
Words of Truth

A Divided Heart

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Hosea was a prophet during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Kings of Judah) and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash (King of Israel) (Hosea 1:1; cf. II Kings 13:13-20:21). The history of those days is that apostasy was rampant in the house of Israel. There were wars between the ten tribes of Israel and the people of Judah. Idolatry was commonplace in both on and off. The ten tribes of Israel continued in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin and divide to begin with (I Kings 12:15-33). Israel had gotten so bad that God put them away that they were no more a people. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained from that point forward (II Kings 17:18 and Ezra 1:5).

Hosea was instructed of the Lord to go and take a wife from among the harlots because of the spiritual whoredoms of Israel (Hosea 1:2-3). Hosea even had to redeem his wife from her adulterous practices later on (Hosea 3:1-5). Hosea's children were named as lessons to the people of Israel (Hosea 1:4-11). Hosea represented to the people of God, through his marriage to a whore, what God was going through in dealing with them. Does that paint the picture for you as to how horrible the people of God had become?

Hosea set forth the following charges against Israel that very much shows us their transgressions: *“Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away. Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest. Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame. They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings. For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD. Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart. My people ask counsel at*

their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery. I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall. Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth. For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place. Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone. Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love, Give ye. The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices” (Hosea 4:1-19). I underlined two statements in the above quoted chapter. Those two statements reveal that Israel had heart problems.

The Problem Of A Divided Heart

One tribe in Israel was said to not have a heart (Hosea 7:11). The people had gotten so full of their own things that their heart was exalted to the point wherein they forgot God (Hosea 13:6). In Hosea’s recordings there is one particular statement that stands out regarding the hearts of the people of Israel. Notice: *“Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images. **Their heart is divided**; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images”* (Hosea 10:1-2).

As we have studied many times, it takes a good and honest heart for the word of God to be productive in anyone’s life (Luke 8:4-15). It takes a good heart to do what is right in the sight of God (Luke 6:43-46). When a person or group of people have their affections divided, that person or persons cannot please God (Matthew 6:24-34, Luke 16:13, Romans 8:5-8, I Corinthians 10:21, Galatian 5:17, etc.).

We cannot stress enough how important it is that we invest ourselves fully in the Lord (Psalms 119:174, Luke 13:23-24, John 6:1-27, II Corinthians 4:8-5:1, Philippians 3:4-20, and Colossians 2:20-3:4). Where your treasure is, there will be your heart also (Matthew 6:19-21). Examine yourself. Where is your heart?

Conclusion

We are supposed to learn from the mistakes of God’s people of old (I Corinthians 10:1-12). We have learned that when our hearts aren’t right, our actions won’t be either. Israel erred because they didn’t set their hearts aright (Psalms 78:8). Don’t have a divided heart!