

## Sowing the Wind

*“They sow **the wind**, and reap **the whirlwind**. The stalk has no bud; it will never produce meal. If it should produce, aliens would swallow it up,”* Hosea 8:7.

The preceding verse described the conduct of apostate Israel. It was written by Hosea, who served as a prophet *“in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel,”* Hos. 1:1. Halley’s Handbook gives the time period as from 760-720 B.C. Hosea was married to Gomer, who proved to be a harlot, Hos. 1:2. Spiritually speaking, God was married to Israel, who in worshipping idols, committed spiritual harlotry. Ultimately Israel became so corrupt that she was carried into captivity in Assyria, around 722 B.C. Indeed, as a nation, Israel sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind!

Sowing *“the wind”* is a proverbial expression. It illustrates the cause and effect relationship between conduct and consequences. The difference between *“wind”* and *“whirlwind”* is in degree, or quantity. A kernel of corn, planted in the ground, will produce an ear of corn. A kernel of corn and an ear of corn are of the same nature, but there is a vast difference in quantity. The language in Hos. 8:7 is very similar to Paul’s language in Gal. 6:7: *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”* This principle of sowing and reaping applies to *“a man;”* it also applies to nations, communities, families, etc. Israel, as a nation, had sown *“the wind,”* and, tragically, it was about to reap *“the whirlwind.”*

Sowing *“the wind”* was a figurative way of depicting Israel’s sins. They were guilty of moral corruption, involving among other things: *“swearing and lying, killing and stealing and committing adultery,”* Hos.4:2. Because of sheer neglect, they were *“destroyed for lack of knowledge,”* Hos. 4:6. Ephraim (another name for Israel) was *“joined to idols;”* the prophet said *“their drink is rebellion, they commit harlotry continually,”* Hos. 4:17-18. Their kings and princes were corrupt, Hos. 7:3-7. Ephraim, or Israel, had entered into unlawful alliances with idolatrous nations, turning to them for help, but not turning to God, Hos. 7:10-11. They *“made many altars for sin,”* and had *“forgotten”* their *“Maker,”* Hos. 8:11,14. In brief, Israel had sown *“the wind,”* and was about to *“reap the whirlwind,”* Hos. 8:7, as a judgment from God.

The preceding paragraph sets forth some of the sins so vividly (and figuratively) described as sowing *“the wind.”* And in just a few years they reaped *“the whirlwind”* of destruction by being taken away into Assyrian Captivity. From that day until now, *“sow the wind”* has been a very fit metaphor for the conduct of wicked nations, or that of individuals who make a career of sin, indifference, and rebellion.

### **America, like Ancient Israel, Is Sowing “the Wind!”**

Our “founding fathers” were far from perfect. However, they sought to establish a nation of laws, a nation which respected the Bible, which believed in freedom of religion, not freedom **from** religion. But what is happening now?

For starters, we could mention such cultural indicators as violent crime, illegitimate births, divorce, and the legalization of abortion — all of which have multiplied in the life time of some of our readers. We will now “zero in” on one of these issues — **abortion**.

In January, 1973 Congress legalized abortion. As of January 18, 2018 there had been 60,069,971 abortions (legalized **murders!**) in the United States. Fortunately, more and more

people are voicing their protests to this gruesome form of destroying “*innocent blood*,” but let us not think for an instance that the proponents of abortion are about to back down. For example, on Jan. 22, 2019 Gov. Cuomo of New York signed into law a bill legalizing Late Term Abortion right up to the time of birth! In contrast, New York abolished the death penalty for criminals in 2007; the last execution of a criminal in New York took place in 1963! They protect the lives of rapists, terrorists, and murderers, but pass a law (which they later celebrated!) which allows for the willful murder of thousands of innocent, guilt-free, unborn infants! One of the things which God “*hates*,” and which are “*an abomination to Him*” are “*hands that shed innocent blood*,” Prov. 6:16-19. How long will God “*bless America*” if our nation’s leaders and laws endorse the wanton murder of innocent babies — while protecting (and guaranteeing the “rights”) of the most depraved in our society!!

Another “cultural indicator” of a **nation** sowing “*the wind*” is reflected in the growing tendency to **re-defined marriage**! From the very beginning, marriage involved a union between a man and a woman. For centuries, the home, consisting of father, mother, and the children from that union, has been regarded as the bedrock principle of a stable society. But now that is changing. There are those who are trying to erase the boundaries of what constitutes marriage and family. For example, on Nov. 8, 2001 the Massachusetts supreme Judicial Court ruled that according to the State Constitution same-sex couples cannot be denied the right of civil marriage. Other states are trying to follow that sordid example. If, under the guise of “rights,” we can legalize same-sex marriages, then how long will it be before we, in order to be consistent, will also have to legalize polyamory, or group marriage, consisting of three or more people? Then, too, let us not forget the supposed “rights” of polygamists and pedophiles, who will demand equal permission to pursue their immoral perversion! Where does it end. In view of these facts, can any deny that our nation is in the very midst of sowing “*the wind*?” It is enough to make us wonder “how long can our nation stand?”

### **Individuals Also “Sow The Wind!”**

These include those who were reared by God-fearing parents, who learned the truth early in life, and rendered obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ, but who later neglected to “*resist*” the devil (I Peter 5:9), and thus “*have been taken captive by him to do his will*,” 2 Tim. 2:26.

Those who “experiment” with **alcohol** and pursue illicit sex. Centuries ago Solomon posed the questions: “*who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?*” (Prov. 23:29). He then answered those questions, saying “*those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine*” (Prov. 23:30). Such people learn (the hard way) that “*wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise*,” Prov. 20:1. Millions have sown “*the wind*” in pursuit of alcoholic beverages, and they have reaped a “*whirlwind*” of agony.

And what about those caught up in **drug use** and abuse? In a short time, many who so indulge become so enslaved to their drugs that they will go to any length (including murder!) to satisfy their addiction! They are sowing “*the wind*,” and will reap a “*whirlwind*” of misery, both in time and eternity! Is it any wonder why drugs are sometimes called “dope?” What person is acting more dopey than those who begin experimenting with drugs?

What about those who become caught up in **pornography**? The statistics are staggering! It is estimated that porn sites comprise 12 % of the internet, that 70 % of men, ages 18-34, visit a porn site in a typical month. We are also told that the porn industry makes more money than all professional sports **combined**! Those who view porn are sowing “*the wind*,” if they keep it up, they will “*reap the whirlwind*,” for pornography adversely affects a person mentally, spiritually,

physically, financially, and socially. It results in a “re-wiring of the brain,” causing addiction and other problems. And what it does to a person’s marriage and morals is too horrific to calculate!

Nothing is more dangerous (morally, physically, financially, and spiritually) than the practice of sowing to “*the wind*.” **Nations** which sow “*the wind*” (unless there is a turnaround) ultimately fall. This is a fact of history! **Individuals** who sow “*the wind*” (unless “*godly sorrow*” results in repentance, 2 Cor. 7:10) will reap “*the whirlwind*” of “*everlasting punishment*” (Matt. 25:46). So what can we (as individuals) do to **avoid** sowing “*the wind*?” (1) We can spend much time in prayer, being fully aware that the “*effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much*” (Jas. 5:16). (2) We can make it our constant aim to be both “*the salt of the earth*” and “*the light of the world*” (Matt. 5:13-16). (3) We can be regular and steadfast in the work and worship of the church, which in the course of time helps enable us to “*flee youthful lusts*” and to “*pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart*” (2 Tim. 2:22). (4) We can make it a point to study our Bible daily, remembering that the “*blessed*” or happy person is the one whose “*delight is in the law of the Lord,*” and in Whose “*law he meditates day and night*” (Ps. 1:2).

**Conclusion:** More could be said about how to avoid sowing “*the wind*,” but perhaps the Lord already has summed it up best when He said, “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...*” (Matt. 6:33). Remember this: what we sow determines what we reap (Gal. 6:7). To avoid reaping “*the whirlwind*” of misery, make sure you do not “*sow the wind*!”

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—B. Witherington