**7. Fruitful yet Fruitless**

*Read Hosea 9:10-10:15*

In this portion of his prophecy Hosea uses a number of metaphors to picture Israel’s condition. Hosea reflects here on the tragedy of what might have been – we are shown what Israel was, what she could have been but what she chose to become instead.

**A. Grapes in the Wilderness** ***(Hosea 9:10-17)***

1. What imagery does Hosea use to describe Israel’s early history with God (v10)? What is implied in this imagery?

2. Baal-Peor is a reminder of an especially sad period of their history – you can read about it in Numbers 22-25. Israel was enticed to worship Baal by being lured into sexual sin with Moabite women.

1. Compare the latter part of Hosea 9:10 with Psalm 115:1-8. What does it mean for people to become (like) what they worship?
2. This concept is often only thought of in a negative sense; discuss the positive implications of this principle (cp. Romans 8:28-29). How can we spot what it is we truly worship?

3. God is going to take the glory away from Israel (v11) – we have seen that this will lead to fruitlessness in their fields, but here they shall be fruitless in producing offspring.

1. How can Hosea pray like he does in v14? What do you think he means to accomplish in asking for this?
2. What is the end result here for Israel (vv16-17)? How does it compare to how they started out with God (v10)?

**B. The Luxuriant Vine** ***(Hosea 10:1-10)***

4. What has Israel done with their wealth and prosperity (10:1)? Read Psalm 80:8-11. What have they forgotten?

5. Look at verses 5-6. Here Hosea describes Israel’s attitude towards the nation’s idol (the golden calf we thought about in study 6 Q3).

1. What is going to happen to the calf?
2. In addition to this, what does their *trembling* in v5 say about this ‘god’?

6. A repeated theme in Hosea is God bringing about a reversal in the nation. What is the reversal described in these areas:

1. The abundance of altars built in v1.
2. Israel’s rejoicing over the glory of the calf (v5).

7. God’s judgement has been pronounced to Israel repeatedly, and their response in these verses has been empty (see 9:7-8 & 10:3-4), but when God’s judgement breaks it will be a different story – look at their cry at the end of 10:8.

1. Very similar words are found in Luke 23:26-31 & Revelation 6:12-17. How is the judgement of God described there? What is it that is most feared by those who face God’s wrath?
2. How seriously do we take the reality of God’s judgement? What would indicate that we have a Biblical perspective on this subject (as a Christian, as a church)?
3. In what ways should this make us appreciate the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf?

**C. The Trained Heifer** ***(Hosea 10:11-15)***

8. Here Hosea again reflects on what Israel used to be – she used to be a trained heifer/calf who delighted in serving the Lord (v11), but now she is going to have the yoke of judgement placed on her neck.

1. From v12, what does God want Israel to do?
2. God commands Israel to break up her fallow ground. Compare this with Psalm 95:6-9. What attitude softens a hard heart? In what subtle (or obvious) ways can we be hardening ourselves against God?

*In your group…*

Share points for prayer.

Worship God for his attributes revealed in this passage

Ask God to reveal more and more of who he is to you through his word.

Pray over what has challenged you about this passage of Scripture?

Pray for each other’s needs.