

Hosea 9:1-9

Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria, invaded and subjugated the northern part of Israel around 733BC. During the next ten years before the final conquest of Israel, a false sense of security still prevailed among the unconquered territory, during which the people sought to enjoy prosperity.

Hosea 9 sees them celebrating a holy feast, probably the harvest feast that was the northern kingdom's version of the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles.

Summary

In Hosea 9:1-9, although they had corrupted their religion through their worship of false gods, idolatrous Israel still clung to their religious festivals, but days of judgment and recompense would nevertheless come.

1. Removed False Religion vv. 1-6

Just as the feasting was getting going, the prophet Hosea appeared with the unwelcome message (**9:1**).

It was one thing for Canaanites to revel in drunkenness and debauchery, but this was not how God's holy people were to practice their religion.

This reminds us again that God cares about how we worship Him.

Israel's harvest celebration was no longer conducted according to God's word.

In response to the Israelites' corruption of worship, the Lord planned to remove the religion that they loved to celebrate without hearts directed to Him. by delivering His people into exile (**Hos. 9:2-3; cf Deut. 28:33, 51**)

Hosea goes on to record how the Assyrian exile will put an end to compromised Israelite religion (**Hos 9:3-5**).

This judgment of exile was comprehensive (**Hos 9:6**).

2. Vindicated Prophets vv. 7-8

The torments foretold by the prophet had not yet happened. The people were still on the threshing floors enjoying their quasi-religious feast when Hosea delivered the unwelcome message (**Hos 9:7**).

Given this scenario, we might expect Israel to repent but instead, Israel showed its degeneracy by mocking the prophet and his words (**Hos. 9:7**).

Hosea was not the first of God's prophets to be written off as a fool (**2 Kings 9:11**). Nor would Hosea be the last to be written off as a madman (**Jer 29:26; Acts 26:24; John 7:20; Mark 3:21**). For all its professed open-mindedness and tolerance, secular culture reacts the same way today when God's Word is preached to condemn widely accepted practices as sinful.

It is bad enough if the people simply ignored God's messengers but they went further by actively persecuting them (**Hos 9:8; Amos 7:10; Jer 38:6; Luke 13:34**). This violent pattern continues in the church age (**Luke 21:12**).

3. Persecuted Watchmen vv. 7-8

In response to the mockery of his hearers, Hosea gave an important description of God's true messengers, whether prophets of the OT or preachers in the church today (**Hos 9:8**). Hosea's task, together with the other faithful prophets, was to stand as a guard on the city walls, looking out for danger and warning the people when it approached (**Ezek 33:7-8**). Hosea's description of the prophet as a watchman urges ministers of God's Word today not to neglect the Lord's warning on sin. Since preachers are watchmen set by God within a culture, their first duty is to warn of God's fearful justice and to proclaim the only way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Since Hosea was God's watchman for the people's good, why did they mock and threaten him instead of repenting "Because of your great iniquity and great hatred" (**Hosea 9:7b**). They resented the condemnation of sin because they loved their sins. Even when God sent his own Son, Jesus Christ, with the message of judgment, the people responded by having Him nailed to a cross.

4. Coming Final Judgment vs. 9

When judgment fell on the northern kingdom of Israel, as it would be evident to all why God had acted (**Hos 9:9a**).

These words likely refer to the great transgression at Gibeah (**Judges 19**).

For Hosea to compare Israel to the corruption at Gibeah was a severe indictment of the nation's moral slate. If an earlier generation of Israelites had responded with such violence on Gibeah, what would God now do? **Hos 9:9b** He will remember their iniquity; He will punish their sins.

We should shudder at the terrible judgment that Hosea predicted and that then fell on the people of Israel. The reason for this disaster is that they placed their hope in vain idols, offending the true God in corrupt religion and immoral ways, so that God himself inflicted this judgment.

God came with such judgment because Israel deserved this punishment.

For those who are alarmed or even offended by God's judgment, we should remember what the Bible says to unbelieving sinners who likewise scoff at the bearers of God's Word (**Rev 19:13-15; 20:10**).

There are now, as in Hosea's time, two ways to respond to this warning of judgment. One response is to call it crazy and to scoff at preachers of judgment as madmen. The other, and much better option, is to repent before God and seek his mercy through Jesus Christ.