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## **Hosea 10**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Hosea 10.

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### Topics.

- Israel is living in luxury, but their heart is false before God.
- Israel has no fear of the LORD and utter empty oaths.
- The calf of Beth-aven will be carried to Assyria.
- Israel's king will perish like a twig on the face of the waters.
- The LORD will discipline Israel and nations will be against them.
- Israel trusted in multitudes of warriors and fortresses.

**INTRODUCTION:** Hosea has been called the "death-bed prophet of Israel" because he was the last to prophesy before the Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria (about 722 B.C.). His ministry followed a golden age in the Northern Kingdom, with a peace and prosperity not seen since the days of Solomon. Unfortunately, this prosperity led to moral decay, and Israel forsook God to worship idols. So God instructed Hosea to marry a prostitute, whose unfaithfulness to her husband would serve as an example of Israel's unfaithfulness to God. Hosea then explained God's complaint against Israel and warned of the punishment that would come unless the people returned to the LORD and remained faithful to him. The book shows the depth of God's love for his people, a love that tolerates no rivals.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### HOSEA 10:1-2

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#### Israel is living in Luxury, but their Heart is False before God.

- **Hosea 10:1-2:** Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit. The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built; as his country improved, he improved his pillars. <sup>2</sup>Their heart is false; now they must bear their guilt. The LORD will break down their altars and destroy their pillars.

Israel has forsaken the LORD their God and turned to idols and the gods of the surrounding nations. The more they prospered the more places of worship and altars they built. This is because they credited their pagan gods for their prosperity and therefore reasoned the more altars they have for their Baal's the more their farms, cattle and crops will increase. This shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that worldly riches, wealth and prosperity are not evidences that a nation or an individual is right with God. Israel was living in luxury and their farms, crops and vines were producing abundantly yet they were so far from God they were worshipping idols and pagan gods them.

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### HOSEA 10:3-4

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#### Israel has no Fear of the LORD and utter Empty Oaths.

- **Hosea 10:3-4:** For now they will say: "We have no king, for we do not fear the LORD; and a king—what could he do for us?" <sup>4</sup>They utter mere words; with empty oaths they make covenants; so judgment springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field.

**Empty oaths:** means they say they will do something, but never do it and say they love God, but by their actions their heart is far from Him (v2).

**NOTICE:** throughout the book of Hosea the picture of God is not one of Him sitting in heaven with a great stick constantly looking for faults so He can judge His people, but of Him being enormously patient and overlooking multitudes of Israel's sins before He brings judgment upon them. Hosea says, "Judgment springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field" (v4), meaning it is the people themselves who bring sin into the world and cause judgment to rise up and bring the punishment due.

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## HOSEA 10:5-6

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### **The Calf of Beth-aven will be Carried to Assyria.**

- **Hosea 10:5-6:** The inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the calf of Beth-aven. Its people mourn for it, and so do its idolatrous priests—those who rejoiced over it and over its glory—for it has departed from them. <sup>6</sup>The thing itself shall be carried to Assyria as tribute to the great king. Ephraim shall be put to shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his idol.

**Beth-aven;** is a name used for Bethel.

**The calf of Beth-aven:** refers to Jeroboam the head of Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) was afraid that if his people went annually to Jerusalem to worship, they would be won back to the house of David, so he established worship centres at two extremities of his kingdom, one at Dan in the North and another at Bethel in the South. This was at variance with the Law of Moses, which stated there was to be only one altar of burnt-offering and one place of meeting God.

Jeroboam's disobedience became much greater when, in defiance of the commandment forbidding the worship of God by means of images, he set up a "golden calf" in each of the new sanctuaries and quoted to the people the words of Aaron, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:28).

The mass of people conformed to Jeroboam's new religious ways this was the "Sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, wherewith he made Israel to sin." The introduction of the golden bulls led to the Baalization of the religion of Jehovah. In about two-hundred years the moral and religious corruption of the people had gone so far that there was no more hope for them, and God brought in a heathen power (Assyria) to lead them into captivity.

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## HOSEA 10:7-9

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### **Israel's King will Perish like a Twig on the Face of the Waters.**

- **Hosea 10:7-9:** Samaria's king shall perish like a twig on the face of the waters. <sup>8</sup>The high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed. Thorn and thistle shall grow up on their altars, and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us, and to the hills, Fall on us. <sup>9</sup>From the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, O Israel; there they have continued. Shall not the war against the unjust overtake them in Gibeah?

**Aven:** means, vanity it was the Egyptian city called "On" dedicated to the sun and idol worship, Hosea contemptuously likens the places of the golden heathen calves of Bethel to the high places of Aven.

**Gibeah:** from the days of Gibeah the sins of Israel had been remembered for centuries" (Hos. 5:8) (Hos. 9:9) (Hos. 10:9).

**Thorn and thistle shall grow up on their altars:** this was fulfilled when the fierce armies of Assyria invades the land of Israel, destroyed the people's homes and farms and took the people captive, no one was left to till the ground since they were either slaughtered in battle or taken captive.

**They shall say to the mountains and hills cover us:** carries two ideas, firstly, the fierce armies of Assyria will be so brutal, bloodthirsty and cruel that the people will cry out for death to take them. Secondly, there will be such a vast number of slaughtered bodies lying on the battle field and no man left to bury them that they pray the mountains and hills will cover them. In ancient times as it is now it was considered a great lack of respect to leave a dead body on the surface of the earth for wild animals and birds to eat.

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## HOSEA 10:10-11

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### **The LORD will Discipline Israel, Nations will Be against Them.**

- **Hosea 10:10-11:** When I please, I will discipline them, and nations shall be gathered against them when they are bound up for their double iniquity. <sup>11</sup>Ephraim was a trained calf that loved to thresh, and I spared her fair neck; but I will put Ephraim to the yoke Judah must plow; Jacob must harrow for himself.

**Their double iniquity** (v10) can refer to the two golden calves Jeroboam set up in the land of Israel to be worship centres for the ten tribes in the land of Samaria and to the fact Israel who God planned and purposed to be one nation has divided into the two nations of Judah and Israel.

**When they are bound up** (v10) at the right time God will gather nations to punish Israel and Judah for their constant rebellion and gross wickedness. God used Assyria and Babylon and their allied nations to fulfil these prophetic words of Hosea. Assyria bound up the people of Israel and took them captive and Babylon did likewise to the people of Judah. Later Babylon conquered Assyria and so both Israel and Judah were bound up (held captive) under Babylonian rule for seventy years.

**When I please, I will discipline them** (v10) these foreboding words shine a light on the truth that God's judgment is not random, it has its own appointed time. At the moment we are living in the long day of death and the long day of God's grace, judgment is delayed until the right time. No one should think as Israel and Judah did that just because God's judgment cannot be seen in the world at this present moment in that many of the ungodly and wicked prosper while many of the innocent and righteous suffer that they can do as they please and act corruptly and wickedly and escape God's judgment.

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## HOSEA 10:12-15

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### **Israel Trusted in Multitudes of Warriors and Fortresses.**

- **Hosea 10:12-15:** Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you. <sup>13</sup>You have plowed iniquity; you have reaped injustice; you have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your own way and in the multitude of your warriors, <sup>14</sup>therefore the tumult of war shall arise among your people, and all your fortresses shall be destroyed, as Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel on the day of battle; mothers were dashed in pieces with their children. <sup>15</sup>Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel, because of your great evil. At dawn the king of Israel shall be utterly cut off.

Israel is told:

- If they do the right thing, they will reap God's love and blessing.

- If they seek the LORD, He will come to them.

This shows the amazing and majestic love of God, Israel has totally turned away from Him to other gods and Baal's they have set up multitudes of altars to worship pagan gods and even placed altars and pagan symbols in the LORD'S Temple. Added to this instead of trusting in the LORD they are trusting in fortresses and their own armies and their own warriors and yet God is ready to forgive the instant they repent, do the right thing and seek Him.

**Shalman;** the person (Shalman) and place (Beth-arbel) are now unknown.

**Bethel;** the LORD had told Jacob to build an altar at Bethel. This altar was not built as an altar for sacrifice, but to be a monument that God had appeared to Jacob there. Many years later Jeroboam built a worship center there containing a golden calf, and an altar to offer sacrifices to God on. Jeroboam established it to be a gathering place for the people of Israel (the ten tribes) in the land of Samaria so that they would not return to Jerusalem. He feared if they did, they would unite themselves with the two tribes at Judah and worship at the Temple of God and not return.

Jeroboam's fear could be likened to a minister who relies on the income of their assembly (the bigger the congregation the greater the income) and therefore deliberately avoids speaking well of another church even though it is teaching the same doctrines for fear someone in their congregation might leave them and join the church they are giving credit to and their income diminishes.

This was Jeroboam's fear, he should have been happy if people under his leadership did choose to stay at Jerusalem to worship since this is the city of God and the Temple of God and was the proper place to offer sacrifices to the LORD, but he was more interested in building his own religious empire. Likewise, if a member of a church does attend another church and they find it better suits their circumstances while still advancing their spiritual well-being then we should be happy for them and not try to possess them for our own gain.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*