

Hosea 8:1 ¶ Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.

This verse certainly has a number of different readings. The prophet is told to declare his message loudly and distinctly like the sound of the trumpet used to call the people to assembly or to battle or to warn of impending danger. An eagle is a bird of prey. It is also used in scripture to represent God's protection and provision of His people.

Deuteronomy 32:9–12 “For the LORD’S portion is his people....As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.”

I believe this verse is comparing God to the bird of prey; it is declaring that God is going to come against His people in judgment because they have broken covenant and rejected His law without shame and/or repentance. The Hebrew for the word “house” is also a reference to “family.”

Hosea 8:2 Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee.

Hosea 8:3 Israel hath cast off *the thing that is good*: the enemy shall pursue him.

Hosea 8:4 They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew *it not*: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.

The Lord knows that Israel is finally going to realize that they are in trouble and call out for His help-----but it will be too late. She has made her bed and now she has to lie in it. She now faces judgment at the hands of her enemies. The people had rejected God and chosen their own kings and leaders without regard to God's will or leadership. These leaders led them right into idolatry and severed their relationship with YHWH.

I couldn't help but think of the circumstances in America today. We have not sought God's direction in choosing the leaders of our government, and we are certainly reaping the consequences of such foolishness.

Hosea 8:5 Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast *thee* off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long *will it be* ere they attain to innocency?

Hosea 8:6 For from Israel *was* it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.

Hosea 8:7 For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

“Thy calf” seems to be a reference to the idol of their god whose center of worship must have been in Samaria, the capital city. God is very angry at them and wonders if they will ever be smart enough to abandon the foolishness of idol

worship. They are worshipping idols that they have made with their own hands. How can they possibly justify such actions in light of the actions of Almighty God on their behalf throughout their history—the actions of the self-existent, eternal God that is the Creator, not the created. This calf is nothing but a man-made figure that will eventually be broken in pieces.

The principle of sowing and reaping permeates the scripture—you reap what you sow. In this instance it seems that they are going to reap more than they bargained for. They have continued to plant and nourish seeds of sins that incur God's anger (winds), and they are going to reap His wrath (the whirlwind) in judgment. The only harvest they can expect is one of their own destruction.

Hosea 8:8 ¶ Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.

Hosea 8:9 For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers.

Hosea 8:10 Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes.

This is a very sad observation. The nation of Israel that was established as a special treasure before God and that enjoyed His special hand of blessing and protection was now a nation of no significance among the nations. They were like a wandering stubborn donkey looking to find someone to want them. Instead of enjoying a love relationship with YHWH, they were seeking to prostitute themselves to the heathen nations and their false gods.

In spite of their unfaithfulness, God will remain faithful. He will cause them to suffer the judgment of His chastisement with the intent of ridding them of idol worship.

This is an important truth in scripture. God is faithful to His word. His faithfulness can always be depended upon—both in love and mercy toward His people and in judgment of His enemies.

Deuteronomy 7:9–10 “Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.”

Hosea 8:11 Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.

Hosea 8:12 I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.

Hosea 8:13 They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt.

Hosea 8:14 For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.

I think the context of this section supports the NIV translation for verse 11: *"Though Ephraim built many altars for sin offerings, these have become altars for sinning."*

Problem was—they were not acting in accordance with God's law; in fact, they were acting like they had never even heard it. They were performing rituals without a heart or desire to obey God and in distinct rejection of the guidelines He had given for such sacrifices. God takes no pleasure in such rituals. In fact, these practices incite His anger and incur His judgment.

The NLT gives a clear statement of verse 14: *"Israel has built great palaces, and Judah has fortified its cities. But they have both forgotten their Maker. Therefore, I will send down fire on their palaces and burn their fortresses."*

I almost missed a very important phrase in verse 12—*"I have written to him...."* This is an important truth that is under attack to this day—even from within the professing church. The scripture was written to man from God. Though He used human vessels in recording His word, the very words were inspired by His Spirit—He breathed the very words into their minds to record for our instruction.

2 Timothy 3:16 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

I found this quote about the scripture from Spurgeon who so beautifully declares this truth: "This volume is the writing of the living God: each letter was penned with an Almighty finger; each word in it dropped from the everlasting lips, each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit."