

# THE PROPHET HOSEA

## Lesson 2

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**Review.** What object lesson did Hosea provide for Israel?

### Introduction

Picture a courtroom. It's an illustration used throughout Scripture. In today's lesson Israel is on trial and the Lord is both judge and plaintiff. In the first three chapters of Hosea the Lord charged Israel with idolatry. He now brings additional charges against Israel.

Imagine being in the Lord's courtroom. What thoughts would be going through your head as the righteous judge approaches the bench? (Consider **2 Corinthians 5:10**)

### The Lord Charges Israel

**Read Hosea 4:1-3.**

As the Lord brings charges against Israel remember how personal this case is.

What does the Lord *not* find in the land of Israel? (Verse 1)

What *does* the Lord find instead? (Verse 2)

The first three chapters of Hosea highlight Israel's sin of idolatry. They have been unfaithful in their relationship to God. How does that unfaithfulness in their relationship to God impact their relationship to their neighbors?

Verse 3 speaks of the consequences in nature—all creatures in the land will suffer because of Israel's sin. What purpose would this consequence serve for the nation of Israel?

### A Deadly Lack of Knowledge

**Read Hosea 4:4-19.**

Verse 4 is challenging to translate. Note the following translations:

*ESV*            "Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest."

*EHV*            "Yet no one should bring charges. No one should accuse, because your people are like those who dispute with a priest."<sup>1</sup>

What has led Israel to such demise? (Consider verses 1, 6, 11, 14)

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<sup>1</sup> EHV footnote: "The verse is difficult. The translation follows the Hebrew and Greek texts. Translations that render the third line *my contention is with you, O priest* emend the text to obtain this rendering. The point of the verse seems to be that it is useless to bring charges against these people, because they would not accept the judgment even of a priest."

The Lord's charges fall heavily on the priests. What was supposed to be the role of the priest in the Old Testament? (Consider **Deuteronomy 17:8-9**; **Malachi 2:7**; **Hebrew 5:1**).

What instead were the priests in Hosea's day doing?

What is meant by "like people, like priests" in verse 9?

What is meant by a "spirit of prostitution" in verse 12?

Besides the priesthood, where else does Hosea note a breakdown in the Israelite society?

Note the reference to Gilgal and Beth Aven in verse 15.

What indictment does the Lord make in verses 16-19?

## A Deadly Lack of Knowledge

Note: throughout Hosea, and especially in this chapter, Ephraim is used to refer to Israel.

As you **read Hosea 5:1-15**, list the phrases or verses that especially strike you as words of strong rebuke.

Whom does the Lord address in verse 1?

In verse 4 the Lord says, "Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God." What important truth does that poignant phrase teach?

In verse 6, the Lord warns that when they go to seek him, they will not find him. Does the phrase trouble you?

Compare how God's people viewed him (verse 12) to how God would actually reveal himself (verse 14).

Is there any glimmer of hope or comfort in the verses we have read today?

In these chapters of Hosea, we see how the prophets, priests, and kings have failed miserably. Why is noting that failure important as we study Scripture as a whole?

### **Discussion**

- Lack of knowledge and understanding is a key theme in this section of Hosea. What may cause an individual or a generation to lack knowledge and understanding of the Lord?
- In what ways may that lack of knowledge manifest itself in someone's life?
- Is lack of knowledge a legitimate defense in the Lord's courtroom?
- What will your defense be when you one day stand before your maker? (See **2 Cor. 5:21**; **Rom. 8:33-34**)