

Shittim

"I will discipline all of them"

-- Israel was at fault, as a nation, and God warned them that he would withdraw from them (5:3-7).

^{ESV} **Hosea 5:3** I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me; for now, O Ephraim, you have played the whore; Israel is defiled. ⁴ Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. For the spirit of whoredom is within them, and they know not the LORD.

What have Ephraim and Israel done? What is God's warning?

"I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me..." (v. 3)

"...for now, O Ephraim, you have played the whore; Israel is defiled"

"Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God" (v. 4)

"For the spirit (*ruach*) of whoredom is within them..."

"...and they know not the LORD"

⁵ The pride of Israel testifies to his face; Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in his guilt; Judah also shall stumble with them. ⁶ With their flocks and herds they shall go to seek the LORD, but they will not find him; he has withdrawn from them. ⁷ They have dealt faithlessly with the LORD; for they have borne alien children. Now the new moon shall devour them with their fields.

What have Israel and Ephraim done? What is God's warning?

"The pride of Israel testifies to his face..."

"Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in his guilt; Judah also shall stumble with them"

"With their flocks and herds they shall go to seek the LORD, but they will not find him; he has withdrawn from them"

"They have dealt faithlessly with the LORD; for they have borne alien children"

"Now the new moon shall devour them with their fields"

- The sin of a person and a people, along with its consequences, impact others, and others should take note and respond accordingly.
- There is a time and place for leaving a person and a people to their own devices, for they will not respond appropriately and will impact negatively.
- Places, along with actions and words, can have lasting impact on a person and a people, and they can be deceived about its reality and their duplicity.

Sunday, January 25, 2026
Danny Capon, *Pastor*

Hosea—Faithless People Faithful God
No. 8 | God's Contention with Israel—
The Priests and the People, pt. 3
Hosea 4:15-5:7

Review

The Book of Hosea: (1) It is the first book of the minor prophets in the Old Testament (starting on page 751 in the ESV Pew Bible); (2) It recounts the "word of the LORD" to Hosea, a man who served as a prophet in deed and in word; (3) His prophetic ministry was most immediately to the northern kingdom of Israel (Samaria), then to the southern kingdom of Judah (Jerusalem); (4) He began his prophetic ministry likely shortly before Jeroboam II died (753 BC) and concluded shortly after Hezekiah began to reign (729 BC).



The Book of Hosea is about the *faithlessness* of God's people and his *faithfulness* to them, illustrated most poignantly through marital (in)fidelity.

God's Contention with Israel—Priests and People, pt. 3

4:15-5:7

^{ESV} **Hosea 4:1** Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel, for the LORD has a **controversy** with the inhabitants of the land.

What is the "**controversy**" (contention) God has with Israel?

^{ESV} **Hosea 1:2** "...the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD."

^{ESV} **Hosea 3:1** "...the children of Israel...turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins."

^{ESV} **Hosea 4:** ¹ There is **no** faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; ² there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

How does God's contention with Israel (4:1-3) relate to 4:4-7:16?

God's contention with Israel (4:1-3)

Against the priests and people—the religious life of Israel (4:4-5:7)

Against the princes and people—the political life of Israel (5:8-7:16)

God tells Israel to listen up because he has a contention against them, which includes the priests and the people.

Religiously...

- the priests and the people are at fault, together (4:4-14)

- **the nation is at fault, as a whole** (4:15-5:7)

Outline

(4:15-19) Though **you play the whore, O Israel...** (v. 15)

(5:1-2) Hear this, O priests! Pay attention, O house of Israel! Give ear, O house of the king! ...**judgment** is for you...I will **discipline** all of them.

(5:3-7) ...for now, **O Ephraim, you have played the whore** (v. 3)

Reminder

Hosea was speaking to...real people—both persons and a people—in a real time and a real place, with real practices—both actions and words—and real consequences...

-- **Israel was at fault, as a nation, and God warned others to leave them alone** (4:15-19).

^{ESV} **Hosea 4:15** Though you play the whore, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty. Enter not into Gilgal, nor go up to Beth-aven, and swear not, "As the LORD lives." ¹⁶ Like a stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn; can the LORD now feed them like a lamb in a broad pasture?

What has Israel done? What is God's warning?

"Though you play the whore, O Israel..." (v. 15)

= not treating God (the LORD, Yahweh) as he is worthy of, while treating others (people, nations, and gods) the way God alone is to be treated (spiritual whoredom/harlotry, etc.)

"...let not Judah become guilty"

"Enter not into Gilgal, nor go up to Beth-aven..."

Gilgal (See 1 Samuel 7:16, Samuel "judged Israel...on a circuit")

Beth-aven "Beth Aven is almost certainly Bethel; Amos also associates Gilgal with Bethel (cf. Amos 5:5), and employing the same pun that Hosea uses, he declares that Bethel would become 'nothing' (*aven*)...The term *aven* basically means, 'disaster,' 'nothingness,' or 'deception,' and it is a polemical term used by the prophets to describe idolatry." (Garrett, p. 136)

"...and swear not, 'As the LORD lives'"

"Like a stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn..." (v. 16)

"can the LORD now feed them like a lamb in a broad pasture?"

¹⁷ Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone. ¹⁸ When their drink is gone, they give themselves to whoring; their rulers dearly love shame. ¹⁹ A wind

has wrapped them in its wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

What has Ephraim done? What is God's warning?

"Ephraim is joined to idols..."

Ephraim "This is the first of thirty-six instances in which Hosea uses *Ephraim* to refer in some way to the northern kingdom. Ephraim was the dominant tribe in the north, and its traditional territory formed the heartland of the kingdom." (Mackay, p. 154)

"...leave him alone"

"When their drink is gone, they give themselves to whoring..."

"...their rulers dearly love shame"

"A wind (*ruach*) has wrapped them in its wings..."

"...and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices"

-- **Israel was at fault, as a nation, and God warned them that he would discipline them** (5:1-2).

^{ESV} **Hosea 5:1** Hear this, O priests! Pay attention, O house of Israel! Give ear, O house of the king! For the judgment is for you;

"Hear this, O priests!"

"Pay attention, O house of Israel!"

"Give ear, O house of the king!"

"For judgment is for you"

for you have been a snare at Mizpah and a net spread upon Tabor. ² And the revolvers have gone deep into slaughter, but I will discipline all of them.

"for you have been a snare at Mizpah..."

Mizpah

"...a net spread upon Tabor"

Tabor

"And..."

"...the revolvers have gone deep into slaughter..." (ESV; cf. NASB) or

"...a pit they have dug for Shittim..." (Garrett, p. 143; cf. Dearman, p. 169)