

# "A Nation in Trouble with God"

## Hosea 4

### Introduction:

1. Israel has been pictured in the first three chapters as the adulterous wife of Jehovah God. Yet we have seen the unconditional love of God for His wife, Israel.
2. But now Hosea will begin to detail the sin and wickedness that existed within the nation.
3. Verse 1 serves as an overview for the stinging rebuke that is about to come.
  - God has some serious problems with the inhabitants of the land.
  - God gave the land area of Canaan to Israel as a precious gift to be used to bring glory and honor to His name (**Deuteronomy 28:8-11**). Instead they had polluted the land and committed abominations like the heathen nations that God had helped them to drive out.
4. God said that there was no truth, mercy, or knowledge of God in the land.
  - What an indictment! Three vital components in any relationship, and none of them could be found in the people of Israel.
5. The promised chastisement in Deuteronomy 28 would soon come upon Israel and Hosea is spelling out the reasons why. While this was prophesied to Israel many centuries ago, there is so much we can learn from their mistakes (**1 Corinthians 10:1-11**).
6. Why was Israel a nation in trouble with God?

### First, they had broken God's moral law. vs. 1-5

1. God gave Israel His law in Exodus 20-23. Israel entered into a covenant agreement with God and agreed to obey His law in **Exodus 24:7-8**.
2. Verse 2 reveals that Israel had totally disregarded their covenant with God by cursing, lying, stealing, killing, and committing adultery. They had breached God's covenant, violence and crime filling the land (*blood toucheth blood*).
3. What does sin always bring? Judgment! vs. 3
  - There will be such famine, pestilence, and disease that man nor beast will be able to survive. This was part of the promised curses of **Deuteronomy 28:15-63**.
  - America is filled with these same sins, yet people have a knowledge of God and assume that they are okay with God.
  - **Romans 2:1-6** teach that a day of wrath is coming. Men and women are storing up wrath that will one day be revealed on Judgment Day.
4. The people of Israel thought that they were getting away with their sin, but Hosea announced that God had seen everything and judgment was coming.
5. Nobody in Israel was in a position to rebuke his neighbor because they had "*all...like sheep gone astray*" (verse 4 cf. **Isaiah 53:6**). Even their appointed priests and prophets were wicked and ripe for judgment (vs. 5).
6. The final verdict: God said, "*I will destroy thy mother.*" This is a reference to the nation of Israel.

### Second, they had rejected God's truth. vs. 6-11

1. Verse 6 reveals the problem in a nutshell: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."*
2. The priests were responsible to teach God's Word to the people and they had failed to do so (**Malachi 2:7-8**). There was a total spiritual apathy because of a total spiritual ignorance.
3. Why were the priests failing to teach God's Word to God's people? They were too consumed with feeding their own covetousness.
  - They were literally fleecing the flock by taking the sacrifices of the people and using them for their own gain. vs. 7-8
  - They were too busy exploiting people for material gain, and women for sexual satisfaction, to concern themselves with taking heed to God's Word. vs. 10
  - They had no heart for God. vs. 11
4. What was the result of such wickedness among Israel's spiritual leadership? Verse 9 declares, *"Like people, like priest."* The people of Israel followed the wretched example of the priests.
5. Hosea announces that God's judgment will surely fall upon the priests.
  - Because they rejected God's truth, God would reject them and their children from the priesthood. vs. 6
  - God would change their glory into shame. vs. 7
  - God would punish them and reward them for their doings. vs. 9-10
6. What a lesson for the church today. Paul told Timothy to *"preach the word"* in **2 Timothy 4:2**. cf. **Acts 20:27**
  - True life change only comes through the hearing and receiving of God's Word. **2 Timothy 2:24-26, 3:16-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13**
  - Salvation and spiritual growth both hinge on the proclamation of God's Word. **Romans 10:14-17; 1 Peter 2:2**
7. Why are so many churches spiritually weak and anemic today? *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."*
  - When the Word takes a back seat to music, drama, stories, jokes, anecdotes, personal illustrations, and shallow emotionalism, people may feel good, but it doesn't produce any power for true life change.

**Third, they had turned away from the Lord. vs. 12-19**

1. Jehovah God had married Himself to Israel. He had been a husband unto them. **Jeremiah 31:32**
2. When God and Israel entered into their covenant agreement, God made one thing clear above all else - God expected Israel to be true and faithful to Him.
  - The first two of the Ten Commandments dealt with this issue. **Exodus 20:1-6**
  - God knew that Israel would be entering into a land that was steeped in pagan, wicked idolatry. The people of Canaan worshipped and sacrificed to multiple gods of man-made idols and images.
  - They would commit gross and wicked sin in their pagan rituals. They would sacrifice their own babies and commit lewd, sexual sin in an effort to get what they wanted from these gods.

- What was Israel to do when they entered the land? They were to destroy anything that had to do with pagan worship. **Deuteronomy 7:1-6, 25-26, 12:1-4; Numbers 33:51-52**
3. Instead of obeying God's commands, Israel disregarded their relationship with the Lord and went whoring after these pagan idols. vs. 12-13
  4. Idolatry and sexual perversion go hand in hand. As the men of Israel led their families in these pagan rituals, it led their wives and daughters down the path of gross immorality. vs. 14
  5. Israel had played the harlot (verse 15), and God warns Judah not to follow the example. Ephraim (another name for Israel) committed spiritual adultery against God by being joined to idols. God cries out, "Let him alone."
  6. They had turned from the Lord and would now be left alone to bear the consequences of their choices. They would be caught in a whirlwind of God's judgment (**Jeremiah 23:19**) and be utterly ashamed of their wicked abominations. vs. 19
  7. Christian, sin never gives what it promises. The pleasures of sin are only enjoyed for a season. Sin always yields bitter fruit. **Galatians 6:8**

#### **In Conclusion:**

1. Israel was a nation in trouble with God.
  - The people lived corrupt lives.
  - The spiritual leaders had no regard for God's Word.
  - The family unit was completely disintegrated.
  - The political rulers loved wealth, not God. vs. 18
2. Is it any surprise that we see these same characteristics in America today? As Christians, we have been called to be a light in the midst of a crooked and perverse world. **Philippians 2:15**
3. We are to hold forth God's Word; not only in word, but in the way we live our daily lives. **Philippians 2:16**