

Pleasant Valley  
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon  
Wichita KS 67204  
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## Schedule of Services

### Sunday

Classes . . . . . 9:30 am  
Worship . . . . . 10:30 am  
Evening . . . . . 6:00 pm

### Wednesday

Classes . . . . . 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

# Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

December 13, 2009

## The spirit of harlotry

by David King

"My people ask counsel from their wooden idols, and their staff informs them. For the spirit of harlotry has caused them to stray, and they have played the harlot against their God" (Hosea 4:12).

"They do not direct their deeds toward turning to their God, for the spirit of harlotry is in their midst, and they do not know the Lord" (Hosea 5:4).

Hosea twice uses the phrase "the spirit of harlotry" to describe the depraved condition of his people. Preachers sometimes use the term "spiritual adultery" as a synonym, but what the prophet is describing here is more than mere adultery. This is harlotry, prostitution, whoredom, the shameless selling of oneself in an arrangement that has no long-term benefit.

The phrase, of course, is a metaphor based on God's relationship with Israel. God was Israel's husband, who protected and provided for his bride. All He asked in return was her faith and fidelity. But Israel grew tired of the marriage, and began to seek excitement elsewhere. The religions of the nations around her were more provocative, more daring, and the pagan gods eventually began to displace Jehovah in her affection. Instead of seeking guidance from God, His people "asked counsel from their wooden idols." In time, they abandoned Him entirely, and prostituted themselves before their foreign gods.

And like the life of the prostitute, this new direction led to a grim existence. As the people became more intimate with their new lovers, their behavior became more coarse. The bonds

that once held society together disintegrated, and Israel descended into a dark age of its own making. Hosea summarized the living conditions thusly: "There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying, killing and stealing and committing adultery, they break all restraint, with bloodshed upon bloodshed. Therefore the land will mourn; and everyone who dwells there will waste away" (Hos. 4:1-3). They finally had the freedom they longed for, but it cost them dearly.

How did this spirit of harlotry take over Israel? There was no concerted decision to reject God and join with idols. The process was more gradual. The nation was comprised of thousands of people, each of whom made his own decisions regarding God and morality. Individually, each of these decisions was a minor departure that could easily be excused; but taken together, they defined the changing character of the nation. Over several generations it grew into a new cultural philosophy, a *zeitgeist* ("spirit of the age") that permeated every aspect of Israelite society. A million little compromises turned into one huge departure.

This same spirit of harlotry can bring down a society today, in the same fashion as it did in ancient Israel. When people tire of God and His Word, and convince themselves that His way is too restrictive, too boring, too old-fashioned, they will seek fulfillment elsewhere. And other alternatives will always be available.

The spirit of harlotry can be resisted only by maintaining a spirit of fidelity to God. And that begins in the heart of each individual.