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GRACE**

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## **Hosea 8**

(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 8.

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### Topics.

- Sound the trumpet one like a vulture is over the house of the LORD.
- God has spurned the calf of Samaria.
- Israel has gone up to Assyria, a wild donkey wandering alone.
- Israel has forgotten their God and Judah have multiplied fortified cities.
- God will send fire on the cities and fortresses of Judah

**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 8:1-4

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#### **One like a Vulture is over the House of the LORD.**

- **Hosea 8:1-4:** Set the trumpet to your lips! One like a vulture is over the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law. <sup>2</sup>To me they cry, My God, we—Israel—know you. <sup>3</sup>Israel has spurned the good; the enemy shall pursue him. <sup>4</sup>They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not. With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction.

**One like a vulture:** refers to Assyria their fierce and cruel armies invaded the land of Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria), destroyed their farms, houses and worship centres and took the people captive. It is certain the people of Israel could see the armies of Assyria coming and prayed to God for deliverance saying they know Him, but the LORD says, “they have spurned what is good,” meaning they pervert justice and oppress the poor for their own selfish gain and established kings and leaders without seeking the LORD and even worse than this they made idols of silver and gold to worship. People who confess to believe in God and the Lord Jesus Christ, but live against the law of love (i.e., treating others with justice, decency and respect) don’t know God at all. This is because God is love as the following Scriptures of John show:

- Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8).
- So, we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16).

This means that whatever is done against love is done against God. Israel knew how and when they had to keep their ceremonial feasts, the holy days and their sacrifices, religious customs and traditions and even though they kept all these, they still did not know God. Likewise there are

men and woman today who intellectually know the Scriptures, better than some Christians, but they do not know God and there are ministers who teach the Scriptures, but because they don't know God they are so legalistic and dogmatic with the Scriptures they often do more harm than good and drive people away from God and not toward him. Knowing all the facts about God has no power to change a person's life, but knowing God's love does.

**NOTE:** this does not mean having a correct knowledge of the Bible and of God and the Lord Jesus Christ is not important, it simply means that if this knowledge is not clothed in love, mercy and grace it can cause great hurt and do great harm. Men who confessed to be Christian in past ages tortured people until they recanted from their religious belief and confessed to believe a certain set of doctrines, others were put in prison and armies rose up in the name of Christ to go to war to force Christianity upon nations. The Scriptures have the power to unite even the lowest child of Adam to God and save to eternal life, but in the hands of those who do not know God it can do great harm.

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## HOSEA 8:5-7

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### **God has spurned the Calf of Samaria.**

- **Hosea 8:5-7:** I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. My anger burns against them (the golden calve). How long will they be incapable of innocence? <sup>6</sup>For it is from Israel; a craftsman made it; it is not God. The calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces. <sup>7</sup>For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads; it shall yield no flour; if it were to yield, strangers would devour it.

**The calves refer to the two golden calves Jeroboam set up:** Jeroboam became the head of Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria), afraid that if his people went annually to Jerusalem to worship, they would be won back to the house of David, he established worship centres at two extremities of his kingdom, one at Dan in the North and another at Bethel in the South. 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. These two calves of Jeroboam become a continual stumbling to Israel. They sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: (v7) carries the following two ideas:

1. If Israel sows the seed for their crops in a gentle wind to spread the seed, they will reap a whirlwind, meaning it will be destroyed before harvest.
2. If Israel is going to pray to the golden calves it is the same as praying into the wind, all they will reap is the wrath of God.

### **Israel has gone up to Assyria, a Wild Donkey Wandering Alone.**

- **Hosea 8:8-11:** Israel is swallowed up; already they are among the nations as a useless vessel. <sup>9</sup>For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild donkey wandering alone; Ephraim has hired lovers. <sup>10</sup>Though they hire allies among the nations, I will soon gather them up. And the king and princes shall soon writhe because of the tribute. <sup>11</sup>Because Ephraim has multiplied altars for sinning, they have become to him altars for sinning.

In the era of Hosea, a donkey was a great work animal and an enormous help to their owner, but a wild donkey that roams on its own is useless to anyone, such is how the LORD sees Israel, they are going about their life on their own, meaning without God.

**Ephraim (Israel) has hired lovers:** refers to their going to the surrounding nation for aid and adopting their gods and their religious practises. Sacrifices in the original covenant, were only to be offered at the altar at Jerusalem, but Ephraim (Israel) had multiplied altars throughout the land of Samaria.

**The king and princes shall soon writhe because of the tribute:** refers to the heavy taxes imposed on Israel when Assyria conquered them.

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## HOSEA 8:12-14

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### **Israel has Forgotten God and Judah has Multiplied Fortified Cities.**

- **Hosea 8:12-14:** Were I (the LORD) to write for him (Ephraim) my laws by the ten thousands, they would be regarded as a strange thing. <sup>13</sup>As for my sacrificial offerings, they sacrifice meat and eat it, but the LORD does not accept them. Now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins; they shall return to Egypt. <sup>14</sup>For Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces, and Judah has multiplied fortified cities; so I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour her strongholds.

The LORD says, no matter how many times he wrote down His laws Israel would not understand them, they are offering their sacrifices and food offerings, but the LORD does not accept them because they have no idea of who the LORD is and what He desires. Israel has gone the way of riches and wealth, while Judah is trusting in fortresses. Today this could be likened to those who follow Christ because of false teachers who promise them if they learn certain keys of faith they can be prosperous, healthy and successful in all they do, they are following Christ not because they want to know God, but for what they can get from God and though they confess to believe in Christ they live a lifestyle that is totally indifferent to him.

**NOTICE:** The LORD says, now He will remember Israel's sins, prior to this Hosea gave us a picture of all of Israel's sins being in front of the LORD'S Face, God choses to overlook a lot, but eventually the cup of offences becomes too great to ignore or overlook and God is forced to judge. It could be rightly stated that the global world and people bring judgment upon themselves by their corrupt behaviour and denial of God's existence.

**Israel will return to Egypt:** refers to when Assyria was about to invade Israel multitudes fled to Egypt for refuge and safety, but eventually Assyria conquered Egypt. The lesson taught here is that no one will escape God's judgment no matter where they flee to.

**God will send fire on the cities and fortresses of Judah:** refers to Babylon, God used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon Judah. The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) and pillaged the temple. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken in chains there with him (around 587 B.C.). Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. They went into captivity to Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and who were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods and were under Babylonian rule for the next seventy years.

Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist. But the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

**Now here is the good news:** while in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again).

Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a time of prosperity and peace followed. Sadly, Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when, the Lord returns in glory:

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

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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.*