

Foundation of the sermon

Purpose

To drive home the uselessness of false religion. To show how it divides our loyalty.

Principle Idea:

False religion divides our loyalty to God.

Type of Outline

Expository based on Hosea 10:1-8

I. Introduction

How committed are you to God? Where is your heart in relationship to where it should be. You must choose. God does not like mixed religion. God will not put up with divided loyalty.

This is the theme of today's passage. It is found in:

Hosea 10:1-8

Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.

2 Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.

3 For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us?

4 They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.

5 The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Beth-aven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.

6 It shall be also carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

7 As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water.

8 The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.

II. Body

A. Prosperity brought forth heresy (1-2)

1. Let's look at the word translated in KJV as "empty" -- there are two different roots for the hebrew *bqq* the first of these means empty as translated by the KJV. It should be noted however that there is a second root word which means: luxuriant -- this is in a way opposite of being empty -- as one writer put it luxuriant means: "elaborate marked by complexity and richness of detail;
2. Other translations such as the the New American Standard Bible use the word "luxuriant." This rendering is also supported by the Septuagint translation into Greek of the book of Hosea.
3. Israel prospered in the land. Clearly this is what is indicated by the second phrase in verse 1. It says "according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars." Israel was prosperous but this prosperity caused them to turn away from God. The multitude of their altars was not a good thing. This phrase has to do with their idolatry.
4. Judah who later followed them in their idolatry is chastised by Ezekiel in Ezekiel 6:13 for idolatry by saying: " Then shall ye know that I am the LORD, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols."
5. The next phrase in this passage shares a parallel idea. It says "according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images." By the same measure as their bounty of increase in the produce of the land, they increased their idols.

For our first 200 hundred years as a nation we prospered in America. As we have prospered we have also increased our places of worship. Our tolerance of different ideas has led us to encourage the ideas of eastern religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and other religions to increase, and gain a foothold in our land.

These ideas have infected our views of the God of the Bible. We have modified our religious views to accommodate what others believe and teach.

There is a pantheon of religious views which find their acceptance in our society. Don't get me wrong I have enjoyed the fruits of religious freedom. I am glad that we have the freedoms we have today. I see however that these freedoms are being eroded by government intrusion. This erosion is caused by the reaction of our people to some of the more dangerous elements of the religious practice of some. We are caught between a rock and a hard place when it comes to keeping order in our society and the chaos caused by the cultic ideas of some.

We find that in trying to relieve the burdens of our society people have turned to drugs, and alcohol, and unseemly sexual deviancy to find some spiritual high. Some of our states are ready to make the use of marijuana and other drugs legal, or decriminalize them. The use of intoxicants for relief of the stresses of our world has become a form of worship.

We may want to take note of what happened to Israel in the Hosea. The increase of our altars, the worship of other gods, which are not God at all is not good. The increase of our worship of nature is not good, nor is the rejection of God as creator by those who follow the ideas of Atheism and Darwinism are not God. These teachings of the modern age are a form religious ideas. Their adherents are just as dedicated to the rejection of God. Their defense of these views are done from the alters of colleges, and society. They form false worship just as ancient Israel did in their worship of idols of silver, gold, and stone.

Our nation is suffering right now. We have immigration problems, we have financial problems, we have wars in diverse places in the world. We can not seem to overcome these issues. Whether these current crises are the result of this sin of idolatry, I don't know, but what I do know is one day these sins will destroy our nation.

These sins can also destroy our personal lives.

What we as individual Christians must do is avoid the traps of prosperity. We must reject the ideas of the false religions, their idols, their forms of worship. We should be praying for our friends,

neighbors, and loved ones who have bought into these ideas. We should be careful to reject these views that we may have adopted in our own lives. We need revival in our lives. A return to the "roots" of our faith.

6. The sin of idolatry causes division of loyalty. (2)

"Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images."

Remember the gods of the land were called the Baalim. They were the Lords or Masters. During New Testament times Christ warned the people concerning the worship of "money." He says: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (See Matthew 6:24).

Today we are asked by our society to tolerate and even embrace religious views that we believe will lead to the eternal destruction of their adherents. We are discouraged from evangelizing. Some believe that teaching the Christian religion is too radical, and creates hard feelings. Some believe that the teaching of Jesus should be stopped.

They want Christians to modify their message, to a message of inclusion. That want to promote the idea that "I am okay and your okay." They want to stop the evangelizing of others in public. I understand some of their concerns. I feel that the preaching of some on the public airwaves is not Scriptural and even dangerous to the weak. However, with the protections are founding fathers put into the constitution, we have given a right for all in this land to worship in the way they see fit. So no matter how offensive I would find the preaching of some, I can not condone the removal of our freedoms.

False religious ideas cause us to have division in our loyalty. You can't worship God, and follow these false ideas as well. You will love one and you will despise the other.

B. The Sin of Idolatry leads to Judgement, and Judgement leads to suffering. (3-6)

As a result of their sin. God will bring judgement. This judgement brings:

1. The loss of leadership (3)
2. Their false worship has caused a deadly vine to grow in their land. (hemlock) (4)
3. The loss of their "glory" in their false worship will depart (5)
4. Their gifts to the false gods will be gifts to the kings that oppress them.
5. False worship will be taken away, the prosperity will be taken away. This will be painful.

C. God will destroy false worship. (7-8)

1. Israel's leaders are compared to sea foam -- meaningless. They shall be completely and utterly cut-off (7)
2. The objects and places of false worship will be destroyed, and will become useless places like those that will only grow thorns and thistles. (8)

III. Conclusion

False worship is destructive in our lives. It causes us to be divided in our loyalty. It causes us to hate and loath God and His ways. We must get rid of false worship in our lives, or God will.

We need to commit to God and be loyal to Him. If we don't we are like "sea foam" useless and we will be cut-off.

Title: Sea-foam Religion