

Worse Than You Thought, but Better Than You Could Dream

Hosea 8:1-14

Key Verse(s) here.

Big Idea:

God loves us enough to reveal the bad news about our hearts. But he does so in order to prepare us to receive the even better good news about his salvation.

I. Need (v. 1)

The threat is that an “eagle” or vulture stands over Israel. It is a common ominous image we all recognize, that of vultures circling over the heads of people they suspect are near death. Israel thought that their danger was entirely political and economic. They were correct in seeing Assyria as a threat. Assyria hated them and would eventually take them into captivity. Though they properly identified the local threat, they didn’t recognize the spiritual force behind it. The result was that they asked for too little help. Our world has genuine needs: health care, economic recovery, job growth, terrorism, children’s success, education, poverty, hunger, obesity, disease, environment, war and many others. But the spiritual realities of sin, the effects of the fall, and destructive worldviews that lie behind each of these problems is the real need that only the gospel can address.

II. Supply (vv. 3-6)

The kind of supply for your redemption from your problems will greatly depend on your diagnosis of your need. Because Israel saw her need to be political and economic, political alliances and a thriving economy were the supplies they sought. The result was that they got what they wanted which was far less than they needed. So what were those supplies the Israelites sought? The same ones we tend to seek: political power and economic prosperity. Internally they “set up kings” whom they thought would best serve their needs. They did not bother to ask the Lord for his guidance and approval. The Israelites got what they wanted—temporary political and economic security—like some of you, but is it really what you want? Let’s consider the contrast of what God offers for your redemption. Rather than merely offering a political alliance that will only be as good and permanent as the fallen humans who lead it, God unites you to the Head and King of the Church, a person and a Kingdom that will never be decapitated (7), swallowed up (8), or dispersed (10). And in contrast to temporary financial relief, God buys you with the infinite cost of blood and proves your worth is greater than silver and gold (8-10).

III. Response (vv. 1-2; 14:2-3)

So if the supply you seek for redemption is based on the need you diagnose, it stands to reason that your response to redemption will differ as well. The ultimate result of looking for your redemption in certainty is disappointment. Specifically that disappointment comes in the form of anxiety and/or escapism. I want you to notice first of all, that trusting in man-centered deliverance is not always obvious. One can appear to be quite religious. For instance, these Israelites cried out, “O our God, we acknowledge you” (v. 2). These Israelites claim to “know” (yada) the Lord. That word in Hebrew connotes intimate knowledge. It is possible to admit that you know God and yet not trust him in your heart.

In your heart of hearts you are putting your trust in what man has to offer. What is the response of the one who turns to the Lord for redemption? We have to fast-forward to the end of the book (14:1-3). Hosea outlines the response that only those who trust in the Lord can repeat. The first step is to return to the Lord. It is to turn around completely and abandon any hope placed in any scheme, plan, or resource besides Christ alone.

Discussion Questions

1. **Need:** What alternate explanations do you find yourself or others often turning to to explain the problems we face? What is one way you can address the problems you see in your neighborhood or city in the name of Jesus?
2. **Supply:** Have you ever gotten what you really thought you needed in a situation only to find out it wasn't what you actually needed? What kind of attitude must we adopt toward God in order to avoid this and be able to receive the generous supply he offer?
3. **Response:** How might God be calling you to respond in light of your answers to the above two questions? How can you reset and look at your need and God's supply from his perspective instead of your own?