

“SERIES: “MEET THE GOD WHO LOVES YOU”

SEVEN: “WHO’S THE BLAME?”

HOSEA 5:1-7

INTRODUCTION

THERE IS A TENDENCY IN OUR SOCIETY TO REFUSE TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR ACTIONS.

FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE WHO ENGAGE IN IMMORAL BEHAVIOR ARE DESCRIBED AS “VICTIMS” OF A SEXUAL ADDICTION.

BY DEFINING THEM AS “VICTIMS,” THEY ARE EXCUSED FROM RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CONDUCT.

A “VICTIM” IS ONE WHO IS PREYED UPON OR TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF.

THEY ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT THEY DO; CONSEQUENTLY, WE HAVE ABSOLVED AN ENTIRE GENERATION OF GUILT.

WE LOOK UPON PEOPLE AS BEING ADDICTED TO ANGER, ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR, GAMBLING, PORNOGRAPHY, AND THE LIST GROWS EACH MONTH.

AND WE SAY THOSE INVOLVED ARE NOT TO BLAME FOR WHAT THEY DO; THEY ARE VICTIMS.

EVIDENCE OF THIS TENDENCY IS ALSO FOUND IN THE WAY WE ASSIGN BLAME TO INSTITUTIONS FOR THE EVILS OF SOCIETY.

WE WANT TO BLAME THE GOVERNMENT, HOLLYWOOD, AND PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR THE DECLINE IN MORAL VALUES AND THE INCREASE IN VIOLENT CRIME.

WE WANT TO HOLD INDUSTRIES RESPONSIBLE WHEN WE USE THEIR PRODUCTS TO OUR HARM.

IN THE “BLAME-GAME”, EVERYONE IS AT FAULT EXCEPT “ME”.

ONE OF THE RESULTS OF REFUSING TO LIVE RESPONSIBLY AND ACCEPT ACCOUNTABILITY IS THE EFFECT IT HAS ON FUTURE GENERATIONS.

TODAY, CHILDREN ARE EMULATING THE EXCESSES OF THEIR PARENTS.

NOT CONTENT TO BE ENTERTAINED BY IMMORALITY AND VIOLENCE, THEY RE-ENACT IT WITH ALARMING FREQUENCY AND WE ASK, “WHO’S THE BLAME?”

GOD HOLDS BOTH INSTITUTION AND INDIVIDUALS ACCOUNTABLE. THAT IS THE MESSAGE THAT HE DELIVERS IN THIS CHAPTER.

HE ASSIGNS BLAME; HE MAKES US FACE THE FACT THAT PERSONAL CHOICES MATTER.

(I). IN [VERSE 1-7] GOD IS ASSIGNING BLAME.

(A). IN [VERSE 1-2] HE DEMANDS ACCOUNTABILITY. HE SAYS; “*FOR JUDGEMENT IS TOWARDS YOU*”

1. NO ONE WAS EXCUSED FROM RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DOWNWARD SLIDE OF THE NATION.

(a). THE PRIESTS WERE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR COMPROMISE, DISHONESTY AND UNFAITHFULNESS.

(b). THE POLITICIANS (“O HOUSE OF E KING) WERE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR WICKED LEADERSHIP AND ENDORSEMENT OF IMMORAL BEHAVIOR.

- (c). THE PEOPLE (YE HOUSE O ISRAEL’)
WERE ACCOUNTABLE FOR ALLOWING
THEMSELVES TO BE LED ASTRAY
IGNORING THE VOICE OF CONVICTION
AND THE PREACHING OF THE
PROPHETS.

ILLUSTRATION

MIZPAH WAS EAST OF THE JORDAN RIVER AND TABOR
WAS WEST OF THE JORDAN RIVER. THIS WAS HOW GOD
DEMONSTRATED THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE WHOLE
NATION. EVERYWHERE YOU TRAVELLED IN THE LAND,
PEOPLE, PRINCES, AND PRIESTS HAD REBELLED AGAINST
GOD’S LAW AND IGNORED HIS REBUKES.

2. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT GOD BEGAN BY
ASSIGNING BLAME TO THE PRIESTHOOD,
REMINING US THAT JUDGEMENT MUST
BEGIN AT THE HOUR OF GOD [I PETER 4:17]
- (a). GOD PLACES SPIRITUAL LEADERS
ABOVE POLITICAL LEADERS BECAUSE
THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE FIRST
TO CRY OUT AGAINST THE MOVE
TOWARD IDOLATRY AND IMMORALITY.
- (b). INSTEAD, MOTIVATED BY SELFISHNESS,
GREED, AND LUST FOR POWER; THEY
HAD ENDORSED THE VERY SINS THEY
WERE CALLED TO COMBAT.

ILLUSTRATION

TO ILLUSTRATE THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF SPIRITUAL
LEADERS, CONSIDER THE STORY TOLD BY ROBERT
YACKEY OF A MAN WHO WAS ON HIS WAY TO CHURCH.
AS HE WAS DRIVING, HE NOTICED ALL THE SHEEP IN A
NEIGHBORING PASTURE LYING ON THE GROUND. AT
FIRST, HE THOUGHT THEY MUST ALL BE ASLEEP. THEN HE
REALIZED THEY WERE ALL DEAD. OVER 1,000 SHEEP HAD
FROZEN TO DEATH AS A LATE COLD FRONT DESCENDED

UPON THE AREA. THE SHEEP WERE INNOCENT VICTIMS OF A RANCHER WHO HAD SHEARED THEM TOO EARLY, MOTIVATED BY HIS DESIRE TO GET HIS WOOL TO MARKET WHILE THE PRICE WAS STILL HIGH. THE SHEEP WERE KILLED BY THE RANCHER'S GREED, THE ONE WHO SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER; THE ONE WHO SHOULD HAVE CONSIDERED THE ERROR OF HIS ACTIONS UPON THE FLOCK HE CARED FOR.

(B). IN [VERSES 3-5] GOD POINTS OUT THEIR ATTITUDES.

1. IN [VERSE 3], GOD MAKES A DISTINCTION BETWEEN "EPHRAIM" AND "ISRAEL".

(a). GENERALLY, EPHRAIM IS THE NAME OF SECULAR POWER.

- FROM THE BEGINNING, THE NORTHERN KINGDOM HAD REJECTED GOD'S RULE.
- JEROBOAM I, HAD LED THE NATION INTO IDOLATRY AND EACH SUCCEEDING KING HAD FOLLOWED IN HIS STEPS.

(b). ISRAEL IS THE NAME OF SPIRITUAL PROMISE.

- IT IS A REMINDER THAT GOD HAS NOT BROKEN HIS COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD DEFILED THEMSELVES WITH IDOLATRY AND IMMORALITY.

(c). GOD KNEW THE CHARACTER OF THE NATION.

- HE KNEW BOTH THE HEART OF ITS KING AND THE HEART OF ITS PEOPLE.
- HE FINDS EACH GUILTY OF THE SAME SINFUL ATTITUDES.

2. HE ACCUSED BOTH OF THEM OF STUBBORNNESS IN [VERSE 4]

(a). IT WAS NOT THAT ISRAEL *COULD* NOT CHANGE, BUT THAT THEY *WOULD* NOT CHANGE.

(b). OBSESSED WITH IDOLS, THEY SOON FORGOT THE LORD, NOR WERE INTERESTED IN KNOWING HIM.

- THE “SPIRIT OF WHOREDOM” REFERS TO AN OBSESSION WITH IDOLATRY AND THE IMMORAL BEHAVIOR THAT ACCOMPANIED IDOL WORSHIP.
- INDULGENCE HAD BECOME HABIT AND HABIT HAD BECOME COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR.
- THE PEOPLE KNEW THAT IDOLATRY WAS WRONG, YET THEY STUBBORNLY CLUNG TO

THEIR IDOLS.

- **TODAY, THEIR INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE DESCRIBED AS AN ADDICTION. GOD IDENTIFIES IT AS A CHOICE.**

3. **HE ACCUSED THEM OF PRIDE IN [VERSE 5a].**

- (a). **PEOPLE, PRIESTS AND RULERS WORE THEIR PRIDE ON THEIR FACES LIKE A BADGE OF HONOR.**
- (b). **THEY FLAUNTED THEIR ACTIVITIES, MISTAKING GOD'S PATIENCE FOR EITHER IGNORANCE OF THEIR SINS OR LACK OF INTEREST.**
- (c). **PRIDE AND STUBBORNNESS KEPT THEM FROM SEEKING THE LORD OR ACKNOWLEDGING HIS WAYS.**

C. **IN [VERSE 5b-7] WE SEE THE ADMONITION OF GOD.**

1. **WE SEE ISRAEL'S EVIL INFLUENCE.**

- (a). **NOT ONLY WOULD ISRAEL AND EPHRAIM FALL, BUT THEIR IDOLATRY HAD SPREAD TO JUDAH AND WOULD EVENTUALLY RESULT IN ITS DESTRUCTION.**
- (b). **ADDITIONALLY, ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS HAD RESULTED IN THE BIRTH OF "STRANGE CHILDREN", A GENERATION TO WHOM THE TRUTH OF GOD WAS TOTALLY FOREIGN.**

2. IN [VERSE 6] WE SEE ISRAEL'S INABILITY TO FIND GOD.
 - (a). THE TIME WOULD COME WHEN ISRAEL WOULD ----- TO OFFER SACRIFICES TO APPEASE THE LORD AND ESCAPE THE PAINFUL EFFECTS OF JUDGEMENT.
 - (b). HOWEVER, THEY WOULD DISCOVER THAT GOD HAD WITHDRAWN HIMSELF, LEAVING THEM TO EXPERIENCE JUDGEMENT WITHOUT MERCY UNTIL THEY RECOGNIZE THE TRUE CONDITION OF THEIR HEARTS.
3. IN THIS TEXT, WE SEE ISRAEL'S IMPENDING DESTRUCTION. "NOW SHALL A MONTH DEVOUR THEM." [7]
 - (a). A MONTH IS A SYMBOL OF A SHORT TIME.
 - (b). ONCE JUDGEMENT BEGAN TO FALL, IT WOULD DESTROY THEM SWIFTLY.

(II). IN [VERSE 8-14] GOD ANNOUNCES JUDGEMENT.

- (A). IN [VERSE 8-9] WE SEE THE FUTILITY OF RESISTANCE.
 1. IN [VERSE 8-9] GOD TELLS THE NATION TO SOUND THE ALARM AND RALLY THEIR TROOPS, BUT IT WILL BE TO NO AVAIL.
 2. THEIR PROPHESED DESTRUCTION WOULD "SURELY" COME TO BE.

(B). IN [VERSE 10] WE SEE THE FAILURE OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

1. ALTHOUGH ISRAEL WAS THE PRIMARY TARGET OF GOD'S JUDGEMENT, JUDAH WOULD NOT COME AWAY UNSCATHED.

(a). GOD COMPARES THEM TO LANDOWNERS WHO REMOVED THE BOUNDARY'S MARKERS BETWEEN THEIR PROPERTY AND THAT OF THEIR NEIGHBOR.

(b). ALTHOUGH JUDAH HAD NOT TURNED TOTALLY TO IDOLATRY, THEY WERE GUILTY OF DIMINISHING THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL BOUNDARIES THAT SET THEM APART FROM ISRAEL.

(c). ISRAEL'S DESTRUCTION WOULD COME LIKE A MOTH THAT EATS AWAY AT CLOTHING.

(d). JUDAH'S DESTRUCTION WOULD COME LIKE "ROTTENNESS" THAT SLOWLY DESTROYS WOOD FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

(e). IT TAKES MUCH LONGER BEFORE YOU SEE THE EVIDENCE, BUT BY THEN IT IS USUALLY TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

2. AGAIN, GOD INFORMS THE NATIONS THAT THEY WERE TO BLAME FOR THE JUDGEMENT THAT WAS TO COME.

(a). EPHRAIM WILLINGLY WALKED AFTER THE COMMANDMENT OF MEN, AND THEIR OBSESSION WITH IDOLS RESULTED FROM A WILLING REJECTION OF GOD'S TRUTH.

(b). WHEN THE NATION RECOGNIZED ITS “SICKNESS”, THE MORAL DECADENCE THAT WAS DESTROYING ITS NATION, INSTEAD OF TURNING TO GOD FOR HEALING, IT TURNED TO HUMAN AGENTS, THE ASSYRIANS.

3. THERE ARE A COUPLE OF SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS TO BE MADE AT THIS POINT.

(a). FIRST, ISN'T IT AMAZING THAT WE TURN FOR AID TO THE VERY INSTITUTION THAT WE BLAME FOR THE DISEASED STATE OF OUR SOCIETY?

(b). SECONDLY, THE SAME HUMAN AGENTS TO WHOM WE LOOK FOR HELP, ACTUALLY CONTRIBUTED TO OUR EVENTUAL DESTRUCTION.

(C). LET US LOOK AT THE FACT OF GOD'S INVOLVEMENT.

1. THROUGHOUT THIS SECTION, GOD EMPHATICALLY STATES THAT THE EVENTS THAT ARE TO COME ARE THE RESULTS OF DIVINE ACTIVITIES.

(a). *“I WILL POUR OUT MY WRATH, THEREFORE WILL I BE UNTO EPHRAIM AS A MOTH... FOR IT WILL BE UNTO EPHRAIM AS A LION... I EVEN WILL TEAR.... I WILL TAKE AWAY.”*

2. GOD IS AT WORK BEHIND THE SCENES OF HUMAN HISTORY, QUIETLY BRINGING HIS

WILL TO PASS.

3. **ALTHOUGH THE DESTRUCTIVE FORCES OF WAR, MATERIALISM AND IMMORALITY ARE THE RESULT OF HUMAN CHOICES, GOD USES THEM TO ACCOMPLISH DIVINE PURPOSES.**

(III). IN [VERSE 15], WE SEE THE ANTICIPATED RETURN OF GOD.

- (A). **THIS SERMON ENDS ON A SOLEMN NOTE, YET A RAY OF HOPE SHINES THROUGH.**
 1. **GOD SAID HE WOULD WITHDRAW TO HIS PLACE, ABANDONING THE NATION TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR SIN AND REBELLION.**
 2. **HE WOULD IGNORE THEIR SUFFERING AND THEIR FRANTIC ATTEMPTS TO APPEASE HIM WHEN THE NATION BEGAN TO FALL APART.**
 3. **HOWEVER, HE WAS NOT ABANDONING THEM. HE KNEW THERE WOULD COME A DAY WHEN ISRAEL WOULD RECOGNIZE ITS FOLLY, CONFESS ITS SIN, AND SEEK GOD'S FACE.**
 4. **THEY WOULD GIVE UP THEIR CONFIDENCE IN EVERY HUMAN RESOURCE AND LOOK TO GOD ALONE TO DELIVER THEM.**
 5. **AT THAT DAY, THEY WOULD FIND THE LORD AND HE WOULD CLAIM THEM AS HIS PEOPLE AGAIN.**
- (B). **THERE ARE TWO ISSUES OF ACCOUNTABILITY.**
 1. **ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR ACTIONS, REFUSING TO BLAME SOCIETY,**

**HOLLYWOOD, OR ANYONE ELSE FOR
CONSEQUENCES OF OUR CHOICES.**

2. **ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR
ACTIONS, REALIZING THAT OUR CHOICES
ALWAYS AFFECT OTHERS.**

CONCLUSION

**THERE WAS A LITTLE BOY VISITING WITH HIS
GRANDPARENTS DOWN ON THE FARM.**

**AND HE WAS GIVEN A SLINGSHOT TO PLAY WITH IN THE
WOODS.**

**HE PRACTICED IN THE WOODS, BUT HE COULD NEVER HIT
THE TARGET.**

**AND GETTING A LITTLE DISCOURAGED, HE HEADED BACK
TO HIS GRANDPARENTS- HOUSE FOR DINNER.**

**AS HE WAS WALKING BACK HOME, HE SAW HIS
GRANDMOTHER-S LAYING HEN.**

**JUST OUT OF IMPULSE, HE LET THE SLINGSHOT FLY,
HITTING THE HEN IN THE HEAD, AND KILLING IT.**

**HE WAS BOTH SHOCKED AND GRIEVED THAT HE HAD
KILLED HIS GRANDMOTHER-S LAYING HEN.**

**IN A PANIC, HE HID THE DUCK IN THE WOOD PILE, ONLY
TO SEE HIS SISTER SALLY, WATCHING IN THE WINDOW.**

**SALLY SAW IT ALL, BUT SHE SAID NOTHING TO HER
GRANDMOTHER.**

**AFTER DINNER, GRANDMOTHER SAID, ASALLY, COME LET
US WASH THE DISHES.©**

**BUT SALLY SAID, AGRAND MAMA, JOHNNY TOLD ME HE
WANTED TO HELP YOU IN THE KITCHEN.©**

**THEN SHE TURNED WHISPERED TO JOHNNY, AREMEMBER
GRAND MAMA-S LAYING HEN?© SO JOHNNY DID THE
DISHES.**

LATER ON THAT DAY, GRANDPA ASKED IF THE CHILDREN WANTED TO GO FISHING? AND GRAND MAMA SAID, AI-M SORRY, BUT I NEED SALLY TO HELP ME MAKE SUPPER.Ⓢ

BUT SALLY JUST SMILED AND SAID, AWELL THAT-S ALRIGHT BECAUSE JOHNNY TOLD ME HE WANTED TO HELP MAKE SUPPER.Ⓢ

SHE WHISPERED AGAIN TO JOHNNY, AREMEMBER GRAND MAMA-S LAYING HEN?Ⓢ

SO SALLY WENT FISHING AND JOHNNY STAYED HOME TO HELP MAKE SUPPER.

AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF JOHNNY DOING BOTH HIS CHORES AND SALLY-S, HE FINALLY COULDN-T STAND IT ANY LONGER.

HE CAME TO GRAND MAMA AND CONFESSED THAT HE HAD KILLED HER LAYING HEN.

GRAND MAMA KNELT DOWN AND GAVE HIM A BIG HUG, AND SAID, AI KNOW YOU KILLED THE HEN.

YOU SEE, I WAS STANDING AT THE WINDOW, AND I SAW THE WHOLE THING.

BUT BECAUSE I LOVE YOU, I FORGAVE YOU. AND I WAS JUST WONDERING HOW LONG YOU WOULD LET SALLY MAKE A SLAVE OUT OF YOU. AND YOU TOOK RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTIONS.

1. OH MY BROTHERS AND MY SISTERS, WHAT EVER IS IN YOUR PAST, THAT THE ENEMY KEEPS THROWING UP IN YOUR FACE, YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT JESUS WAS STANDING IN THE WINDOW AND HE SAW THE WHOLE THING.
2. WHATEVER YOU HAVE DONE, JESUS WAS IN THE WINDOW, AND HE SAW THE WHOLE THING.
3. AND HE WANTS YOU TO KNOW THAT HE LOVES YOU AND THAT YOU ARE FORGIVEN.

4. HE IS WONDERING JUST HOW LONG WILL YOU LET THE ENEMY MAKE YOU A SLAVE.
5. IF YOU ARE TIRED OF BEING A SLAVE TO SIN, WHY NOT GET FREE.
6. WHY NOT LET JESUS REMOVE THE SHACKLES OF SIN THAT BINDS YOU.
7. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TELL THE LORD, ALORD, I-M GUILTY.®
- LYING...GUILTY...
 - STEALING...GUILTY..
 - MURDER...GUILTY..
 - ADULTERY...GUILTY...
 - FORNICATION...GUILTY...
 - BACKBITING...GUILTY....
 - GOSSIPING...GUILTY...
 - HOMOSEXUALITY...GUILTY..
 - LESBIANISM...GUILTY...
 - DRUG-ABUSE....GUILTY...
 - DRUNKENNESS...GUILTY...
 - PEACE-BREAKING...GUILTY..
 - HOME-WRECKING.....GUILTY.

THOMAS SPURGEON WROTE A POEM THAT ILLUSTRATES HOW WE AS CHRISTIANS HAVE TO CONSIDER HOW OUR CHOICES AFFECT OTHER BELIEVERS.

“IT WAS A SHEEP, NOT A LAMB THAT STRAYED AWAY,

**IN THE PARABLE JESUS TOLD:
A GROWN-UP SHEEP THAT HAD GONE ASTRAY
FROM THE NINETY AND NINE IN THE FOLD.**

**OUT IN THE MEADOWS, OUT IN THE COLD
T'WAS A SHEEP THE GOOD SHEPHERD SOUGHT,
BACK TO THE FLOCK AND INTO THE FOLD
T'WAS THE SHEEP THE GOOD SHEPHERD BROUGHT.**

**AND WHY FOR THE SHEEP WE EARNESTLY LONG,
AND SO EARNESTLY HOPE AND PRAY?
BECAUSE THERE IS DANGER, IF THEY GO WRONG
THEY WOULD LEAD THE YOUNG LAMBS AWAY.**

**FOR THE LAMBS FOLLOW THE SHEEP, YOU KNOW,
WHEREVER THE SHEEP MAY STRAY;
IF THE SHEEP GO WRONG, IT WILL NOT BE LONG
TILL THE LAMBS ARE AS WRONG AS THEY.**