

**Hosea 5:1** ¶ Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment *is* toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.

**Hosea 5:2** And the revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I *have* been a rebuker of them all.

**Hosea 5:3** I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, *and* Israel is defiled.

Hosea's message from the LORD is again directed to the spiritual and royal leaders of Israel. He declares that they are accountable before God for the judgment to come; they are compared to hunters out looking for prey. They were the ones that had led the people into idol worship and sought to promote and enrich themselves in the process.

JFB makes note that Mizpah is in the east and Tabor in the west as representing the whole of Israel. I also liked this quote from JFB: "He does not say 'to sacrifice,' for their so-called sacrifices were *butcheries* rather than sacrifices; there was nothing sacred about them, being to idols instead of to the holy God."

The prophet emphasizes that nothing done in Israel is hidden from God. He is very aware of their spiritual adultery and uncleanness.

That is a very important truth that is so often ignored today. Nothing is hidden from the eyes of Almighty God.

*Psalms 33:13–14* "The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth."

*Proverbs 5:21* "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings."

*Proverbs 15:3* "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

**Hosea 5:4** They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms *is* in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD.

The key truth in verse 4 is that evil actions are a result of a rebellious and wicked heart. Scripture is very clear in declaring that it is the condition of the heart that affects our spiritual sensitivity.

*Ephesians 4:17–19* "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

Following is a relevant excerpt from my study of Psalm 119.

**Psalm 119:70 Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in thy law.**

The Hebrew for *fat* referenced being thick or stupid. It would seem that the Psalmist is describing them as having thick hearts that are unable to feel. I decided to do a phrase search on Google and found this insight from Nancy Missler at <http://www.khouse.org/articles/2004/499>.

"Psalm 119:70 ...says that when we make emotional choices, our hearts become "fat as grease" (like kitchen lard!). This grease, then, not only clogs, chokes out and quenches any communication or personal leading from God, it also causes us to become insensitive and unfeeling towards others.... It's interesting to note that in a real life situation, when you put grease or fat on a physical burn, you not only make that area insensitive and resistant to healing, you also cause a scar to be formed in its place. Sin and self are just like that grease - they not only make us insensitive and resistant to God's leading, they also leave scars on our lives. In other words, we always reap the consequences of our wrong choices...."  
[end excerpt]

**Hosea 5:5 And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them.**

**Hosea 5:6 They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find *him*; he hath withdrawn himself from them.**

It is the pride of Israel that testifies against her. I believe all sin stems from the seed and root of pride in our heart. We think we know better than God. The LORD declares that Israel will fall because of her pride and determination to choose rebellion and disobedience against God. By the time of this prophecy it had become clear that, in spite of the warnings as declared by God's prophets, Judah would also fall victim to pride and disobedience.

God is declaring that though the people make a pretense of turning back to Him, He will not be listening. The time for judgment has come. Isaiah declared a similar message.

*Isaiah 1:11–15 "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."*

This is another important truth that is greatly ignored today. There comes a time when God gives one over to their sin—a time when you have rejected Him to the point that He basically rejects you. I want to be clear, however, in stating that the Lord never turns away the truly repentant person.

*John 6:37 "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

*Romans 1:28–32 "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."*

Those that the LORD gives over to their sin have passed the point of no return, and only an omniscient God can make such a determination.

I am often reminded of God's words to Abraham about the Amorites: *Genesis 15:16 "...for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."*

**Hosea 5:7 They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions.**

This verse indicates that the latest generation of Israelites knew nothing about the true God of Israel; they had been raised to follow false gods. According to the CJB translation, judgment would come within the month. The Hebrew makes reference to the new moon, which would connect with the words from Isaiah.

**Hosea 5:8 ¶ Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud at Bethaven, after thee, O Benjamin.**

**Hosea 5:9 Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be.**

The prophet is instructed to declare God's message with fanfare throughout the land of Judah; trumpets were recognized instruments of warning. Gibeah and Ramah were important cities of the tribe of Benjamin, whose portion of land was situated on the border between Israel and Judah. Benjamin would be the first tribe in Judah to face danger from the Assyrian army that would come in judgment upon Israel.

God's judgment would result in the destruction of Ephraim/Israel. The people would be without excuse because God's prophets had boldly and repeatedly declared the coming judgment in light of their continued rebellion and disobedience.

**Hosea 5:10 The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.**

**Hosea 5:11 Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment.**

**Hosea 5:12** Therefore *will I be* unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.

**Hosea 5:13** When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah *saw* his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

I think the NLT wording is very clear: *“The leaders of Judah have become as bad as thieves. So I will pour my anger down on them like a waterfall. The people of Israel will be crushed and broken by my judgment because they are determined to worship idols.”*

To “remove the bound” is to tamper with established boundary stones that marked one’s property. The NIV Commentary made the point that the boundary stones being moved were not physical, but spiritual. The leaders of Judah were tampering with parameters set by YHWH, not by man. The LORD is driving home the point that the people of Judah were responsible for the judgment to come as a result of God’s wrath against their sin of choosing to follow impotent false gods rather than trust in Almighty God.

The message to Ephraim was meant to be a deterrent to Judah’s sin as they saw God’s hand of judgment come down to destroy the land of Israel and lead the people of the Northern Kingdom away into captivity because of their idolatry.

Moths destroy wool; rottenness is also a reference to decay and destruction.

Instead of turning to God in repentance, the leaders of Ephraim turned to the king of Assyria for help. He couldn’t help, because he followed the same false gods. In fact, as is so often the case, Assyria eventually exploited the weakness of Israel to its own gain.

As a student of prophecy, the term “the Assyrian” resonates in my mind as an allusion to the Antichrist. Prophecy foretells that Israel will once again turn to “the Assyrian” for help when they sign his deceitful 7-year covenant. Just as with the people to whom Hosea prophesied, they will once again become victims of the one they thought would help them. The end result this time, however, will be that the people of Israel will eventually turn back to God in faith and repentance; and the Messiah will return to save them and rule as their King.

**Hosea 5:14** For I *will be* unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, *even I*, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue *him*.

**Hosea 5:15** I will go *and* return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

The point of verse 14 is that no one is able to avert the judgment of God. Verse 15 affirms the truth of the end time scenario stated in the section above.

Lions are known for their strength and prowess. God’s actions toward His people are to be compared to a powerful, vigorous lion on the attack. One can’t help but be reminded of the words of the Lord Jesus: *Matthew 23:37–39* “O

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."*

Scripture tells us that God is the same yesterday, today and forever; He never changes.

*Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I change not...."*

*Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."*

When God punishes His people, it is always connected with judgment against sin that is meant to result in repentance and faith.