

# Hosea 6:7-11

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/hos/hos-6/hosea-67-11/>

*The LORD ends this chapter with an illustration of covenant infidelity committed by both Israel and Judah.*

Having accused and condemned Israel and Judah for their covenant infidelity and false devotion to Him (vv. 4-6), the LORD ended Hosea Chapter 6 with an illustration of such acts of infidelity. He declared, *Like Adam they have transgressed the covenant. There they have dealt treacherously against Me* (vs 7).

Rather than obeying God's covenantal precepts, the people (especially the priests) had broken faith with God.

As translated in the NASB, this verse seems to draw a comparison between God's covenant people in Hosea's days and *Adam*. *Adam* was the first transgressor. He who ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:6, 12). God made a covenant with Adam that was very simple: eat of any but the tree of knowledge and live, eat of the tree of knowledge and die (Genesis 2:16-17). Adam chose to transgress, so he experienced all sorts of death (separation) as a result. One immediate form of death was to be exiled/separated from the garden (Genesis 3:24).

In a similar way, Israel had broken its covenant. They were not following God alone; they were also worshipping other gods (Hosea 4:13). They were also not loving their neighbors as themselves, but rather were exploiting and injuring their neighbors (Hosea 4:2). As a result, they also would experience death, including exile from the land.

It is also plausible that the word *Adam* here refers to a geographical location, the place where the Jordan rose up when Israel crossed over to enter the land (Joshua 3:16). The reason for taking the word "Adam" as a geographical location is threefold. First, the adverb "there" in the next parallel line requires an antecedent. Second, the preposition "like" preceding the word "Adam" can also be translated as "in" or "at" before a place name. Third, the next two verses make references to other place names (Gilead and Shechem). However, if it does refer to a geographical location, it is not clear how *they have dealt treacherously against me* at that place. There is no record of a historical event of treachery at *Adam*.

Some translations render *Adam* as "man" which is how the word is usually translated, other than when the context indicates that "adam" refers to the first man, *Adam*. If this is the case, then the "there" where the "men" of Israel dealt treacherously could refer to *Gilead* and *Shechem*. It could be that *Adam*/"adam" has multiple applications.

Israel and Judah's breaking of faith with their Suzerain (or Ruler) God is further exemplified when God stated, *Gilead is a city of wrongdoers, tracked with bloody footprints* (vs 8). The place named *Gilead* was located in the region east of the Jordan River, the northern part of the modern

country of Jordan. It was one of the cities designated as a city of refuge, where people who committed accidental killing could safely flee (Joshua 20:1-2).

The term translated as *wrongdoers* has to do with evildoers of several kinds. Here, it refers to wicked deeds that included bloodshed. Thus, the people of God in Hosea's days performed wicked deeds in *Gilead*, shedding innocent blood without restraint. They took pleasure in trampling the weak. This was the opposite of the behavior they promised to follow in their covenant with their Suzerain (Ruler) God. In that covenant they promised to love and care for their neighbors (Leviticus 19:18).

But *Gilead* was not the only town in which human blood was shed. Shechem was also included. As the LORD stated, *And as raiders wait for a man, so a band of priests murder on the way to Shechem* (vs 9).

The place named *Shechem* was located in Israel's central hill country. This was the place where Abram built an altar to worship the LORD (Genesis 12:6-7). Like *Gilead*, *Shechem* was one of the cities of refuge. It was set apart to protect those who committed accidental or unintentional killing (Joshua 20:1-2; 7-8). Unfortunately, it was later contaminated by bloodshed.

In Hosea's days the religious leaders acted as bandits to *murder* other people *on the way to Shechem*. *Surely they have committed crime* (vs 9). The term for crime is "zimmâh" in the Hebrew language. It speaks of that which is shameful or indecent. It is sometimes used of sexual sins such as fornication, rape, and adultery (Judges 20:6; Jeremiah 13:27). Here, it is used to describe the shameful behavior of the priests. Their indecent behavior was unacceptable because they altered the purpose for which *Shechem* existed: as a city of refuge.

The priests were supposed to use their authority to advance justice, and instead accommodated murder. The cities of refuge were supposed to be a place where someone involved in an accidental death could flee in order to be safe from retribution (Numbers 35:6).

It is inferred that these authorities were not protecting those who fled to the cities of refuge. Perhaps they were taking bribes in order to remove protection from a target, and subject them to the vengeance they were supposed to be protected from. This appears to be yet another instance of leaders abusing their authority in order to pursue gain, instead of exercising stewardship of their positional authority in order to serve and bless their communities.

Sadly, the priests were supposed to provide spiritual leadership to the people, but were in reality involved in all kinds of corruption and wickedness there at *Shechem* (Hosea 4:4-10; 2 Kings 15:25). Those priests ignored their duties and fell so low as to be accomplices in the murder of human beings created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-26).

The sins of Israel were shameful and scandalous. God made it clear when He said, *In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing; Ephraim's harlotry is there, Israel defiled itself* (vs 10).

The term for *horrible thing* likely suggests cultic transgressions (Jeremiah 18:13). The types of behaviors that could be included are listed in Leviticus 18. It could include multiple forms of

sexual immorality and exploitation. *Israel*, or *Ephraim* (the largest tribe in Israel, the northern kingdom), had become unclean by her engagement in harlotry with the pagan gods. The Book of Hosea began with God instructing the prophet to take a wife of harlotry in order to picture the fact that Israel is God's covenant wife, married to Yahweh at Mount Sinai when Israel said, "I Do" (Exodus 19:8).

This commentary takes the position that Hosea 6:11 begins a new thought that best fits with the beginning of Hosea Chapter 7.

Verse 11 states,  
*Also, O Judah, there is a harvest appointed for you  
When I restore the fortunes of My people.*

God's judgment on *Judah* will only last for a time. In the future there is a *harvest appointed* by God. This is a positive turn, with famine ending and productivity resuming, because God will *restore the fortunes of His people*. That this *harvest is appointed* means that it will happen at the *appointed* time. The people of *Judah* would be cut down like grains gathered in their seasons (Jeremiah 51:33). But God has also *appointed* a time to *restore the fortunes* of His *people*.

God will never reject those who are His (Romans 8:38-39). This includes His people, Israel (Romans 11:1-2).

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>7</sup> But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant;  
There they have dealt treacherously against Me.**

**<sup>8</sup> Gilead is a city of wrongdoers,  
Tracked with bloody *footprints*.**

**<sup>9</sup> And as raiders wait for a man,  
So a band of priests murder on the way to Shechem;  
Surely they have committed crime.**

**<sup>10</sup> In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing;  
Ephraim's harlotry is there, Israel has defiled itself.**

**<sup>11</sup> Also, O Judah, there is a harvest appointed for you,  
When I restore the fortunes of My people.**