Hosea 9 to 11 Study

Watchman's Warning or Fool's Folly?

Part 1. Hosea 9:7-9.

The days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this. Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired person a maniac. [8] The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman over Ephraim, yet snares await him on all his paths, and hostility in the house of his God. [9] They have sunk deep into corruption, as in the days of Gibeah. God will remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins.

1. What is the reference to Gibeah in 9:9? Skim Judges 19 to 21. What is Hosea saying about Israel?
2. Does this quote capture the scene ok?

As for the depth of Israel's guilt, the mere mention of Gibeah (9:9) is measurement enough, for its story in Judges 19–21 leaves Sodom and Gomorrah with nothing they could teach this city, whose depravity at that period was only equalled by its arrogance in brazening the matter out.

(Derek Kidner, <u>The Message of Hosea: Love to the Loveless)</u>

3. Has anybody in the group ever failed to respond to an evac siren and it turns out to not be a drill but be an actual emergency? If so, describe.

Two possible ways to respond to a warning:

a) Take it seriously (which most of Israel failed to do)

b) Decide the messenger is a fool ***9:7 Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired person a maniac.***

- What effect does a hard heart have on spiritual discernment?
- Consider that Isaiah wandered naked, Ezekiel lay on his side for a year and Hosea married a prostitute on purpose. Surely these guys need help! But wait…….. is it possible that people we think need help need to help us! Consider ***Hebrews 11:37-38. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— [38] the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.***

4. Discuss:

- Who do you let speak into your life with spiritual authority?
- What warnings to you heed and what warnings do you dismiss?
- When a prophecy occurs in our church or our circle do we consider it a ***Watchman's warning or fool's folly?***
- Who do we laugh off as a loser, a nut-job? Why? Is it because of them, or is it the state of our own hearts?

Part 2 Hosea 11:8-11.

[8] "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboyim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. [9] I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I devastate Ephraim again. For I am God, and not a man— the Holy One among you. I will not come against their cities. [10] They will follow the LORD; he will roar like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west. [11] They will come from Egypt, trembling like sparrows, from Assyria, fluttering like doves. I will settle them in their homes," declares the LORD.

1. What is the significance of Zeboiim and Admah? What is the implication for Israel?
2. Is God changing his mind, unsure, double-minded? Consider the quote below

'While accepting the fact that God transcends our metaphors and that theological doctrines about the impassability and foreknowledge of God should never be jettisoned, texts such as this should be allowed to speak to us in the power of their raw emotion. It is precisely in texts such as this that the love of God becomes a vivid reality and not a barren abstraction.'

(Duane A. Garrett, Hosea, Joel, vol. 19A, The New American Commentary)

3. Can a loving God punish? Through this passage we can connect with the heart of God which is ultimately love. The God who punishes also loves, and his punishment is ultimately an expression of his love because God is love!
4. How many situations in Scripture can you think of where God has saved as faithful remnant?
5. Are you aware of situations where God has used prophetic revelation to warn his people of impending disaster?
6. If God's Spirit wants to warn us of something today, will recognise it as a ***Watchman's warning or dismiss it as a fool's folly?***
7. Would we be on the ark / heading to Judah / leaving Jerusalem in 70AD? Or would we go with the crowd?