

Living a Fantasy

Hosea 6:4, 7:8ff

As you study the book of Hosea, God's love for His people is easily discovered. While they had turned their backs on him, seeking the gods of this world and the pleasures of the flesh, God continued to pursue them by His grace. In the chapters between our last study and our text today, Hosea records the immorality and rebellion of Israel. Although God had provided countless opportunities to return unto Him and restore their relationship, Israel continued a path of self-destruction. She was living in a fantasy world, void of all reality and accountability.

Unfortunately as I study this prophetic book, I see many similarities to America and many within the church today. While Hosea was written specifically to Israel, there are timeless truths that apply to any generation. Like His dealings with ancient Israel, our Lord remains gracious toward humanity. He actively seeks us out, desiring us to walk in fellowship with Him. Many in our world today have chosen a path very similar to the one Israel walked in Hosea's time. They too live in a fantasy world, unwilling to admit the severity of their need.

As we consider our text today, I hope to address the [areas](#) in which Israel was lacking before the Lord and make application for our lives today. Let's examine these areas as we consider: [Living a Fantasy](#).

I. The lacked Stability (6:4) – [O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.](#) Here the Lord revealed the first of five comparisons made regarding Israel. Their goodness was said to be as a morning cloud, as the early dew that falls on the ground and quickly evaporates. Their commitment to the Lord was sporadic at best. They may have gathered for worship on the Sabbath, but quickly forgot their obligations to the Lord throughout the remainder of the week. They couldn't be counted on to serve the Lord faithfully.

- Sadly this attitude is prevalent in our society as well. The nation as a whole has no genuine desire for the Lord. Many will invoke the name of God in a moment of desperation or national tragedy, but there is no genuine desire for the Lord or commitment to a relationship with Him.
- Unfortunately this attitude permeates the modern church as well. All across the nation, people gather on Sunday mornings for worship, but they are as a morning cloud or the early dew. They quickly disappear into the world, rarely presenting a Gospel witness. Many strive to hold to divided loyalties – seeking to hold the things of God in one hand and desperately desiring to keep a hold on the world with the other. Some are faithful for a season, and then they disappear. They attend regularly for a while, and then they are gone. I pray the Lord will create a desire in our

hearts to remain committed unto Him and steadfast in our service! [Rev.3:15-16 – I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.](#) ^[16] [So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.](#)

II. They lacked Maturity (7:8) – [Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned.](#) The Lord rebuked their lack of faith and commitment, desiring to seek the ways of the world along with attempting to serve Him. They were described as a cake not turned, literally one that was half-baked. They were done on one side and remained undone on the other. On one side they portrayed the ways of God and yet the other side continued to show the ways of the world. They had failed to seek the ways of God, yet to reach a state of spiritual maturity. They were living a life of compromise with the world.

- Surely you will agree that we stand in need of spiritual maturity and commitment in our day as well. The world is watching our lives. They expect to see something different from the church. Unfortunately like those in Israel, what the world sees depends solely on which side they choose to look. Many today have a side they reveal when at church or in the company of believers, and another side the world sees when they are among them. We desperately need those who will surrender their lives unto the Lord, living consistently for Him, and portraying a solid Gospel witness. I want others to see Jesus in me, regardless of my surroundings.
- We must seek spiritual maturity in our day. One of the greatest hindrances for the church today is the lack of genuine lives. The world is watching. What type of witness are we portraying? We need to be fully baked, revealing Jesus regardless of the side the world may see!

III. They lacked Vitality (7:9) – [Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.](#) The Lord continued to chastise the lack of commitment in Israel. He declared their strength was gone, and yet they were totally unaware. Their youth had vanished, and yet they did not know. Often gray hair was a sign of wisdom, but here it speaks of a lack of strength. Israel had lost her strength and power and she was completely unaware of her need.

- While this example may be the easiest to understand, it brought deep conviction to my heart. We serve the risen, living Christ. He has conquered every enemy we could possibly face. Sin, death, and hell were defeated as He rose triumphant from the grave. As Christ ascended back to the Father, the Spirit descended, filling believers. We have the presence of the Spirit within continually. However, one cannot deny that we lack power in our day. Our lack of power isn't the Lord's fault. We have access to all that heaven has to offer. We have the promise of being equipped by the Spirit, and yet we lack power in our lives. We have lost our desire to pray.

Our services lack conviction. The power of God is not being revealed as it once was. We are not seeing folks come to Christ in salvation as we did in years past. This is certainly not due to lack of ability on the Lord's part. We are much like Israel; our strength and power has departed and we are completely unaware. Many continue to go through the motions and fail to see the power of God is not in their midst.

- We will never be successful apart from the power and conviction of the Lord through His Spirit. He is able and willing to provide for our need, but we must seek Him and live according to His Word. We must return unto the Lord, and deal with the sin in our own lives if we are to see a powerful move of God in our day that revives the church and restores the sinner!

IV. They lacked Security (7:11) – Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria. Although I have studied the history of Israel and their unfortunate demise, this indictment troubled me. God is speaking to a people He had called unto Himself. He had given birth to a nation of people that numbered in the millions. He brought them out of Egypt's bondage with a strong hand. He led them into the land of Canaan, driving out their enemies and providing a land of untold blessing. Yet they had become as a silly dove without heart. Rather than following the Lord and depending upon Him to deliver as He had done in the past, Israel looked to Egypt and Assyria to deliver them. They chose to trust in the flesh instead of the living God.

- It is impossible to consider this accusation against Israel and fail to see the parallel to America. There can be no doubt our nation was built upon biblical principles and blessed by the mighty hand of God. He has sustained us and allowed us to prosper. Yet in modern times we have rejected the Lord nationally. We no longer see the need for the Lord. Many of our elected officials would be pleased if all reference to God was removed from our historical documents and governmental buildings. We have become a people who trust in Wall Street and the Pentagon to provide for our stability and protection. We are like Israel of old, trusting in the arm of flesh instead of the mighty hand of God.
- Even among the church we are experiencing a great falling away. Genuine worship and biblical instruction have been pushed aside by the latest gimmick or approach to appeal to the flesh. We have concluded that we know how to do ministry and yet we fail to include the Lord in our services and ministries. We have arrived at a place where we trust in our own wisdom and abilities more than we do the power and leading of the Spirit. I am convinced of an eternal truth – if anything of value is accomplished in our lives and churches, it will be done by and through the power of God. We don't need more programs or newly developed approaches. I understand the need to reach people where they are, but we must get back to relying on the Lord to meet our needs, grow our churches, and save those who are yet outside His grace! [Rev.3:17](#) – [Because thou](#)

sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

V. They lacked Purity (7:16) – They return, *but* not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this *shall be* their derision in the land of Egypt. As God looked at Israel He saw a people who served Him with their lips, but not with their hearts. They continued in their religious formalities, and yet they refused to return to the most High. They were like a deceitful bow, one that was unable to hit the mark. It looked good outwardly, but lacked the ability to provide reliable results. God warned their sin would eventually cause their demise. When mercy and grace were continually rejected, judgment was all that remained.

- I am no prophet of doom, but I am convinced the Lord is calling us to repentance. Our nation has abandoned the Lord and our churches have embraced the world. We are busier than ever before and yet we are coming up increasingly short. We must return to a life of purity, seeking the Lord with a desire to live for Him. Our complacency and lack of commitment has caught up with us. We are now reaping the harvest of years of sowing sparsely, without genuine commitment.
- The only hope for America is for the church to return unto the Lord. If the church continues to decline, the demise of our nation is certain. The number of unsaved and unchurched people continues to increase at an alarming rate. We must return to the Lord in an effort to reach them before it is eternally too late! [Heb.12:1-2 – Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,](#) ^[2] [Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.](#)

Conclusion: These were hard verses to consider, but they are needful in our day. Just as the Lord pled with Israel to repent and return unto Him, He is speaking to the church today. I fear we have become much too casual and unconcerned in our walk with the Lord. Can you honestly say you are where the Lord would have you be? Has the Spirit spoken to you regarding needs in your life? If so, I wouldn't put it off. Israel did and she suffered greatly. The Lord allowed her to have her desires, and she found that she should have repented and returned. Come while there is time and opportunity. The Lord desires us to walk in fellowship with Him.

If you are unsaved, I urge you to respond to the leading of the Spirit. Salvation is available in Christ, but you must come with a heart of faith and repentance!