly powers or to their heavenly Father. The Israelites chose the former and forfeited their true strength but gained the most deadly of all foes (**Hos. 8:10**). In all these self-reliant actions, we read nothing of Israel turning to God in prayer?

4. Different Perspective

What tempts us to forget or neglect the Lord?
 Is it our possessions? Is it a prosperous career? Is it our family?
 Do we place relationships before the Lord?
 Is it a lifestyle of leisure that keeps us from Christian service?
 If we continue setting God aside, he may do to our false gods what he did to the false gods of Samaria and Jerusalem, both of which God reduced to ash.
 What folly it is to set aside the Lord.
 Jesus calls us to put all our trust in him and urges an entirely different perspective on life (**Matt 6:19-21**).