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The Ominous Trumpet of the Lord

June 12, 2022

Sermon Text: Hosea 8

Scripture Reading: Hosea 8

Hos 8:1-6 Set the trumpet to your lips! One like a vulture is over the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law.

(2) To me they cry, “My God, we—Israel—know you.” (3) Israel has spurned the good; the enemy shall pursue him. (4) They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not. With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction. (5) I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will

they be incapable of innocence? (6) For it is from Israel; a craftsman made it; it is not God. The calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces.

Trumpets are instruments of announcement. They aren't so much used to play a piece of music as they are means of calling us to attention because some very significant event is imminent:

- The arrival of a king
- A call to troops in battle
- Trumpet blew at Mt. Sinai
- They were blown repeatedly at Jericho
- And there is coming a day when Christ's final appearing in this world for judgment will be announced with a heavenly trumpet

Exo 19:16 On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the

mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

Num 29:1 “On the first day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It is a day for you to blow the trumpets,

Isa 18:3 All you inhabitants of the world, you who dwell on the earth, when a signal is raised on the mountains, look! When a trumpet is blown, hear!

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Rev 8:6 Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

Rev 11:15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever

and ever.”

Bugles sound the charge in a battle, they awaken the troops, they call all to attention when a soldier dies in battle. Trumpets are a kind of divine instrument to call everyone to stop what they are doing and give their full attention.

Joe 2:1 Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near,

And that is what we have here in Hosea 8 –

Hos 8:1 Set the trumpet to your lips! One like a vulture is over the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law.

Judgment was imminent because of Israel’s rebellious wickedness in spite of all of the Lord’s warnings.

Another picture of divine judgment here is “one like a vulture is over the house of the Lord.” Often the

vulture or eagle represents an enemy (like Assyria) swooping down to destroy.

Jer 4:13 Behold, he comes up like clouds; his chariots like the whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles— woe to us, for we are ruined!

Hab 1:8 Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves; their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swift to devour.

Mat 24:27-28 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. (28) Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

Vulture/Eagle are often used in such verses interchangeably. Notice here in Revelation that both of these images – trumpets and an eagle – are direct means of the Lord announcing His imminent judgment upon the wicked:

Rev 8:13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!”

One day the Lord’s trumpet is going to blow a final time in this wicked world. *Once it is sounded, it will be too late for repentance.* Too late. The attention of every single person will be instantly called away from whatever they are doing. All will be eclipsed by the sound of that trumpet and nothing else will matter.

And it will not matter if people try to name-drop with the Lord. It will do them no good:

Hos 8:2 To me they cry, “My God, we—Israel—know you.”

“But Lord, we know you. We have been baptized. Surely You know us.” This is what Hosea’s countrymen had been doing for a long, long time. Pretending. Giving only lip service to the Lord but in

fact loving and serving their idols and pursuing their own evil sins. The world is still full of such people. They are called “nominal” Christians. Christian in name only. Their religion is *formal* – only one of forms, of outward show. But their heart is unchanged and evil.

Hos 8:3-6 Israel has spurned the good; the enemy shall pursue him. (4) They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not. With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction. (5) I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence? (6) For it is from Israel; a craftsman made it; it is not God. The calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces.

The Lord here exposes their sin. They claim to know the Lord, to be His people – and yet, they have rejected Him. Instead of submitting to Him, they have set up their own kings. Jeroboam led the 10 tribes away from Judah and from the Davidic dynasty ordained by the

Lord, crowning himself king. And if that were not enough, they set up their own “tabernacle” at Samaria and put a gold calf in it to worship.

1Ki 12:25-31 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. And he went out from there and built Peniel. (26) And Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. (27) If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.” (28) So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” (29) And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. (30) Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. (31) He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from

among all the people, who were not of the Levites.

The calf of Samaria will be broken to pieces.

Listen to J.C. Ryle as he writes about this very trap of *formalism* or *nominalism*.

Look for example at those thousands of people whose whole religion seems to consist in keeping religious ceremonies and ordinances. They regularly attend public worship. They regularly go to the Lord's Table. But they never get any further. They know nothing of true heartfelt Christianity.

They are not familiar with the Scriptures, and take no delight in reading them. They do not separate themselves from the ways of the world. They draw no distinction between godliness and ungodliness in their friendships, or matrimonial alliances. They care little or nothing about the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel. They appear utterly indifferent as to what they hear preached. You may be in

their presence for weeks, and from what you hear or see on any week day, you might easily assume they were atheists.

What can be said about these people? They clearly profess to be Christians; and yet there is neither heart nor life in their Christianity. There is but one thing to be said about them--they are formal Christians. Their religion is only a FORM.

Look in another direction at those hundreds of people whose religion seems to consist of a lot of talk and profession. They know the theory of the Gospel with their heads and profess to delight in Evangelical doctrine. They can say a lot about the "soundness" of their own views, and the "ignorance" of all who disagree with them. But they never get any further!

When you examine their inner lives you find that they know nothing of practical godliness. They are neither truthful, nor loving, nor humble, nor honest, nor kind, nor gentle, nor giving, nor honorable. What shall we say of these people?

They claim to be Christians, and yet there is neither substance nor fruit in their Christianity. There is but one thing to be said--They are formal Christians. Their religion is only an empty FORM.

Such is the formal religion against which I wish to raise a warning voice this day. Here is the rock on which multitudes of people from every part of the world are making catastrophic shipwreck of their souls. One of the wickedest things that was ever said was this: "Don't worry about your religion, but only the appearance of it." Such notions are from the earth. No, rather they are from beneath the earth: they smell of the pit. Beware of them, and stand on your guard.

If there is anything about which the Scripture speaks expressly, it is the sin and uselessness of FORMALISM. Listen to what Paul tells the Romans: "A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical" (Romans 2:28). These are strong words indeed! A man might be a son of Abraham according to the flesh--a member

of one of the twelve tribes--circumcised the eighth day--a keeper of all the feasts--a regular worshipper in the temple--and yet in God's sight not be a Jew! In the same way, a man may be a Christian by outward profession--a member of a Christian Church--baptized with Christian baptism--faithful in receiving the Lord's Supper--and yet in God's sight, not a Christian at all.

Ryle, J.C.. Practical Religion (Kindle Locations 4015-4039). Kindle Edition.

And so it was with Hosea's fellow Israelites.

Hos 8:2 To me they cry, "My God, we—Israel—know you."

But He will say to them, *I never knew you.*

Sowing and Reaping: Nothing

Hos 8:7-8 For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads; it shall yield no flour; if it were to

yield, strangers would devour it. (8) Israel is swallowed up; already they are among the nations as a useless vessel.

What does it mean to “sow to the wind and reap the whirlwind”? Here is an excellent answer:

Hosea 8:7 makes the enigmatic statement, “For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.” This proverb is known in modern times for its use in military speeches and as a title for a science fiction novel. What did Hosea mean?

The proverb uses an illustration gleaned from the agricultural process of sowing and reaping. A farmer would sow seed. Of course, the type of seed he planted determined the type of plant that would grow and be harvested. This is the principle of duplication. In Hosea 8:7, God says that Israel had planted wind and would harvest a whirlwind. Taking the “wind” to mean something worthless and foolish (see Job 7:7; Proverbs 11:29; and Ecclesiastes 1:14, 17), we can surmise that Israel’s foolishness in

the past would result in a veritable storm of consequence. Indeed, in the previous verses, Hosea decries Israel’s idolatry (verses 4-6). Their foolish pursuit of false gods would reap a severe judgment from the Lord.

Also at work in the proverb is the principle of multiplication: a farmer may plant one kernel of corn, but he will reap much more than that—a whole ear. In the same way, Israel’s sin of idolatry would bring forth an amplified consequence that would sweep them all away.

The rest of verse 7 notes the results of this “whirlwind” of judgment: “The standing grain has no heads; it shall yield no flour; if it were to yield, strangers would devour it.” So, the crop would yield nothing. Outsiders would steal anything that did happen to grow. Israel would have understood Hosea’s words well. A poor or stolen crop would be devastating. Here, God is warning His people that their idolatry would lead to ruin. [gotquestions.org]

The Lord, in other words, repays with interest -whether for evil or for good. *Formalist religion is a worthless vessel.* It does no good and actually tremendous harm to the nations. It is hypocrisy that even the pagan peoples see.

Rom 2:24 For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

Turning to the World Instead of Calling Upon the Lord

Hos 8:9-10 For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild donkey wandering alone; Ephraim has hired lovers. (10) Though they hire allies among the nations, I will soon gather them up. And the king and princes shall soon writhe because of the tribute.

Faith. A sure mark of people who truly do know the Lord is *faith*. And that faith is always faith *that is placed in Him*. To put our faith in something or someone else is *idolatry*.

The Israelites had repeatedly chosen to put their trust for deliverance in the godless nations – Assyria, Egypt, Babylon. You have it repeatedly in Scripture:

Hos 12:1 Ephraim feeds on the wind and pursues the east wind all day long; they multiply falsehood and violence; they make a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried to Egypt.

Isa 30:1-2 “Ah, stubborn children,” declares the LORD, “who carry out a plan, but not mine, and who make an alliance, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; (2) who set out to go down to Egypt, without asking for my direction, to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!

Right now we see it again in our own nation. Our president is going to nations and dictators who spurn the Lord and asking them for help! There is no prayer to the Lord for His help and direction. None. For all the evils we see in our nation

today, (and which are the Lord's judgment upon us), we still see a stubborn refusal to turn from wickedness and call on the Lord, putting our trust in Him.

Isa 31:1-3 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the LORD! (2) And yet he is wise and brings disaster; he does not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evildoers and against the helpers of those who work iniquity. (3) The Egyptians are man, and not God, and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble, and he who is helped will fall, and they will all perish together.

It is a great sin for a nation or for an individual to turn to the world, to enter into covenants with the wicked, looking to them for deliverance instead of putting their trust in the Lord.

Let's apply this individually. Let's come back to this matter of *faith*. Just who or what are we trusting in for blessing and help? Think on this carefully because *that which we place our faith and trust in is either the living and true God, or an idol.*

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

2Co 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Sight will lead us to trust in this world for deliverance and salvation. Faith – genuine faith - leads us to trust in the Lord. Sight will lead us to make alliances with the godless. Faith actually does practice, *in God we trust.*

To refuse to call upon the Lord for His help and instead to turn to the world for rescue is a great sin and brings judgment, not blessing.

Psa 33:16-17 The king is not saved

by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. (17) The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.

Walking by Sight Results in Spiritual Blindness

Finally then, look at these last verses of this chapter:

Hos 8:11-14 Because Ephraim has multiplied altars for sinning, they have become to him altars for sinning.

(12) Were I to write for him my laws by the ten thousands, they would be regarded as a strange thing.

(13) As for my sacrificial offerings, they sacrifice meat and eat it, but the LORD does not accept them. Now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins; they shall return to Egypt. (14) For Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces, and Judah has multiplied fortified cities; so I will send a fire

upon his cities, and it shall devour her strongholds.

We see here that the Israelites multiplied their idolatrous worship sites throughout the land. Their religion had become sin. It paraded as worship of Yahweh but in fact was idious to Him. Each time they gathered to offer sacrifices, it was sin.

Isa 1:11-15 “What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. (12) “When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts?

(13) Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. (14) Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.

(15) When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

Now, I want us to carefully notice verse 12 again-

(12) Were I to write for him my laws by the ten thousands, they would be regarded as a strange thing.

Do you see what this means? Because they were wicked, rebellious, and unbelieving, they were blind and deaf to God's Word. The Lord says that *even if He were to write ten thousands more words of Scripture in an effort to explain His Law to them, they still would not get it. His Word was foreign to them – like a different language.*

Now, apply that to our day. Have you ever attempted to show someone who claims to be a Christian some plain passage of Scripture which applies directly to their situation, and they act as if

you are speaking a foreign language?

I told a fellow who was a deacon in a Baptist church where a gross and open sin had occurred. He wondered what to do and I showed him 1 Cor 5 on church discipline. He said he had never heard of that before and the look on his face was blank. He had been serving a false Christ you see and that false god is what was being displayed in that church. God's Word was regarded as a strange thing. And the root problem was an unconverted heart.

One day the ominous trumpet of the Lord is going to sound for all to hear. And on that Day, everything will be laid open and bare for all to see. Who truly belongs to the Lord and who does not.

I hope that no one listening to these words today will be found unclothed and without Christ when that trumpet announces the King's arrival.