

## What Does Judgment from God Look Like?

[Hosea 4:7-14](#)

Hosea, Day 10

*The more they increased,  
the more they sinned against me;  
I will change their glory into shame.  
They feed on the sin of my people;  
they are greedy for their iniquity.  
And it shall be like people, like priest;  
I will punish them for their ways  
and repay them for their deeds.  
They shall eat, but not be satisfied;  
they shall play the whore, but not multiply,  
because they have forsaken the Lord  
to cherish whoredom, wine, and new wine,  
which take away the understanding.  
My people inquire of a piece of wood,  
and their walking staff gives them oracles.  
For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray,  
and they have left their God to play the whore.  
They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains  
and burn offerings on the hills,  
under oak, poplar, and terebinth,  
because their shade is good.  
Therefore your daughters play the whore,  
and your brides commit adultery.  
I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore,  
nor your brides when they commit adultery;  
for the men themselves go aside with prostitutes  
and sacrifice with cult prostitutes,  
and a people without understanding shall come to ruin.*

- Hosea 4:7-14, ESV

When most people think of judgment from God, they likely picture tremendous natural disasters or plagues. Or perhaps they might envision spectacular economic collapse. Either way, most people's conception of divine judgment is dramatic and devastating. Yet more often God chooses very simple and yet even more deeply devastating ways to judge His people.

Here in Hosea 4, we have an unfolding of God's case against His people, Israel, and their spiritual leaders, the priests. Last time, we saw that the priests, far from being exempt from blame, actually share the largest part of the responsibility for Israel's sin because they failed to teach the people God's truth. In today's passage, the case continues to build and the early stages of judgment are also given.

In verse 7, God says that the more His people prospered, the more they used their prosperity as an occasion for sin. In verse 8, He says that the leadership of the people actually feed and thrive on the sin and iniquity of the people. If that sounds absurd, think of education funded by lottery dollars. or of "spiritual leaders" gathering to bless the work of a [Planned Parenthood abortion clinic](#). Now the charges of verses 7-8 hit pretty close home, don't they?

What does judgment against this pattern of sin look like? God says "I will *punish them*" in verse 9, but what form will the punishment take? a plague of locusts? hailstones of fire? No, nothing so dramatic, but two things just as devastating, even more so:

1. "*They shall eat but not be satisfied; they shall play the whore but not multiply.*" (v. 10)
2. "*I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore, nor your brides when they commit adultery*" (v. 14)

The first thing God tells Israel is that they will continue to commit sin and even prosper from it, but they will find no satisfaction in their prosperity, and they will not benefit the way they thought they would. To "*play the whore*" here means to commit idolatry, which is spiritual adultery. So, God will make Israel's idolatry unsatisfying.

In America, the economy is our god. Our idol is the success of the American Dream. Yet in the last generation or two, we have found this dream to be deeply unsatisfying. As economic prosperity has continued to hit new heights, so have divorce rates and suicide attempts.

The second judgment is a picture of being given over to sin in devastating ways. Men don't mind being unfaithful themselves, but the thought of their daughters and their wives being sexually immoral is more disturbing. Isn't that exactly what we're seeing happen in our culture? Sexual immorality used to be a male-dominant sin, but no more. It has spread to be an equal-opportunity snare. God is continuing to give us over to our sin.

So, if we understand Hosea 4:7-14, we should see our own culture clearly displayed in these verses. Let's remember that God gave this word as a mercy to His people, to warn them of the disaster so they would repent and seek Him. We need to hear His word today, and we need to seek the grace of the Holy Spirit to grant us true and heart-felt repentance.