

**Friday, December 6**

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**Hosea 4:1 - 5:15**

**4 1** Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel! The LORD has brought charges against you, saying: “There is no faithfulness, no kindness, no knowledge of God in your land. **2** You make vows and break them; you kill and steal and commit adultery. There is violence everywhere— one murder after another. **3** That is why your land is in mourning, and everyone is wasting away. Even the wild animals, the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea are disappearing. **4** “Don’t point your finger at someone else and try to pass the blame! My complaint, you priests, is with you. **5** So you will stumble in broad daylight, and your false prophets will fall with you in the night. And I will destroy Israel, your mother. **6** My people are being destroyed because they don’t know me. Since you priests refuse to know me, I refuse to recognize you as my priests. Since you have forgotten the laws of your God, I will forget to bless your children. **7** The more priests there are, the more they sin against me. They have exchanged the glory of God for the shame of idols. **8** “When the people bring their sin offerings, the priests get fed. So the priests are glad when the people sin! **9** ‘And what the priests do, the people also do.’ So now I will punish both priests and people for their wicked deeds. **10** They will eat and still be hungry. They will play the prostitute and gain nothing from it, for they have deserted the LORD **11** to worship other gods. “Wine has robbed my people of their understanding. **12** They ask a piece of wood for advice! They think a stick can tell them the future! Longing after idols has made them foolish. They have played the prostitute, serving other gods and deserting their God. **13** They offer sacrifices to idols on the mountaintops. They go up into the hills to burn incense in the pleasant shade of oaks, poplars, and terebinth trees. “That is why your daughters turn to prostitution, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery. **14** But why should I punish them for their prostitution and adultery? For your men are doing the same thing, sinning with whores and shrine prostitutes. O foolish people! You refuse to understand, so you will be destroyed. **15** “Though you, Israel, are a prostitute, may Judah not be guilty of such things. Do not join the false worship at Gilgal or Beth-aven, and do not take oaths there in the LORD ’s name. **16** Israel is stubborn, like a stubborn heifer. So should the LORD feed her like a lamb in a lush pasture? **17** Leave Israel alone, because she is married to idolatry. **18** When the rulers of Israel finish their drinking, off they go to find some prostitutes. They love shame more than honor. **19** So a mighty wind will sweep them away. Their sacrifices to idols will bring them shame.

**5 1** “Hear this, you priests. Pay attention, you leaders of Israel. Listen, you members of the royal family. Judgment has been handed down against you. For you have led the people into a snare by worshiping the idols at Mizpah and Tabor. **2** You have dug a deep pit to trap them at Acacia Grove. But I will settle with you for what you have done. **3** I know what you are like, O Ephraim. You cannot hide yourself from me, O Israel. You have left me as a prostitute leaves her husband; you are utterly defiled. **4** Your deeds won’t let you return to your God. You are a prostitute through and through, and you do not know the LORD. **5** “The arrogance of Israel testifies against her; Israel and Ephraim will stumble under their load of guilt. Judah, too, will fall with them. **6** When they come with their flocks and herds to offer sacrifices to the LORD, they will not find him, because he has withdrawn from them. **7** They have betrayed the honor of the LORD, bearing children that are not his. Now their false religion will devour them along with their wealth. **8** “Sound the alarm in Gibeah! Blow the trumpet in Ramah! Raise the battle cry in Beth-aven ! Lead on into battle, O warriors of Benjamin! **9** One thing is certain, Israel : On your day of punishment, you will become a heap of rubble. **10** “The leaders of Judah have become like thieves. So I will pour my anger on them like a waterfall. **11** The people of Israel will be crushed and broken by my judgment because they are determined to worship idols. **12** I will destroy Israel as a moth consumes wool. I will make Judah as weak as rotten wood. **13** “When Israel and Judah saw how sick they were, Israel turned to Assyria— to the great king there— but he could neither help nor cure them. **14** I will be like a lion to Israel, like a strong young lion to Judah. I will tear them to pieces! I will carry them off, and no one will be left to rescue them. **15** Then I will return to my place until they admit their guilt and turn to me. For as soon as trouble comes, they will earnestly search for me.”

## **2 John 1:1 - 13**

**1 1** This letter is from John, the elder. I am writing to the chosen lady and to her children, whom I love in the truth—as does everyone else who knows the truth— **2** because the truth lives in us and will be with us forever. **3** Grace, mercy, and peace, which come from God the Father and from Jesus Christ—the Son of the Father—will continue to be with us who live in truth and love. **4** How happy I was to meet some of your children and find them living according to the truth, just as the Father commanded. **5** I am writing to remind you, dear friends, that we should love one another. This is not a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning. **6** Love means doing what God has commanded us, and he has commanded us to

love one another, just as you heard from the beginning. **7** I say this because many deceivers have gone out into the world. They deny that Jesus Christ came in a real body. Such a person is a deceiver and an antichrist. **8** Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked so hard to achieve. Be diligent so that you receive your full reward. **9** Anyone who wanders away from this teaching has no relationship with God. But anyone who remains in the teaching of Christ has a relationship with both the Father and the Son. **10** If anyone comes to your meeting and does not teach the truth about Christ, don't invite that person into your home or give any kind of encouragement. **11** Anyone who encourages such people becomes a partner in their evil work. **12** I have much more to say to you, but I don't want to do it with paper and ink. For I hope to visit you soon and talk with you face to face. Then our joy will be complete. **13** Greetings from the children of your sister, chosen by God.

#### **Psalm 125:1 - 5**

**125 1** Those who trust in the LORD are as secure as Mount Zion; they will not be defeated but will endure forever. **2** Just as the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people, both now and forever. **3** The wicked will not rule the land of the godly, for then the godly might be tempted to do wrong. **4** O LORD, do good to those who are good, whose hearts are in tune with you. **5** But banish those who turn to crooked ways, O LORD . Take them away with those who do evil. May Israel have peace!

#### **Proverbs 29:9 - 11**

**29 9** If a wise person takes a fool to court, there will be ranting and ridicule but no satisfaction. **10** The bloodthirsty hate blameless people, but the upright seek to help them. **11** Fools vent their anger, but the wise quietly hold it back.