

Foundation of the sermon

Purpose

Admonish the people to accept the knowledge of God.

Principle Idea:

The results of a rejection of the knowledge of God are disastrous.

Type of Outline

Expository based on Hosea 4:6-19

I. Introduction

Last time, we looked at the relationship between truth, knowledge and mercy. God had started this section by noting that He had a controversy with the nation of Israel and with its priests. We discovered that, because of the rejection of Biblical truth as the source of their religious practice, the people had lost the knowledge and mercy of God.

God aimed His first complaint against the priesthood. He did this because they had led the people away from the truth and into error.

The passage we will look at today expands on the idea of lost knowledge and its results in Israel. God, in this passage, still focuses His complaint against the priesthood and their role in the rejection of the knowledge of God. This passage focuses on the process of the rejection of God as the source for knowledge and the ultimate degeneration into false worship that results from that decision.

The focus of the teaching of this portion of Hosea is that the results of a rejection of the knowledge of God are disastrous.

II. Body

A. Knowledge will erode away when you reject God

The first point this passage makes is that knowledge will erode away when you reject God. Let's look at Hosea 4:6-11:

6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. 7 As they were increased, so they sinned against me:

therefore will I change their glory into shame. 8 They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. 9 And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings. 10 For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD. 11 Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.

1. The rejection of the knowledge of God causes: (6)

The rejection of God causes the destruction of the people. The term for destruction here can mean that they ceased to exist, were cut-off, were destroyed. This destruction was because they were without knowledge. The reason they were without knowledge is because they rejected the knowledge of God.

2. The source of all "knowledge" is the knowledge of God. (6)

The implications of this passage are that all vital knowledge has its source in the knowledge of God. The Scripture says of knowledge: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7. Since God is the source of all the physical and moral law, the rules of "true" science, history, and for that matter, all real knowledge, are founded in the knowledge of God. .

3. The rejection of the knowledge of the LORD is based in the rejection of the "moral" law of God. (6)

The reason Israel rejected the knowledge of God is that they had rejected the law of God.

4. The results of the rejection of God on the moral character are: (7-8)

a) An increase of the sinful action.

b) The rejection by God of you as "my people" and God's removal of you from His knowledge.

c) Causes the shame of the person rejecting God

The word for shame here is: "shame, disgrace, dishonor."

d) The sinful nature consumes the person who has rejected God.

5. The degeneration of character cause the heart (desire) of a person to stray further from God. (9-11)

B. False Worship is an attempt to seek for knowledge once God has been rejected.

Hosea 4:12-19 12 My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God. 13 They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery. 14 I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall. 15 Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth. 16 For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place. 17 Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone. 18 Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love, Give ye. 19 The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

1. The worship of Idols (12)

The people now denied the access of the knowledge of God and ask wooden idols. The phrase here is "they ask of trees". The implication here is as in Jeremiah 10:3-4 where it says:

"3 For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. 4 They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not."

When the people of Israel were separated from God they turned back to false worship for the answers to life's questions. Before they left Egypt, the people were warned not to seek answers from the gods of the nations. They were told in Deuteronomy:18:9-12:

" 9 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. 10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter,

or a witch, 11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. 12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

In our post-modern times, you will notice this. America, has for the most part, rejected the God of the Bible as the source of truth and knowledge. As a result, there is an increase of "nature worship," "palm readers," and "psychics." We also have seen the increase of "idol" worship with the increase in the land of immigrants who have come from lands where these things are practiced, and through the writing of books and the influence of other things in our lives.

You can see it at "Half-Price" books or Barnes and Noble. The number of aisles that promote the occult have become larger than those promoting scriptural content. You might even note that "Christian fiction" has a greater number of books than the scriptural reference books and study guides.

Because of the influence of the world's religions, many Christians have incorporated the "holidays" and practices of these religions into so-called "Christian worship". We must be careful in this day and age.

2. The dependence on divination (12)

The next phrase in this verse says: "and their staff declares them." Now we have already discussed above the return practices of the occult in our society. This is specifically the use of external devices to determine the future.

The process here was taking two staffs or "rods" and throwing them to the ground. The way they fell would determine the answer to life's questions, much like the "eight-balls" one may have seen in the novelty stores. It might take the form of "rolling the dice," or throwing bones or coins while asking questions. It might take the form of doing certain rituals to answer life's questions.

When denied the access to communication and knowledge from God, we will turn to other things.

Both the turning to idol worship and the use of divination is seen by God as "spiritual whoredom. We see this in verses 12, and 14-19 of this 4th chapter of Hosea.

C. The dependence on location -- "mountain top experiences and the worship in groves"

According to Kiel and Delitzch: " Mountain-tops and hills were favorite places for idolatrous worship because men thought, that there they were closer to heaven and to the deity. ... green shady trees in the plains and valleys were also chosen, for this purpose."

The worship of the nature "goddess" took place in sacred groves. This practice continued even after biblical times. This goddess of nature had to do with fertility, and fertility had to do with sex.

1. Rejection of God leads to nature worship.

In today's world, we want to be "green" and as everyone who has ever watched Kermit the Frog knows: "its not easy being green." Today's society promotes "mother nature," getting back to nature, etc.

In the late 1970s, I was a member of the Sierra Club. I enjoyed the hiking aspect. I went on many day hikes with the club and enjoyed it very much. In the early 1980s, in reaction to the Reagan administration, the club got more into politics. Even though they still hiked, the emphasis of every piece of literature and meeting turned more toward the environment and anti-Reagan, so I quit.

We seem driven by "nature" worship -- with global warming, etc. Now I am not saying we should not be good stewards of our environment, but it seems as though "going natural" has taken over our world.

a) Rejection of God leads to place worship

This morning, when you told someone, "I am going to church," what did you mean? The building where we attend? Do you think of the place where we worship as the "sanctuary?" Haven't you seen major ministries advocating "Come with us on this cruise to place X," and calling it "A Spiritual Journey?" I know of some people who find a spiritual element to going through corn mazes or hedge mazes.

I think we can all think of a time when we have gone to mountains, or maybe even carved out a special place in our home -- decorated it with candles or something else and that was our place for God.

I know of places that are called the "sacred grove" in America. People have designated it that because they have had some experience there.

b) The rejection of God leads to "sex"

Now I will not dwell here on this topic too long. Sex has strong emotional responses that some would equate with a "spiritual" experience.

Since the 1960s, the emphasis in our society has been wrapped up in the "sexual" revolution, in the "free love" movement. It explodes in front of us each day on TV, and in movies, and in music.

Some forms of "nature" worship are based in "sex." Some are based in the idea of the nature "goddess."

III. Application

Bottom line: this passage has been about the rejection of God as our source for knowledge. The second point of emphasis is that when you reject God, you will turn to other forms, and objects of worship. Lastly, this sermon notes that the rejection of God as a source of knowledge and the object of worship leads to spiritual and physical "whoredom" in the eyes of God.

What can you do about it?

1. Look at what you have in your life that you absolutely "must" have. My mother used to have a porcelain statue of an Asian wise man, monk, or priest on her dresser. When one broke, she went and bought another. We had spent some time in the Far East. I am not saying that it was an object of worship for my mother, but it had become overly important to her. I think it may even be classified as a "household" god. Now remember how Rachel, Jacob's wife, a member of the family of promise, stole her father's household gods and hid them away. Find what is more important to you than your relationship to God and get rid of it.
2. There was a book written by A.H. Lewis, the famous SDB writer, called "Paganism Remaining in Christianity." His book is based mainly on ancient "water" worship, and its remaining influence in Christianity. However, A.H. Lewis also notes other false worship practices that have found their way into Christianity. He points to the pagan "high days" such as "Lent," "Christmas" and "Easter." He shows how their origin as days of worship goes back to a time before "Christianity" began. There are other books such as "The Two Babylons" by Hislop that show the influence of paganism on the Catholic churches and therefore also upon the churches closely associated with it. By the way, neither did SDBs, nor most Baptists or Protestants, keep "Christmas" as we know it today until after the Civil War and the increase of international missions. I am not here bashing a particular practice; what I am doing here is advocating listening to the knowledge God has given you about proper practice. I am advocating you to worship based solely on Scriptural guidelines. Look in your lives and find out how your worship has been tainted by outside influences and get rid of them.
3. Stay away from place worship. The church is a "called-out assembly" of believers. Get rid of the "worship" zones. There aren't any places closer to God than you are. Don't go to the mountains to find yourself; don't go to a forest to contemplate about God -- you can do that here and now. Search out the "special sacred groves" in your life, and cut them down.
4. Stay away from the "Astrology" page in the paper. Stay away from Madam so-and-so, and the "psychic friends" network, or whatever forms of "folk magic" that supply you with knowledge. Don't be like Saul when you feel that God is not giving you the knowledge you need -- don't "consult a witch".
5. What compromises have you made in your moral character to go along and get along? Stop doing them.
6. Sometimes we just need to extract ourselves from the world of "nature worship" and the culture of "sex" in our society. Sometimes, turn off the

TV. Pass by the "tabloid" papers, and media. Turn off the radio, the computer, and the other broadcasters of the messages of filth and debauchery.

IV. Conclusion

This week, the passage was really all about rejection of God as the source of truth and knowledge, and the replacement of Him with something else. We just discussed possible applications of the passage. All of these applications are based in the results of rejection of God as your source of knowledge. They are all dealing with the symptom of areas of our lives that we either haven't turned over to God, or have taken back from God.

Bottom line: the real solution to the problem is to "Study the Word of God," accept it in our hearts and minds "as our only rule of faith and practice," and then apply what we have learned.

Title: God is the source of all knowledge.