

## Living in Reality Hosea 7-8

### Introduction:

1. When it comes to our walk with God, ignorance is not bliss. Spiritual ignorance is a very dangerous thing.
  - An example of this is **Romans 10:2-3**. Israel had a zeal of God, but their zeal was rooted in a total ignorance of what God was really doing.
2. Several times Paul told Christians, "*I would not have you to be ignorant*" and then Paul would share spiritual truth with them.
  - The word "ignorant" means "not to know, or to ignore."
  - Webster's defines "ignorance" as "the state of being unaware or uninformed."
3. The nation of Israel was in deep spiritual trouble in Hosea's day. They were on the brink of national judgment, yet we see that there was a total unawareness of their true condition. What a dangerous place to be.
4. God sent the prophet Hosea to warn Israel and to shed light on the true state of their relationship with God.
5. May God use the example of Israel to challenge Christians in this age to carefully examine their hearts and make sure that they are living in reality.

### The Illusion

As we study our text we see that Israel was living under several illusions.

1. God is unconcerned about our sin. 7:1-2
  - Like a cake left on the stove and seared on one side, they had seared their conscience. 7:8
  - They were indifferent about their actual state before God and assumed that God was likewise indifferent.
  - There are so many people today that profess they know God (they will tell you they are saved), but give absolutely no thought of God in their daily lives.
2. We are strong because of our alliances. 7:8-10
  - God had specifically told Israel to be separate from the pagan nations around them. **Exodus 23:31-33**
  - They were to dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations, yet Israel continually disobeyed God in this matter.
  - Israel's strength had been greatly weakened because of unholy alliances, yet they were full of pride, thinking they were strong.
  - Many Christians think themselves to be strong because of outward success, prosperity or power, yet they are totally ignorant of how weak and vulnerable they really are. They lack true spiritual power, yet they are too blind to see it.
3. We are safe because of our cleverness. 7:11, 8:9-10
  - Israel turned everywhere but to the Lord. Whenever they felt threatened, they would run to another nation (Egypt, Assyria) for protection.
  - Many times we think we have cleverly covered all of our bases and covered all our tracks. We turn everywhere but to the Lord.
4. We are right with God because of our religious acts. 8:1-2, 13

- They thought they knew God (8:2) because of religious rituals they had robotically carried out (8:13).
- These religious acts earned no brownie points with God, nor will they today.

### **The Reality**

God sent Hosea to shine the spiritual light of His Word on them. God wanted them to wake up and begin to live in reality. What was the reality?

1. God saw every sin.
  - The deceit (7:1, 3, 13, 16)
  - The adultery (7:4-7)
  - The idolatry (8:4-6, 11)
  - The self-will (7:10, 8:4)
2. They were weakened and feeble. 7:9
3. They were in great danger. 7:13, 8:14
4. They were in trouble with God. 7:12-13
  - God was unimpressed by their religious ceremony. He simply wanted them to seek Him with their whole hearts. 7:10, 14

### **The Result**

1. God's heart was aching.
  - The book of Hosea pictures God as a loving husband who cares deeply for His wife, yet she will not return that love.
  - We see God's heart displayed in two statements found in 7:1 and 8:12.
    - *"When I would have healed Israel..."* 7:1
    - *"I have written to him the great things of my law..."* 8:12
  - God had loved (3:1, 11:1, 3-4) and instructed Israel, yet they would not return to Him (7:16).
  - How God's heart must ache when He sees His children today living in sin and not according to the new identity He has given us in His Son. He has showered us with love and instruction. He simply wants us to walk in His Son.

#### **Colossians 2:6**

2. God's judgment would fall.
  - If Israel persisted in their rebellion, God would send judgment. 7:11-12, 16, 8:1, 7-10
  - When God in His love would rather have brought healing, His justice and holiness demanded that He bring judgment.
  - These judgments were designed to jolt them into reality, so they, in turn, would seek the Lord and return to Him.

### **In Conclusion:**

1. Christian, are you living in reality? Are you aware of your true spiritual condition before God? Are you walking with Him or does your life evidence self-will and pride?
2. Many Christians today are like Israel in Hosea's day. They feel that if they do some religious things (go to church, give an offering, help in a ministry, etc.) that God is pleased. This is an illusion.

3. Christian, may this lesson teach a valuable lesson - God desires your heart, your love, and your affection. He doesn't want to share your affection with the idols of this world.
4. Live in the reality of who God has made you in Christ and love Him with all of your heart!