

Supplemental Notes:

*The Book
of
Hosea*

*compiled
by
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Acknowledgments

These notes have been assembled from speaking notes and related materials which had been compiled from a number of classic and contemporary commentaries and other sources detailed in the bibliography, as well as other articles and publications of Koinonia House. While we have attempted to include relevant endnotes and other references, we apologize for any errors or oversights.

The complete recordings of the sessions, as well as supporting diagrams, maps, etc., are also available in various audiovisual formats from the publisher.

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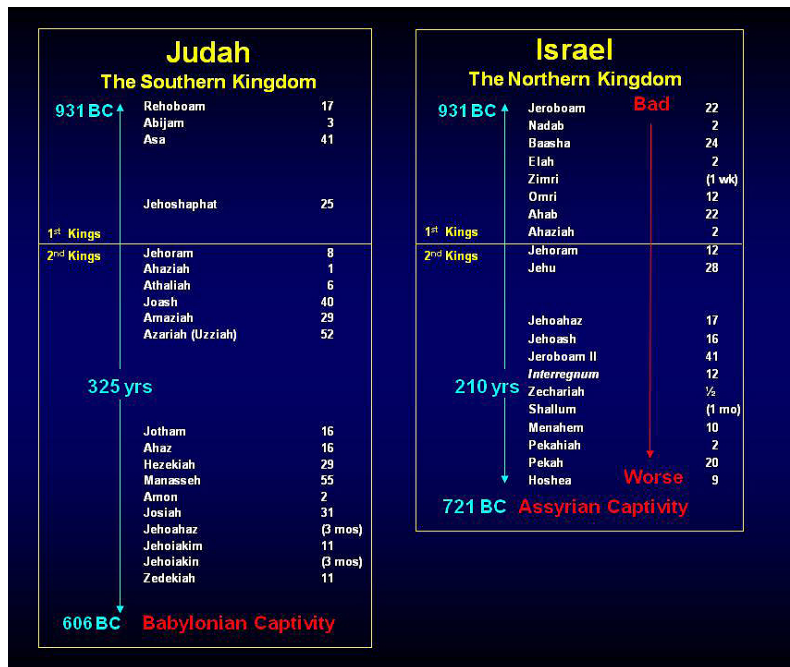
Covenant with the Assyrians. Canaan. Addendum: Figures of Speech.

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The Book of Hosea Session 1

Chapter 1



His main target was the Northern Kingdom, but his message encompassed the entire people of God.

Doctrinal Message

No other messenger gives so complete an outline of the ways of God with His earthly people as does Hosea.

- 1) God suffers when His people are unfaithful to Him;
- 2) God cannot condone sin;
- 3) God will never cease to love His own, and, consequently
- 4) He seeks to win back those who have forsaken Him.

Hosea's Message

It was the best of times and the worst of times...

—Charles Dickens, *Tale of Two Cities*

They were enjoying material prosperity unequalled since Solomon (2 Kgs 14:25-28; 2 Chr 26:2, 6-15). Jeroboam recovered all the territory lost to Israel; even the possession of Damascus. [No material prosperity is a guarantee of safety to that people whose stability rests not on the moral basis of the fear of God and obedience to His laws...]

They thought it was the “best of times,” but God’s perspective was just the opposite—and *He sent Hosea to correct their misapprehension...*

Hosea’s message (like those of his 8th century contemporaries, Amos, Isaiah and Micah) must be understood against the instruction of Deuteronomy 28, the covenant between YHWH and Israel:

- Israel was to maintain loyalty to the Lord by worshipping Him alone and obeying His commandments;
- Obedience would bring blessing (Deut 28:1-14);
- Disobedience would bring judgment and eventual exile (Deut 28:15-68).

Hosea emphasized idolatry, and compared Israel’s relationship as spiritual adultery, using his own marriage to an unfaithful woman as an illustration. Hosea’s own reconciliation also illustrates Israel’s ultimate restoration. Other sins mentioned include:

- Social injustice Hos 12:7
- Violent crime Hos 4:2; 6:9; 12:1

God’s Prophets

Judah

- Shemaiah
- Joel
- Isaiah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Jeremiah

Israel

- Ahijah
- Elijah
- Micaiah
- Elisha
- Jonah
- Amos
- Hosea

General Background

Hosea was a contemporary of Isaiah (for most of his ministry) and Amos (earlier years); he was the “Jeremiah” of the Northern Kingdom.

- Religious hypocrisy Hos 6:6
- Political rebellion Hos 7:3-7
- Foreign alliances Hos 7:11; 8:9
- Selfish arrogance Hos 13:6
- Spiritual ingratitude Hos 7:15

Does any of this sound familiar?

In addition to exposing the nation’s breach of covenant and God’s intention to implement judgment, Hosea also confirmed the Deuteronomic promise of ultimate restoration (Deut 30:1-10).

The major themes of Hosea’s message are sin, judgment, and salvation. His style is abrupt, sententious, and ungrounded; the connecting particles are few; there are changes of person, and anomalies of gender, number, and construction. His name means *Salvation!*

Historical Background

Hosea, the contemporary of Isaiah, Micah, and Amos, seems to have entered on his prophetic office in the last years of Jeroboam (contemporary in part with Uzziah), and to have ended it in the beginning of Hezekiah’s reign, 722 B.C. that is, about 60 years in all, from 784 B.C. to 722 B.C.

His first prophecy foretells the overthrow of Jehu’s house, fulfilled on the death of Jeroboam, Jehu’s great-grandson (2 Kgs 15:12) in Zachariah, Jeroboam’s son, the fourth and last from Jehu, conspired against by Shallum.

This first prediction was doubtless in Jeroboam’s life, as Zachariah, his son, was only suffered to reign six months; thus the inscription is verified that “the word of the Lord came unto him in the days of Jeroboam” (Hos 1:1).

Shalmaneser’s expedition against Israel is alluded to *as past* (Hos 10:14); that is, the first inroad against King Hoshea, who began to reign in the twelfth year of Ahaz. As Ahaz’ whole reign was sixteen years, the prophecy seems to have been given about the beginning of Hezekiah’s reign.

Hosea Quotes in NT

- “Out of Egypt I have called my son” (Mt 2:15)
- “I will have mercy, not sacrifice” (Mt 9:13)

- “I will have mercy, not sacrifice.” (Mt 12:7)
- “My people which were not...” (Rom 9:25, 26)
- “O Death, where is thy sting...” (1 Cor 15:55)
- “My people which were not...” (1 Pet 2:5, 10)

Messianic references are not frequent; but the predictions of the future conversion of Israel to the Lord their God, and David their king, and of the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that his spiritual seed should be as the sand of the sea (Hos 1:10; 3:5) clearly refer to the New Testament dispensation.

Outline of the Book

- The prophet’s married life Hos 1 - 3
- Israel’s unfaithfulness and consequent judgment Hos 4 - 13
- Israel’s conversion and renewal Hos 14

Hosea 1

- 1] The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, 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.

“...Hosea”: His name means “Salvation of YHWH.”

“...son of Beeri”: His father was Beeri = “The Well of YHWH.” They were of the tribe of Issachar, born in Beth-Shemesh, according to Jerome.

“...Jeroboam”: Only one Israelite king is mentioned vs. four Judean kings; perhaps to emphasize the legitimacy of the Davidic dynasty (cf. Hos 3:5) in contrast to the violence and instability of the Northern Kingdom (cf. Hos 7:3-7).

The Northern Kingdom (“Israel”)

- **Jeroboam II** (790-749): Great prosperity; Hosea begins;
- **Zechariah** (748): Reigned six months; killed by Shallum;
- **Menahem** (748-738): Extremely cruel; a puppet of Assyria;
- **Pekahiah** (738-736): Killed by Pekah;
- **Pekah** (738-730): Killed by Hoshea; Galilee captivity, 734;
- **Hoshea** (730-721): Fall of Samaria; End of the kingdom.

Jeroboam II died in the fifteenth year of Uzziah’s 41-year reign. From his time forth *all* Israel’s kings worshipped false gods: Zachariah (2 Kgs

15:9), Menahem (2 Kgs 15:18), Pekahiah (2 Kgs 15:24), Pekah (2 Kgs 15:28), and Hoshea (2 Kgs 17:2). As Israel was the most flourishing externally under Jeroboam II, who recovered the possessions seized on by Syria, Hosea's prophecy of its downfall at that time was the more striking as it could not have been foreseen by mere human sagacity. Jonah the prophet had promised success to Jeroboam II from God, not for the king's merit, but from God's mercy to Israel; so the coast of Israel was restored by Jeroboam II from the entering of Hamath to the sea of the plain (2 Kgs 14:23–27).

Southern Kingdom (“Judah”)

- **Uzziah** (737-735): A good king; Hosea begins;
- **Jotham** (749-734): A good king;
- **Ahaz** (741-726): Very wicked; Galilee captivity, 734;
- **Hezekiah** (726-697): A good king.

[Dates are approximate; sources vary; reigns recorded in 2 Chr 26-32.]

As foreseen by Hosea, the Assyrians under Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727) expanded westward; in 733 the Northern Kingdom was made a puppet state within the Assyrian Empire (2 Kgs 15:29). After plotting revolt, Israel was defeated in 722 and deported (2Kgs17:1-6; 18:10-12). Judah was also incorporated as a vassal state into the Assyrian Empire during Hosea's time (cf. 2 Kgs 16:5-10).

- 2] The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD.

“...take unto thee a wife”: Marriage = love, intimacy, privilege, and responsibility.

Marriage relationship in OT—warnings of harlotry: Ex 34:15-16 (warning re: Ahab, Jezebel); Lev 17:7; 20:5,6; Deut 32:16, 21; Isa 54:5. Also: Ruth (cf. Eph 5:25-32) and Adam (cf. Rom 5:14).

- 3] So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

“Gomer” = filling up the measure (harlotry?).

“Diblaim” = a double cake of figs; suggestive of sensual pleasure.

- 4] And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little *while*, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

First son: Jezreel = “sown of God”; blessing/judgment. [Jezreel was the royal city of Ahab and his successors, in the tribe of Issachar. Here Jehu exercised his greatest cruelties (2 Kgs 9:16, 25, 33).]

Homonyms:

- 1) May God scatter (Jer 31:10).
- 2) May God sow (Zech 10:9).

God was about to cast Israel (the Northern Kingdom) out of His sight among the Gentiles, in order for them to be chastened for their iniquities. The reigning house of Israel had succeeded to the throne through that very “Blood of Jezreel”; it was the site of Jehu's ruthless massacre of the house of Ahab at Jezreel (Hos 1:4; cf 2 Kgs 9-10) and in the future it would also be the scene of Israel's military demise (Hos 1:5).

Jezreel was the location of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kgs 21). Ahab covets; Jezebel obtains (1 Kgs 21:3, 9, 10 13; cf. Rev 2:20-25). Jezebel = “chaste”?! (1 Kgs 16 - 2 Kgs 11). Led systematic extermination of leadership of YHWH worship in Israel (1 Kgs 18). Elijah pronounces judgment (1 Kgs 18:19, 23); Ahab slain in the battle of Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kgs 22:37-38) and is succeeded by Joram (Jehoram).

The present dynasty (Jehu's) came to the throne through the blood of Jezreel, but failed to profit from the lesson of God's hatred of sin, and abhorrence of idolatry in particular. This same Valley of Jezreel would be the scene of their judgment: in that very spot (then called Esdraelon) the Assyrians defeated Israel and their captivity began.

Jehu, anointed King of Israel by Elisha, sets out to put Joram to death; Jehu meets Joram (with Ahaziah, King of Judah) at the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite, pierces him through with an arrow and cast his bleeding corpse into the plot of Naboth. Ahaziah was also smitten, but fled to Megiddo to die (2 Kgs 9).

Jezebel also meets her fate: at Jehu's request, the eunuchs cast her down from the window and she is trampled to death. When Jehu returns later, the dogs had already devoured her (2 Kgs 9:30-37; cf. 1 Kgs 21; 17ff).

Judgment on Jehu's Dynasty

So many think the attitude expressed by the Lord (Hosea 1:4) contradicted that in the accounts in 1 and 2 Kings. But a closer examination of the historical record suggests a resolution to the problem.

Jehu's slaughter of Jezebel and Ahab's descendants had been prophesied by Elijah (1 Kgs 21:21-24); commanded by Elisha (2 Kgs 9:6-10); and commended by the Lord Himself (2 Kgs 10:30).

Jehu also killed Joram (2 Kgs 9:24), Ahaziah, king of Judah (2 Kgs 9:27-28), 42 of Ahaziah's relatives (2 Kgs 10:12-14), and several functionaries of the Baal cult (2 Kgs 10:18-28).

Though the execution of Baal's servants was certainly in accord with the Lord's will (cf. 1 Kgs 18:40), Jehu's attack on the house of David went too far.

Despite the fact that Ahaziah's assassination could be attributed to God's providence (2 Chr 22:7), it demonstrated an underlying lack of regard for the Lord's commands. This disregard subsequently came to the surface in other ways (2 Kgs 10:29-31).

So Hosea 1:4 probably refers to the slaughter of Ahaziah and his relatives. Though their deaths did not actually occur in Jezreel (cf. 2 Kgs 9:27; 10:12-14), they were associated with the wholesale slaughter at that place.

The fulfillment of this prophecy came in 752 B.C., when Shallum assassinated Zechariah, the fourth of Jehu's descendants to rule the Northern Kingdom, thereby cutting off Jehu's dynasty forever (2 Kgs 15:10).

Jezreel: the Plain of Esdraelon

The Jezreel valley—afterwards called Esdraelon—is 10 miles in breadth; its borders are the Mediterranean (near Mt Carmel) to the Jordan; from Galilee to the mountains of Ephraim. It is the great battlefield of Gideon (Judg 6:33; 7) and became a symbol of national disgrace and defeat as it had been after Saul's death (1 Sam 29:1, 11; 31).

Dispensationally: Israel = YHWH's Vineyard

- Isaiah 5:1-7 [Cf. Matt 21:33-45]
- Isaiah 5:8-23 Six Woes (Cf. America)
- Isaiah 5:24-30 Enemies His means of judgment...

Jezreel

"Sown of God" in the land of Canaan, to be YHWH's portion; hired false witnesses against the Lord of the Vineyard; the Righteous One,

who would not give the enemy His rightful inheritance; by wicked hands they slew the Husbandman, and claimed the vineyard as their own; because of this the Gentile oppressor was permitted to overturn the kingdom, and power was transferred to the nations.

Their blood has been poured out and they have been devoured by the dogs: the unclean Gentiles...Have the Gentiles profited from this dreadful lesson? Far from it. Therefore, they too shall be cut off, and thus will God avenge upon them the Blood of Jezreel (Rev 16:16).

- 5] And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

"...break the bow": Referring to the destruction of the nation's military might. Here, the Fall of Samaria (cf. 1 Sam 2:4; Ps 46:9; Jer 49:35).

This prophecy was fulfilled 50 years later in the days of Hoshea, who was imprisoned by Shalmaneser, the Assyrian ruler, and the Northern Kingdom taken captive.

- 6] And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Lo-ruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.

"...Lo-ruhamah": This name means "not loved"; from the verb רָחַם *racham*, describing tender feelings of compassion as those expressed by a parent for a child. It was not that she was an orphan, but she did not know who her father was.

At Sinai, God אֱלֹהֵי רַחֻם *el rachum*, "the Compassionate" who is willing to forgive iniquity (Ex 34:6), will come to the point where, despite his gracious character, He will no longer leave the guilty unpunished (Ex 34:7). [...and America, perhaps?]

And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

Exodus 34:6-7

Such a time had come for the Northern Kingdom. The Holy Spirit's interpretation of this prophecy: "Not beloved" (Rom 9:26); "nor having obtained mercy" (1 Pet 2:10); Cf. The State of Israel since they have been cast out of their land...

- 7] But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

This was supernaturally fulfilled in 701 B.C. when God had an angel annihilate 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night, ending their campaign against Judah (2 Kgs 19:32-36; cf. Ezek 38 & 39). 2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 37, you will learn how God miraculously delivered the people of the southern kingdom at this time. But He did not deliver the northern kingdom.

- 8] Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.
9] Then said *God*, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye *are* not my people, and I will not be your *God*.

[Last clause above literally, “and I [am] not I AM to you.”]

“...not my people”: In the ancient covenant formula God declared, “I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be My people.” (Lev 26:12; cf. Ex 6:7; Deut 26:17-18). But now that relationship had been severed.

Having broken the covenant entered into at Sinai and ratified in the plains of Moab, God gives them up for the time being; this sentence remains unrepealed to the present day... [This accounts for the name of God hidden in the Book of Esther, which sets forth His providential care over them while they are scattered among the nations even though He doesn’t publicly identify with them.]

This is also a rebuttal to the amillennialists who insist that God is through dealing with the nation Israel. [This verse (Hos 1:9) ends Chapter 1 in the Hebrew text.]

- 10] Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people, *there* it shall be said unto them, Ye *are* the sons of the living God.

In a remarkable shift of tone, the Lord then declares that the effects of judgment would someday be reversed. Paul quotes this re: Gentiles (Rom 9:24-27). The Jew and Gentile are on the same ground: grace, not legal performance (“works”).

“...sand of the sea”: Original covenant of pure grace made with Abraham by *El Shaddai* (Gen 22:17; 32:12).

- 11] Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great *shall be* the Day of Jezreel.

“...Day of Jezreel”: Eschatological reference (Isa 9:4-7; 41:8-16; Amos 9:11-12; Joel 3:9-17; cf. Rev. 19:11-21).

That which had been divided after Solomon would be reunited under one leader (cf. Ezek 37:22), the Davidic Ruler of the Kingdom Age (cf. Hos 3:5; Isa 9:6-7; Amos 9:11; Micah 5:2). The promise to David of an everlasting throne will be fulfilled (2 Sam 7:11b-16).

The “Field of Blood,” Jezreel, will become again the Vineyard of YHWH, and they shall ultimately be “sown of God” in the land of their fathers, never to be uprooted again. The future day of restoration will be ushered in by a great military triumph like that of Gideon (cf. Isa 9:4-7; 41:8-16; Amos 9:11-12; Joel 3:9-17; Rev 19:11-21).

The History of Israel

- 1) **Jezreel** (1:4) means “scattered,” referring to the time when God would scatter Israel among the nations;
- 2) **Lo-ruhamah** (1:6) means “unpitied,” meaning that God would lift His mercy from the nation and permit her to suffer for her sins;
- 3) **Lo-ammi** (1:9) means “not my people,” indicating this present time in God’s program when Israel is out of fellowship with God and its people are not His people as once they were.

(In Chapter 2, we see there will be a time when God will call Israel “My people” and “Obtaining pity,” when Christ returns and restores the nation and establishes His righteous kingdom.)

Lessons For Us

We cannot leave these chapters without pointing out that spiritual adultery can be a sin of NT Christians as well as the OT Jew (1 Jn 2:15-17; Rev 2:1-7; James 4:1-10). Christians who love the world and live for sin are false to their Savior and break His heart. Paul warned the Corinthians against this (2 Cor 11:1-3).

Next Session

Read Hosea 2 & 3. Review Historical Background (2 Kings 15-17).

The Book of Hosea Session 2

Chapters 2 & 3

Review: The History of Israel

- 1) **Jezreel** (1:4) means “scattered,” referring to the time when God would scatter Israel among the nations;
- 2) **Lo-ruhamah** (1:6) means “unpitied,” meaning that God would lift His mercy from the nation and permit her to suffer for her sins;
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The last two verses of Chapter 1 saw several prophecies:

- Israel will experience a great increase in population (1:10a);
- In the nation there will be a great turning to God (1:10b);
- The Northern and Southern Kingdoms will be reunified into a single nation (1:11a);
- They will appoint themselves one head—who will be the Messiah (1:11b);
- ...and now, national restoration (2:1).

Hosea 2

In this second chapter, the same cycle of events recurs as in the first, with this difference: what is expressed by symbol in the one is simply narrated in the other. The cycle is the common one of sin: its usual consequences of suffering and sorrow; and then, succor and sympathy in case of repentance.

The Valley of Achor (Hosea 2:15)

The Valley of Achor, “trouble”: a valley near Jericho, so called in consequence of the trouble which the sin of Achan caused Israel (Josh 7:24,26). The expression “valley of Achor” became proverbial for that which caused trouble: Gomer proves faithless; Israel proves faithless; God proves *faithful*.

- 1] Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.

“...Ammi”: that is, My people.

“...Ruhamah”: that is, Pitied; Having obtained mercy.

God is announcing that the day is coming when He is again going to say, “You are My people.” THUS: *God is not through with the nation Israel*. We will see this again in Chapter 3. Those who teach that God is through with Israel have to discount or “spiritualize” a great part of the Old Testament (and the New!).

- 2] Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts;

“Plead”: This suggests great contention because Gomer was unfaithful and went back to prostitution. Whatever her beginnings, she was to etch her name in the infamy of the nation.

(All this while Hosea’s heart was broken: he loved her! The worst sin one can commit is to become unfaithful to one who loves you.) [*The greatest sin a Christian can commit is unfaithfulness to God who has redeemed you and who loves you...*]

This passage shows the nature of God’s love toward those who have proved unfaithful to Him. To the Greeks, God was unfeeling. (Their word for this was *apatheia*, from which we get apathy.) To the Muslims, Allah is capricious, unknowable.

The God of the Bible weeps for His people, yearns for them, works for their deliverance (Cf. Jer 2:2, 13). If it were you or me, we might give up. But God works to turn sorrow into joy and tragedy of unfaithfulness into the triumph of love. But even God has a point beyond which He will not strive... (Gen 6:3; Ps 2; et al.).

- 3] Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.

“...she was born”: The day of her political “birth” was when God delivered her from the bondage of Egypt, and set up the theocracy (Ezek 16:4).

“...wilderness”: Translate, “make her as the wilderness,” namely, that in which she passed forty years on her way to her goodly possession of

Canaan (Jer 6:8; Zeph 2:13). With this agrees the mention of “thirst” (cf. Jer 2:6).

“...slay her with thirst”: If she does not repent, God will judge her; make her a desert. In our culture we have come to glamorize adultery. It is the chief product of Hollywood. But God tells it like it is. Her life is a life downhill...

- 4] And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms.

God is applying the sins of the nation to the individuals who compose the nation. The prevalence of adultery has turned our nation into the debris of broken families, single-parent homes, and offspring incapable of intimacy and commitment.

We have degenerated into a culture in which “family values” are even debated within the corridors of power... At this time, the entire nation had turned to idolatry. (Cf. we have invented the most insulting “god” of all: random chance as our creator...)

[“3rd and 4th generation” applies to the 2nd Commandment...]

- 5] For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.

She is doing it for money! (Hosea may not have been a wealthy man, and not able to provide the luxuries she wanted.)

“...me my bread and my water” = necessities.

“my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink” = luxuries.

Ingratitude is the most frustrating insult of all. ...the worst sin against God, our Provider of all things. But God’s love is a disciplining love.

Israel had turned to idols (spiritual adultery) and was giving the idols credit for providing for them. [*What is the real source of the wealth that has made America great?*]

- 6] Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.

“...Therefore”: The passage is segmented by three “therefores” (vv. 6, 9, and 14). We are reminded of the complaints of Satan against the hedge

that God had placed around Job (Job 1:8-11). But even then, God did not allow Job to be tempted more than he was able to bear

“...thy way”: The sudden change of person from the third to the second is very observable: this directness of address is, in this instance, expressive of deep indignation. She had avowed her determination to pursue her evil courses shamefully and sinfully, as if in defiance of the Almighty.

“...that she shall not find her paths”: In case of Gomer, the hedge served as a protection against Gomer herself from the evil things she desired (as though addressing her personally and promptly, he said, “Then thou shalt not be able to carry out thy plan or accomplish thy purpose”; Cf. Job 1:10, 19:8; Isa 5:5; Lam 3:7).

- 7] And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.

There comes that day when the harlot is no longer attractive and her clientele loses interest in her... She sank lower in their social scale of the city and ultimately was unable to obtain even the necessities. This is precisely what was happening to Israel. So the people were now saying, “Now let’s return to God.” This also reminds us the plight of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32).

- 8] For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.

Our own culture also ascribes our blessings—even our very origin—to the god of random chance (an astonishing failure in basic design IQ...).

Baal

Baal was the Canaanite god who supposedly controlled storms and was responsible for both agricultural and human fertility. The Canaanite “Legend of Keret” associated Baal’s rain with agricultural blessing in the form of grain, bread, wine, and oil.

[Source: J.C.L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978, p. 98.]

By looking to Baal for these things Israel broke the first of the Ten Commandments, rejecting one of the main principles of the Mosaic legislation (cf. Ex 20:3; Deut 5:7).

Moses taught that the Lord provided grain, wine, and oil (Deut 7:13; 11:14). Each Israelite, when presenting his firstfruits in the harvest festival, was to recite the following words in the presence of the priest, “I bring the firstfruits of the soil that You, O Lord, have given me” (Deut 26:10).

- 9] Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness.

The Mosaic Law made agricultural prosperity dependent on loyalty to the Lord. Obedience to the covenant stipulations would result in the Lord’s blessing in the form of plentiful harvests, numerous offspring, and security (Lev 26:3-13; Deut 28:1-14).

“Therefore”: Disobedience would bring drought, pestilence, war, death, and exile (Lev 26:14-39; Deut 28:15-68). This announcement in Hosea 2:9 revealed the Lord’s intention to implement the covenant curses against Israel. Drought, blight, insect swarms, and invading armies would destroy the land’s produce (Deut 28:51; Joel 1:4-12; Amos 4:6-9; 7:1).

“Hosea, Can You See?”

This same predicament faces America. We are so “sophisticated” that we condone homosexuality as a “normal lifestyle.” We don’t punish murderers; we even subsidize them. We have too many judges who twist laws rather than acknowledge the God who overrules even the laws of a nation. We’ve become so apostate that we don’t recognize the enemy when he threatens our very existence...

- 10] And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand.

“...lewdness”: נבלות *nabluwth* (only here in the OT) refers to a blatant breach of covenant which disgraces the entire community. A related term (נבלה *nebalah*) is used of Achan’s sin (Josh 7:15), as well as various prohibited sexual acts, including fornication (Deut 22:21), incest (2 Sam 13:12), rape (Judg 19:23; 20:6), and adultery (Jer 29:23).

- 11] I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

Word play, such as puns, typifies Hosea: “cease” = שבת *shawbath*; vs. “sabbaths” = שבת *shabbath*.

“...feast days”: Feast days of Jeroboam’s appointment, distinct from the Mosaic (1 Kgs 12:32). Most of the Mosaic feasts remained, but to degenerate Israel worship was a weariness; they cared only for the carnal indulgence on them (Amos 8:5).

- 12] And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.

“...destroy her vines and her fig trees”: A common synecdoche conveys the idea of all those sources that combine to support life and supply its luxuries. This was fulfilled in the overthrow of Israel by Assyria (Hos 9:4, 5). When the united kingdom of Judah and Israel, before the disruption, had obtained the zenith of prosperity in the reign of Solomon, it is thus expressed: Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.”

- 13] And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD.

“...Baalim”: The name of Baal came to be used generally as the designation of any idol or false god. Behind all of our problems is the big problem: that we are not recognizing the Living God.

[Baal in the plural, has respect to the various forms of the Baal-idolatry, or modification of the Baal-worship. Examples: Baal-peor, Baal-be-rith, Baal-zebub, Baal-perazim, Baal-zephon, Baal-zamar, Baal-shalishu.]

Hosea 2

- vv. 2-5 An exposure of Israel’s sin;
- vv. 6-13 An enumeration of her sufferings by penal inflictions;
- vv. 14-23 A touching exhibition of Divine succor and support.

- 14] Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.

Why? That’s the mystery to me. Are you like Gomer at the depths of her misery? Are you like the Prodigal Son, exiled in a foreign land? Don’t just sit there: Go, return to God. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).

[J. Vernon McGee has expressed the view that the Depression, and the “dust bowl,” were sent by God to speak to us in judgment. If we had repented and heard God at that time, we would never have had to fight World War II, Korea, or Viet Nam. We should have been sending out missionaries, not soldiers to suffer in prison camps...]

Donald Grey Barnhouse writes:

Who can explain the insanity of true love? Love is of God, and it is infinite. Love is sovereign. Love is apart from reason; love exists for its own reasons. Love is not according to logic; love is according to love. Thus it was for Hosea, for he was playing the part that God has played with you, all of your life, and with me. The pursuing love of God is the greatest wonder of the spiritual universe.

We leave God in the heat of our own self-desire and run from His will because we want so much to have our own way. We get to a crossroads and look back in pride, thinking that we have outdistanced Him. Just as we are about to congratulate ourselves on our achievement of self-enthronement, we feel a touch on our arm and turn in that direction to find Him there.

“My child,” He says in great tenderness, “I love you; and when I saw you running away from all that is good, I pursued you through a shortcut that love knows well, and awaited you here at the crossroads.”

We have torn ourselves free from His grasp and rushed off again, through deepest woods and farthest swamp, and as we look back again, we are sure, this time, that we have succeeded in escaping from Him.

But once more, the touch of love is on our other sleeve and when we turn quickly we find that He is there, pleading with the eyes of love, and showing Himself once more to the tender and faithful One, loving to the end.

He will always say, “My child, my name and nature are Love, and I must act according to that which I am. So it is that I have pursued you, to tell you that when you are tired of your running and your wandering, I will be there to draw you to myself once more.”

When you see this love at work through the heart of Hosea we may wonder if God is really like that. But everything in the Word and in experience shows us that He is. He will give man the trees of the forest and the iron in the ground. Then He will give to man the brains to make an axe from the iron to cut down a tree and fashion it into a cross. He will give man the ability to make a hammer and nails, and when man has the cross and the hammer and the nails, the Lord will allow man to take hold of Him and bring Him to that cross; He will stretch out His hands upon it and allow man to nail Him to that cross, and in so doing will take the sins

of man upon Himself and make it possible for those who have despised and rejected Him to come to Him and know the joy of sins removed and forgiven, to know the assurance of pardon and eternal life, and to enter into the prospect of the hope of glory with Him forever. This is even our God, and there is none like unto Him.

- 15] And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the Valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

“...the Valley of Achor”: The Valley of Trouble. Mentioned three times in the Bible.

The Valley of Achor: Hosea 2:15

1) Joshua 7: The victory at Jericho was followed by the disastrous defeat at Ai. God had instructed them not to take any of the spoil at Jericho, but one man disobeyed. Ai represents the flesh—which always means defeat. Joshua fell on his face and pleaded with the Lord.

The Lord said, “Get up off your face.” Israel has sinned. You must deal with the sin before you can have a victory” (Josh 7:7-26).

The offending Achan and his property were taken to the Valley of Achor where they were destroyed and buried. From then on it was victory for Israel. So it is with us. The Valley of Achor is, in effect, a Valley of Hope. Dealing with sin is a preamble to blessing.

2) Isaiah 65:10: When he speaks of a day when it will become a resting place for herds.

3) Hosea 2:15: to become a place (or path) of hope for God’s people. How can this be? By taking our trouble on Himself.

In the final hours prior to His death He said, “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.” (Jn 12:27). Again, we are told, “Jesus was troubled in spirit” (Jn 13:21). Why? He was troubled in our place. It is on the basis of His death for our sin that can now say to us, “Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:1, 27).

- 16] And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali.

“...Ishi” = my husband.

“...Baali” = my lord or my master. (They had been attempting to place the Lord on a par with Baal.)

Baal

Baal, in various versions, is pictured in Canaanite worship wearing a bull-like helmet, wielding a thunderbolt with a spear-sharp point in one hand and a battle mace in the other. He is associated with Mars, the god of war throughout ancient myths and rituals. Some believe it also was associated with near pass-bys of the Planet Mars (see *Signs in the Heavens* or our *Joshua* commentary).

The husband relationship indicates a relationship that is intimate and personal, and is based on love. It is the highest relationship in the human family (Song 6:3). Can you call Christ yours? (1 Cor 3:21-23). Not everyone who calls Him “Lord” (Mt 7:21-23).

Richard Wurmbrand, in his message, *Preparing for the Underground Church*, highlights that it isn’t how many Scriptures you’ve memorized; your survival depends entirely on your personal relationship with Him.

- 17] For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.
- 18] And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

“And in that day” = the Millennium; the lion and lamb will lie down together (Isa 11:6; 65:25). (They do now, but the lamb is *inside* the lion.)

“...make a covenant”: Ancient Hittite covenants were of two kinds: 1) Parity covenants between equals; and 2) Suzerainty covenants between a sovereign and his subjects. The covenant between God and Israel was of the latter type.

- 19] And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

“...betroth” = to woo a virgin; to court a girl...a wonderful experience. That is what God said He would do to Israel.

- 20] I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

This has not happened yet (Cf. Ezek 36:18-28. Review Ezek 37-39).

- 21] And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth;
- 22] And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.
- 23] And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

There is no greater promise than that. All three children here, regathered, embraced:

- *Jezreel* = “sown; or planted”
- *Ruhamah* = “mercy; pity”
- *Ammi* = “my people”

This is quoted by Paul in Rom 9:25-26 (Cf. 1 Pet 2:10).

Hosea 3

We now come to what some have called “the Greatest Chapter in the Bible!” Only five verses, it portrays Israel’s Idolatrous Past, Prophesied Present, and Future Restoration.

- vv. 1-3: A symbolic representation;
- vv. 4-5: The explanation.

[*Chapter divisions added by Stephen Langton (1227); Verse divisions began to be used in the Stephanus Greek New Testament (1551).*]

Background

Be sure to review this in Paul’s definitive declaration of the Gospel known as the Book of Romans:]

- Chapter 9: The **past** dealings of God with Israel;
- Chapter 10: His **present** dealings with Israel; and,
- Chapter 11: His **future** dealings with Israel.

Those that build their doctrine on the “replacement” of Israel with the church have profound problems with the New Testament as well as the Old. (66 books by 40 penmen—but an integrated message!)

- 1] Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

Hosea still loved her despite her unfaithfulness.

“...flagons of wine” should actually be translated as “cakes of raisins,” which were used in the sacrificial feasts of the Canaanites, and which the children of Israel had adopted.

- 2] So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:

“...bought her to me”: Gomer was put up at auction. There were three ways that one could become a slave: by conquest; by birth; and by debt (we are slave by all three!). Slaves were always sold naked. So are we.

The bidding started. “12”... “13”... “14”... Finally, “15 pieces of silver and a 1½ bushels of barley.” Done. (Hosea’s pockets now appear to have been emptied...) The price of a slave was thirty shekels of silver (Ex 21:32). Hosea evidently paid ½ in money and ½ in grain.

Notice that Hosea now *owned* his wife. She was his property. He clothed her and took her home. That’s us. We are Gomer: We are the slave sold on the auction block of sin. The world bids for us promises of fame, wealth, prestige, influence, power—the world’s currency. Yet we, too, have been redeemed; purchased despite our despicable character with the blood of Jesus Christ (Mt 20:28; 1 Pet 1:18,19; Titus 2:14).

The real mystery is, *why?* (Eph 2:7). You hear a lot about dedication, commitment, turning your life over to the Lord. *But that all comes later: first you must come as a sinner in desperate need of redemption.*

Until then, it is like going to a graveyard and proclaiming, “Listen everyone: let’s all start doing better. Let’s all start committing our lives to the Lord.” Yet, *everyone there is dead.* Until we come to God for salvation, you and I are *dead* in trespasses and sins.

We have no life to commit unto Him. *Until* the sin question is settled—*until* we are born again and have a new nature—we can do nothing that is pleasing to God. Yet, He has purchased us. And has clothed us—with His garments, not our own filthy rags.

- 3] And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.

“...thou shalt not play the harlot”: If a so-called church has a man in the pulpit that denies the Word of God, denies the deity of Christ, and denies that He died for sinners, it is not a church: it is a *brothel*. *That’s what God says right here.*

- 4] For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim:

“...many days without a king” Note: it doesn’t give a specific number. This is unusual: Israel was told three times that they would be put out of their land and later returned. They are “without a king” because the King of Kings is presently on His Father’s throne. (Hosea will have much more to say about His return later.)

“...without a Prince”: the *Meshiach Nagid* that was “cut off but not for Himself” (Dan 9:26).

“...without an image” *מַצֵּבָה matstsebah*—pillar, a monument, personal memorial, with an altar; thus, no Temple! (the Council of Jamnia redefined Judaism in 90 A.D.)

“...without an ephod”—thus, without a priesthood. True today.

“...without a teraphim” (a token or idiom associated with inheritance..).

“...without a sacrifice”: until the Temple is rebuilt; yet, “the Prince that shall come” will “cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease,” etc. (Dan 9:27).

Each of the two previous instances they were told how long it would be—except this last time. The first time was in Egypt, and it was 430 years. The second time was Babylon, and it was precisely 70 years. This third time is speaking of the northern kingdom (which never actually returned to the land).

How long is “many days?” There are numerous people that have expounded various theories. We are in a hiatus—an interval—between the 69th Week and the 70th Week of Daniel (Dan 9:26). The real action will resume when the church is removed from this earth (Rom 11:25).

The reason the days are detailed here in Hosea is that in Scripture the church is *nameless* and *dateless*. We are a heavenly people, having no name (but His!).

- 5] Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

“...in the latter days”: Israel will also recognize the authority of the Davidic monarchy, which it rejected at the time of Jeroboam I (cf. 1 Kgs 12). (*No date setting here...*)

National Repentance and Restoration

It is strange that so many scholars (“Reformed” scholars) still deny that there will be a regathering of Israel and a national repentance of Israel in the last days yet to come. They argue that Israel’s failure when she rejected Christ caused a forfeit and fulfillment will be in the church. The promises of Israel’s regathering and restoration made in the OT (Deut 28:64-67; Isa 11:11, 12; 60:12; Jer 16:14-16; Ezek 36:24-28; Amos 9:14; et al.) and *are repeated* in the NT *following* their rejection of Christ.

In the opening verses of Romans 11, it is clearly not true that God has utterly cast off His people (Rom 11:1). Paul highlights this interval of focus and opportunity for the Gentiles; and then Paul goes on to restate and further define the OT prophecies of a time of future blessing and usefulness for Israel (Rom 11:25-27).

They still have not turned to the Lord; and they still are in peril of losing Jerusalem, etc. *But they will return, and they will seek the Lord their God and David their king.* God keeps His promises: to Abraham; to Moses; to David; and to Mary...and to you and me!

David Resurrected?

“I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them” (Ezek 34:23, 25; cf. 37:24).

“They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them” (Jer 30:9).

Marital Application

Our standard should follow after Hosea’s (Eph 5:22, 25, 26, 32...). Remember, it was not we who sought Him. It was He who sought us and joined us to Himself. He brought us to the Father, and vowed, in effect: “I, Jesus, take thee, sinner, to be My wedded wife; and I do promise and covenant, before God and these witnesses, to be thy loving and faithful Savior and Bridegroom, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, for life and for eternity.”

And we looked into His face and said after Him, “I sinner, take Thee, Jesus, to be my Savior and Lord; and I do promise and covenant, before God and these witnesses, to be Thy loving and faithful bride, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, for this life and for eternity.”

Thus, we took His name and became His. *Now we must be careful to keep His name unspotted before the world.*

Next Session

Next major section: Chapters 4–13. Review your notes and references on the predicaments facing the Northern Kingdom after the death of Solomon and the rebellion of Jeroboam and his successors. In what way was it “the best of times” and also “the worst of times”? Study Chapters 4 & 5.

The Book of Hosea Session 3 Chapters 4 & 5

Predicament of the Northern Kingdom

...the best of times and the worst of times...

—Charles Dickens

They were experiencing unparalleled prosperity...and unparalleled immorality. Their enemies will be used for judgment [*Parallel to America?*]

The Remedy—return and repent before God:

- Israel as the adulterous wife, Gomer;
- *Jezreel* Sown; planted;
- *Ruhamah* Pitied; loved;
- *Ammi* My people.

Set aside, but ultimately received and restored. *Israel was the product of a “broken home” due to (spiritual) adultery!* God is Hosea; we are Gomer.

The Case for the Prosecution

Hosea’s personal life will now fade into the background; the rest of the book is *prophetic*. What had previously been presented in figure and

symbol is now plainly and literally stated. God is going to spell out the specific charges

Formal Charges: lawlessness; immorality; ignorance of God's Word; idolatry. Covetousness is idolatry (Col 3:5). *Is there any nation more committed to covetousness than America?*

God's law, while given specifically to Israel, sets out the pattern for any nation which wants to be blessed. Here, the charges are disclosed in a manner whose depth is unparalleled in the rest of the OT. God's holiness demands an indictment for Israel's sin; God's justice requires that she should be punished.

Hosea 4

- 1] Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

A subpoena from God: As in, "Hear ye! Hear ye! The court is in session..." First, the sins of omission:

- No truth (cf. past history vs. the present);
- No mercy;
- No knowledge of God.

Brainwashed in their idolatry; no truth; no faithfulness. What has happened to the sanctity of a commitment? "My word is my bond"? We have lost it in our marriages. We have lost it in our business dealings. We have disconnected character from destiny. 700 years later, John would write, "The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 Jn 4:8).

The Holy One of Israel was acting as the prosecuting attorney, the plaintiff, the witness, the judge, and the executioner (cf. Amos 9:8). It is interesting to note that they had ignored the Word of the Lord for 200 years! ... *so have we in the United States!*

- 2] By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

Disparaging the Ten Commandments. (Sound familiar? Cf. Ex 20:13-16). (In Hebrew, each of these commandments is stated by Hosea in the infinitive absolute, a grammatical form used for vividness and emphasis.)

"...blood touches blood": ...even among relatives.

[Source: William Rainey Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, The International Critical Commentary, ed. Samuel Rolles Driver, Alfred Plummer, and Charles Briggs, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1905, p.250.]

We are not under the law(s) of Moses, but the Ten Commandments express His will. We have no license to break the Commandments. In fact, we are held to an even *higher* standard! The Sermon on the Mount (cf. Mt 5-7).

There is nothing new in the "new morality." They practiced it in 700 B.C. and were ultimately destroyed as a result. Our God is immutable: He changes not. Neither do His rules.

He has condemned homosexuality in the strongest language. It was practiced (and condoned) in Sodom and Gomorrah and he destroyed them because of it to set an example. If people indulge in that, He will give them up. Jesus Christ says to the homosexuals, "Ye must be born again" (Jn 3:7). He can deliver you from it. It needs to be treated for what it really is—sin. *And only Christ has the remedy for sin.*

- 3] Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

"...the land mourn": The environment is polluted as well.

- 4] Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.

Striving with a priest (sitting as a judge) was punishable by death (Deut 17:8-12).

"...thy people": The leadership change made plain by the change of address from "My people" to "thy people."

- 5] Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

From verse 5, the blame is assigned to the priests...The pathetic scene of the leadership rendering judgments under staggering drunkenness is forcibly portrayed by Hosea's contemporary, Isaiah (Isa 28:1-8).

God will destroy the nation. (The Northern kingdom did *not* return as a nation...) The decision to live as rebels made them "squatters" who deserved eviction.

6] My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

America, too, can clearly track the acceleration of its moral decay to the 1960s Supreme Court decisions outlawing prayer and Bible reading in the public schools...

The Word of God

The minute you get away from the Word of God, you are doomed to failure in both your Christian life and your national life. Thus, our mission statement: *To create, develop, and distribute materials to stimulate, encourage, and facilitate serious study of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God.*

As a result, God will even take away their priests... Paul may have had Hosea in mind when he penned Romans 1:18-32: Compare Hosea 4:6 with Rom 1:24, 26, 28; compare Hosea 4:7 with Rom 1:23; compare Hosea 4:11 with Rom 1:21, 22. There is a specific judgment pronounced on every culture that fails to acknowledge Him as Creator...

The Gentiles had only the creation as a witness, *but that was enough*; Israel was even more guilty than the Gentiles in that they had been given more knowledge of God; but they had rejected it. *We are even more guilty than Israel for the same reason.* “To whom much is given, much will be required! (Lk 12:48).

7] As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.

God kept His promise to Abraham and multiplied them, but that just brought more sinners into the world. (Like me. *Fortunately, someone gave me a Bible early—and then also helped me—and I was able to trust Christ as my Savior.*)

However, these people had no knowledge of the Word of God. Their darkness was a result of their own ignorance (Hos 4:6; Cf. Jn 3:19; Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 4:6). Therefore He will change their glory to shame.

[America’s capital—and schools—have been stripped by the revisionists of its Bible centered founding and its heritage of men committed to prayer...]

If God doesn’t judge America, it will cause the enemies of God to blaspheme: “Apparently their God is not a very strong God,” etc.

8] They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.

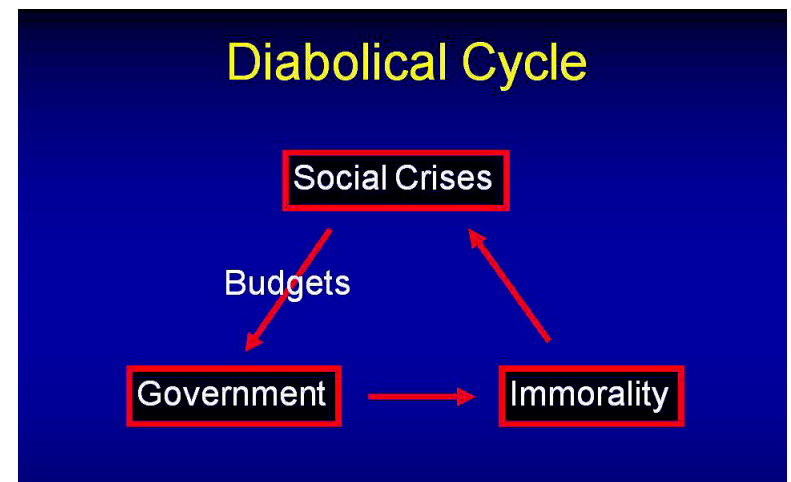
“...set their heart on their iniquity”: People not only sinned, they bragged about it (Cf. Isa 5:18). [Sounds like the “Gay Pride Parades,” etc.]

9] And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.

“...like people, like priests”: Their leadership urged people to sin. Like people, like priest. Both to be punished. Our spiritual leadership was no better. [*How few pulpits set an example...*] “What a man sows, this he will also reap” (Gal 6:7).

Immorality of Governments

Our pagan government, too, has developed the following stratagem: Crises favor increased budgets, controls; social crises work as well as military ones; immorality creates social crises; thus, governments promote immorality (see chart, below).



10] For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD.

There is irony here: Worship of Baal was supposed to ensure fertility of the soil and the fertility of the womb (Cf. Deut 31:17). Forsaking the Lord will result in insatiable hunger and fruitless wombs.

Appetites are never satisfied; gluttony in any form yields frustration rather than satisfaction. They will be their own worst punishment (cf. v.14).

11] Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.

God has condemned drunkenness. Is alcoholism a “disease?”

- It is the only disease contracted by an act of will;
- It is the only disease that is habit forming;
- It is the only disease that comes in a bottle;
- It is the only disease promoting crime and brutality;
- It is the only disease playing a major part in more than half of fatal highway accidents;
- It is the only disease which is sold by license;
- It is the only disease that is bought in grocery stores, drug stores, and well-marked retail outlets;

It is (not) the only disease that provides the government revenues... Washington D.C., New York, and Hollywood are simply indicative: Harlotry, Adultery, Drugs, and Alcoholism are conspicuously rampant and condoned. *Even celebrated!*

12] My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God.

“...stocks”: Lit., “wood”; “Woe unto him who says to a piece of wood, ‘Awake.’” (Hab 2:19). The insanity of paganism: and the blood spilled on the altars *of the gods who are not and the demons who are...* We become like the gods we worship (Ps 115:8; 135:18).

Divination

The stupidity of idolatry and the sin of divination are here combined. By the “wood” is meant an idol carved out of wood; while the staff may likewise have an image carved at the top for idolatrous purposes, or it may denote mode of divination by a staff which by the way it fell determined their course.

13] They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.

Mosaic law forbade the daughters of Israel from cult prostitution (Deut 23:17). Because the word for “spouses” is פְּלִיאָה, *kallah*, lit. “daughters in law,” Hosea may be alluding to the cultic practice of permitting a man to have sexual intercourse with his daughter-in-law to insure fertility in her marriage.

[Source: James Luther Mays, *Hosea*, Westminster, Philadelphia PA 1969, p.75.]

Covetousness and greed are gods of America, too. Adultery and immorality are the primary export of the entertainment industry from Hollywood and New York...

14] I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall.

Sin would thus be punished by sin. Remove God from the schools, what do you get? Columbine High School in Littleton Colorado, et al.

15] Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth.

“...Gilgal”: Gilgal and Bethel (Bethaven) were seedbeds of idolatry. Gilgal (formerly Elisha’s school; cf. 2 Kgs 2:1; 4:38) now a site of idols (Hos 9:15; 12:11). Rejection of YHWH (1 Sam 7, 10, 11).

“...Bethaven”: Bethaven was a small town near Bethel and is often used synonymously (Amos 4:4; 5:5). Hosea seems to be using the label contemptuously, renaming Bethel, “The House of God,” as Bethaven, “The House of Vanity.”

This is a warning to the Southern Kingdom to not replicate the North, but to flee their idolatry. Their Rubicon was passed, their judgment is certain; however, the Southern Kingdom still had opportunity for national repentance.

16] For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place.

17] Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

“...backsliding heifer”: Not “backsliding” as we use the term. Trying to load a stiff-legged heifer can make the chore seem impossible. It refers to being guilty of refusing to be led of the Lord. The word is used three times in this book; it is used only by Jeremiah and Hosea, both of whom spoke to a nation ready to go into captivity.

“...Ephraim”: Ephraim being the dominant tribe became idiomatic for the Northern Kingdom). “Ephraim” is used 37 times in this book; it is God’s synecdoche for the Northern Kingdom, the name of its dominant tribal constituent.

“...joined”: חָבַר *chabar*; yoked to, cleaving to, merged with.

“...let him alone” has a longing note of finality: Cf. Rev 22:11!

Tribal Designations

Incidentally, don’t confuse the tribal labels geographically with the tribal labels genealogically; the faithful from all—including the Levites—had migrated south to Judah (Cf. 2 Chr 11:13-16). (See also our *Expositional Commentary on Joshua*, which includes a supplemental volume on the Twelve Tribes.)

- 18] Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love, Give ye.
19] The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

People carried away with every wind of doctrine—except repentance to the Living God who has provided all...

Hosea 5

- 1] Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.

Just as in Chapter 4, they failed to set an example.

“...give ye ear, O house of the king.” Our “highchair king” is a mirror of the morality in America. [“Highchair king” is a psychologist’s term for a leader who throws tantrums until he gets what he wants...]

“...Mizpah...Tabor”: Mizpah was in the SW section of the Northern Kingdom; Tabor was in the NE. It’s like saying, “from California to Maine” or “from LA to Boston or New York.”

Contemporary Leadership

Unfortunately, our political and spiritual leadership, too, is hardly worth emulation. We get the leaders we deserve. [Contrast recent presidents vs. our Founding Fathers...] Our pulpits are often no better...

- 2] And the revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all.

God rebuked Israel for their brutality: there was murder, there was violence, and there was warfare.

[New York City has recorded more crimes than England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Switzerland, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, and Denmark, combined.]

- 3] I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou comittest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.

“I know Ephraim”: God is omniscient. He (alone) knows what we are really like. It is the fear of His knowledge—and our accountability to Him—that drives the enemies to reject Him.

Ephraim was the center of idolatry. The first golden calf was set up by Jeroboam at Beth-el; later, a second one was set up in Samaria, the capital. (Cf. Rev 7, where it is included, yet not by name: Joseph minus Manasseh = Ephraim. Dan is excluded explicitly; Ephraim slips in without acknowledgement...)

- 4] They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD.

God knows them; they don’t know Him. They are unbearably proud. It is refusing to abandon the sin that always keeps a person from actually coming to Him (Rom 3:10-12).

- 5] And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them.

...but not at the same time. The Southern Kingdom would fall a century later.

- 6] They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them.

Wow. “Not my people.” Set aside . . . for awhile (Cf. Lk 19:42; Rom 11:25). Because they have withdrawn from the Lord, He must withdraw from them. “Light refused” results in darkness (Deut 32:20; Mt 6:23).

- 7] They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions.

“...strange children”: Strange to God. The people did not bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Cf. Deut 6:4-9ff). The Word of God was to be taught *in their homes*—not Sunday School.

- 8] Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud at Bethaven, after thee, O Benjamin.

Gibeah, Ramah, and Bethaven are all cities of Benjamin, part of the Southern Kingdom adjacent to the Northern Kingdom.

“...cornet” = *shofar*, ram’s horn, and the “trumpet” = *hatzotzerah*, standard warning systems to alert the people to gather behind the city walls and prepare for battle.

Syro-Ephramite War

The historical battle for which they were to prepare was the Syro-Ephramite War (735-733 B.C.), in which the alliance of Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel captured certain Benjamite border towns, such as Gibeah, Ramah, and Bethel (or Bethaven); cf. 4:15, 2 Kgs 16:5; Isa 7:1-9 (re: relevant encryptions in Isaiah 7: see *Cosmic Codes* or our *Commentary on Isaiah*).

This prompted King Ahaz of Judah to seek the aid of Assyria, the nation that then used Ahaz’s request to sweep down upon Syria (734 B.C.) and Israel (722 B.C.). Heartened by the aid received from Assyria, the people of Judah, using the old war cry “Behind you, Benjamin” (cf. Judg 5:14), recaptured Gilgal, Ramah, and Bethel (v.8).

[Source: T. Miles Bennett, *Hosea: Prophet of God’s Love*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids MI, 1975, pp.65-66.]

To prevent any of the participants in that intrigue from regarding themselves as being in charge of their own destiny, the Lord reminds them that it is He who declares what is sure, v.9, following...

- 9] Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be.

God had not failed to warn them. He always warns in advance—and always with the opportunity for repentance (cf. Jonah’s call to Nineveh...). *He has warned us, also.*

- 10] The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

“...remove the bound”: Reminding Judah that its retaliatory attack upon Ephraim (v.8) is like the crime of moving a boundary line, forbidden under penalty of divine curse (Deut 19:14; 27:17; cf. 1 Kgs 15:22).

Boundaries

The individual who had the temerity to remove his neighbor’s landmark was not only guilty of a great sin, but opened to a grievous curse.

Thou shall not remove thy neighbor’s landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance;”

Deuteronomy 19:14

Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor’s landmark.

Deuteronomy 27:17

The removal of the landmark characterized the conduct of men entirely regardless of the rights of others “...and meddle not with them that are given to change...” (Prov 24:21).

“...pour out my wrath”: Wrath, from a root meaning “to run over,” is spoken of as “poured”; the whole world will experience it when seven angels appear in Revelation 16:1.

- 11] Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment.

Ephraim willingly followed the crowd: “Everybody is doing it.”

“...every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.” (Deut 12:8; Judg 17:6, 21:25; Prov 12:15; 21:2). When the knowledge of the true and Living God is refused, false gods inevitably fill the vacuum (Rom 1:22, 23).

The Gods We Worship...

And we become like the gods we worship! (Ps 115:4-8; 135:15-18). Are stone idols cold, unresponsive, impersonal? *If you worship them, you will become cold, unresponsive, impersonal.* Is the world materialistic, harsh and unforgiving? *If you worship the world you will become materialistic, harsh, and unforgiving.*

If you worship Christ, you will become like Him! Ah! Devoutly to be wished.

- 12] Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.

“...as a moth”: Moths do two things: 1) They distract us. (Try reading when one is gathered around your lamp...) and, 2) They can destroy a wardrobe surprisingly quickly. Like “a moth to Ephraim,” their political fabric will be destroyed.

“...as rotteness”: Like the woodworm which gnaws away wood. Wooden boards in a foundation can take longer to become rotten. (Judah fell a century later.)

Figures of speech abound in Hosea especially. There is profit in the prophets. (!) [Our book, *Cosmic Codes*, details over 200 figures of speech used in the Bible.]

Our Heritage

Our own foundations are being removed in every imaginable way in our nation today. Try to find some founding father’s history in our Museum of American History of the Smithsonian... How many of our school children can identify what made our American heritage unique?

- 13] When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

They resorted to the wrong remedies: foreign alliances rather than the Lord. (They will make the same mistake again: Dan 9:27).

King Jareb

“King Jareb” (“warrior king”) could be an epithet for Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria; some say it was the birth name of Sargon II, successor of Shalmaneser, who conquered Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. It was the Assyrians that ultimately took them captive! The Pharaoh of Egypt was also an Assyrian! (Isa 52:4). [The First, as well as the Final World Dictator will also be an Assyrian... Mic 5; Isa 10, et al Cf. Briefing Packages, et al.]

- 14] For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.

“...as a lion”: Another figure of speech. A lion destroys. Lion-like, he will rend before removing the prey—a tearing in pieces and then a carrying away.

“It Could Never Happen Here”

That was the cry in Eastern Europe, doubting that Communism would ever take over. That is the presumption that pervades our own country regarding God’s judgment. It is the slogan of a fool in ignorance of God’s nature and His commitments.

We, too, live in a declining culture, and God’s judgment appears overdue. He, again, may use our enemies as His mechanism of judgment. Our only hope is national repentance.

- 15] I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.

This is a remarkable verse (*the implications of which is missed by many commentators!*)

“I will go and return to my place” = He must have *left it* in order to “return!” This implies that God will be involved in *two* comings! “He came unto His own but His own received Him not” (Jn 1:11). He returned to the right hand of the Father (Ps 110:1).

He will stay there...until... “they acknowledge their offence and seek my face”: [“Offence” is singular and specific—re: Arnold Fruchtenbaum.] *This establishes a prerequisite for the Second Coming of Christ!* Israel must repent and acknowledge their rejection of their Messiah before He can return to them (Lev 26:32-42).

[Note: Lev 26:42, the order of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is reversed. Is this seen from the future, looking back? (Cf. Rev 13:2 vs. Dan 7, et al.)]

“...affliction”: The Great Tribulation was so labeled by Jesus Himself, by quoting Dan 12:1 (q.v. Mt 24:22).

“...earnestly”: KJV: “Early” = שָׂחַר *shachar*, to seek, seek early or earnestly, look early or diligently for. This will occur—in fact, *be the purpose* of—the Great Tribulation, the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer 30:1-7). This will be the subject of the next chapter.

Overview of All History: Matthew 23:37-39

- The Purpose of all history
- The Tragedy of all history
- The Triumph of all history

The Purpose of All History

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings...

Matthew 23:37a

The Tragedy of All History

... and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Matthew 23:37b-38

The Triumph of All History

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 23:39

Next Session

Study Hosea Chapter 6 & 7: Some of the Topics include:

- Their Prophetic Destiny;
- The Tribulation ;
- The Remnant;
- The Campaign of Armageddon;
- The Invasion of Ezekiel 38.

The Book of Hosea Session 4 Chapters 6 & 7

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Hosea 5:15

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Hosea 6

- 1] Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

“Come, and let us return unto the Lord”: Israel finally comes to the realization that her sufferings have been of a disciplinary nature.

- 2] After two days will he revive us: In the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

“...In the third day he will raise us up”: Ezekiel used similar language in describing life which would enter the dry bones, representing Israel (Ezek 37:1-10; cf. Isa 26:19). The apostle Paul also develops the subject of the future of Israel in Romans 11.

- 3] Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

The certainty of the Lord’s Coming is as assured as the divine decree that the dawn must follow the night (the *boker* will follow *erev*; cf. Gen 8:22). The Coming will be like the latter (spring) rain, always an occasion for rejoicing (Deut 11:14; Job 29:23; Prov 16:15; Joel 2:23).

The Tribulation

False presumptions: Church vs. Israel; 3.5 vs. 7 years. The Tribulation begins with the enforcement of a covenant with the Coming World Leader (*not* the *harpazo* or “rapture”...).

The Order of Events



Old Testament Terms Used

- The Time of Jacob’s Trouble Jer 30:7
- The 70th Week of Daniel Dan 9:27
- Jehovah’s Strange Work Isa 28:21
- Jehovah’s Strange Act Isa 28:21
- The Day of Israel’s Calamity Deut 32:35; Obad 12-14
- The Tribulation Deut 4:30
- The Indignation Isa 26:20; Dan 11:36
- The Overflowing Scourge Isa 28:15, 18
- The Day of Vengeance Isa 34:8; 35:4; 61:2
- The Year of Recompense Isa 34:8
- The Time of Trouble Dan 12:1; Zeph 1:15
- The Day of Wrath Zeph 1:15
- The Day of Distress Zeph 1:15
- The Day of Wasteness Zeph 1:15
- The Day of Desolation Zeph 1:15
- The Day of Darkness Zeph 1:15; Amos 5:28,20; Joel 2:2
- The Day of Gloominess Zeph 1:15; Joel 2:2
- The Day of Clouds Zeph 1:15; Joel 2:2
- The Day of Thick Darkness Zeph 1:15; Joel 2:2
- The Day of the Trumpet Zeph 1:16
- The Day of Alarm Zeph 1:16

New Testament Terms Used

- The Day of the Lord 1 Thess 5:2
- The Wrath of God Rev 15:1, 7; 14:10, 19; 16:1
- The Hour of Trial Rev 3:10
- The Great Day of the Wrath of the Lamb of God Rev 6:16-17
- The Wrath to Come 1 Thess 1:10
- The Wrath 1 Thess 5:9; Rev 11:18
- The Great Tribulation Mt 24:21; Rev 2:22; 7:14
- The Tribulation Mt 24:29
- The Hour of Judgment Rev 14:7

The Time of Jacob’s Trouble: Jeremiah 30:4-7

Israel is “God’s first born” (Ex 4:22); therefore, receives a double portion (Deut 21:17; Isa 40:1-2; Jer 16:16-18). The general description of Israel in the Tribulation is found in Isaiah 3:1-4:1; also, Day of Jehovah passages (Ezek 13:1-7; Zech 13:2-6; Joel 2:1-11; 3:14-17); (note “time of refuge” in Amos 5:18-20 and focus on Jerusalem in Zeph 1:7-13).

Worldwide anti-Semitism: Matthew 24:9-28—v.13 those who endure to the end will be saved; v.15 triggers the second half of tribulation with the Abomination of Desolation set up.

Summary of the Satanic role toward Israel (Rev 12:1-17). Compare Michael’s role: Rev 12:7-12 & Dan 12:1. Zech 13:8-9 gives the result: Hitler killed 1/3 of the world Jewish population; the Antichrist will kill 2/3...

The Remnant

In His confidential briefing (Mt 24:15) they are told to flee into (which?) mountains...These are the “non-many” (Dan 9:27); the “escaped” ones (Isa 10:20-23; 28:22; also Isa 4:2, 37:31-32; Joel 2:32; Obad 17).

God protects them (Isa 41:8-16) and provides for them (Isa 41:17-20). This is referred to in Revelation 12:6 & 14. Isaiah 33:13-16 reaffirms the provisions of Isa 41 and 68:8-16, and indicates that it will be in the mountains, amid “the munitions of rocks” and easy to defend.

Micah 2:12 pinpoints Bozrah, which was located in the region of Mount Seir, located on the western side of Edom in southern Jordan. Bozrah means sheepfold. An ancient sheepfold had a narrow entrance so that the shepherd could count his sheep, and, once inside, he could guard

a single entrance to contain them (Cf. “I am the door” John 10). It appears that Sela, now Petra, fits the description, shaped like an ancient sheepfold, with a narrow passageway (the “Siq”) opening up to a spacious city surrounded by cliffs. An interesting exception to the rule of the Antichrist:

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many [countries] shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, [even] Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

Daniel 11:41

It would appear that this is then the likely place for the remnant to flee to. It is also interesting that this area, Jordan, is the subject of a treaty with Israel...

- Lev 26:40-42: Because of disobedience, they would be scattered over the world. Their blessings and promises conditioned upon confessing their iniquity. “Iniquity” (v.40) is singular and specific.
- Hos 5:15: Israel’s offense was the rejection of His Messiahship. (His execution was the result of the condemnation and sentencing of a Gentile judge, and done by Gentile hands.)
- Mt 23:37-39: Jesus will not come back to the earth until the Jews and Jewish leaders request Him to come back.

Overview of All History: Matthew 23:37-39

- The Purpose of all history
- The Tragedy of all history
- The Triumph of all history

The Purpose of All History

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings...

Matthew 23:37a

The Tragedy of All History

... and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Matthew 23:37b-38

The Triumph of All History

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 23:39

The “Campaign” of Armageddon [“Day of Vengeance” Cf. Isa 61:2b]

1) Assembling of the Armies of the Antichrist (Rev 16:12-16)

There isn’t really a “battle”; this, the Valley of Jezreel, is the staging area for the armies coming against Jerusalem, and thus against God the Father and His Messiah. God’s viewpoint is one of mockery (Ps 2:1-6; Joel 3:9-11).

2) The Destruction of Babylon

The key power center is in Babylon (Zech 5:5-11). Its destruction is detailed in Isaiah 13 & 14 and Jeremiah 50 & 51. These prophecies are not of an allegory of Rome, etc. They are Chaldean, on the banks of the Euphrates, etc. The Babylon of history never ended this way; it atrophied over the centuries and its rebuilding begun in recent years. It is to be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah, never to be inhabited, etc. (For reconciliation with Rev 17 & 18, see our briefing package, *The Mystery of Babylon.*)

3) The Fall of Jerusalem (Zech 12:1-9; 14:1-2; Micah 4:11-5:1)

Over half of the city taken into slavery by the Gentile forces from the Valley of Jezreel.

4) The Armies at Bozrah (Jer 49:13-14; Micah 2:12)

The world army pursues the remnant, which has fled to the mountains of Edom in Jordan.

5) The National Regeneration of Israel

The required confession (Lev 26:40-42; Jer 3:11-18; Hos 5:15) and the pleading for the Messiah (Zech 12:10) inaugurates the final three days of the campaign with the pleading in Hosea 6:1-3 (and, perhaps, the national confession as in Isa 53:1-9), fulfilling Romans 11:25-27. (See also Zech 12:10-13:9; Joel 2:28-32; Isa 64:1-12; Ezek 20:33f; Ps 79:1-13; 80:1-19.)

6) The Second Coming of Christ

Isaiah 34:1-7 (note the city of Bozrah); Isa 63:1-6; the person is none other than the Messiah, Christ. (Note: His armies are not involved in the fighting! cf. Hab 3:3.) Teman and Mount Paran are also in the same mountain range in the vicinity of Bozrah in Edom (Micah 2:12-13); the breaker, the king, and Jehovah the King are all the same person in this verse.

Shekinah glory; the clouds of heaven (Mt 24:30; Acts 1:9-11): “same manner...” (Not same place!): “Armies” (plural): Rev 19:1-18; Angels (Mt 16:27) and Saints (Jude 14,15). [He fights at Bozrah alone: Isa 63:1-6] Also: Num 24:16-19; Isa 16:1, 14 Ezek 35; Jer 48; Hab 3:1-19; Ps 18:8-16; Zech 12:7 (Bozrah, “tents of Judah” first...then Jerusalem).

7) From the Valley of Jehoshaphat to Bozrah (Isa 63:1-4; Rev 19:13; Isa 34:5-6, 8)

Antichrist powerless before Christ (Hab 3:13; 2 Thess 2:8; Isa 14:3-11, 16-21) and armies destroyed (Zech 14:12-15; Joel 3:12-13): at Bozrah (Jer 49:20-22); then Megiddo—Bozrah to Megiddo = 1600 furlongs (Rev 14:20).

8) The Victory Ascent upon Mount of Olives

Zech 14:3-4; Rev 16:17-21; Mt 24:29; Joel 3:14-17.

The Lord’s Case Against Israel Expanded

Hosea’s style involves rapid transitions (Cf. 2:1 with 2:2). Thus, Hos 6:4 does not necessarily align with Hos 6:1-3.

- 4] O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

Immediate restoration is impossible because of Israel’s lack of loyalty (Hos 6:4-7:16). Easy to diagnose, but difficult to remedy. The cycle of loyalty—disloyalty—punishment had become ingrained since the time of the judges (Cf. Judg 4:1-24).

“...as a morning cloud, and as the early dew”: Metaphors expressing beauty but no substance. At best transitory, any expression of loyalty quickly evaporated. How about *us*?

- 5] Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.

“...have slain them by the words of my mouth”: Paraphrased, “I skinned them alive by the prophets.” An array of prophets had wielded the Sword of the Spirit (Isa 49:2; Jer 5:14; 23:29; cf. Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12). They were not sinning because of *ignorance*—there was no lack of information.

God’s measures to bring His disloyal people to repentance had been extreme (cf. Amos 4:6-11). His words of judgment, spoken through the prophets, had brought sudden death and destruction on many people (cf. Jer. 1:10; 5:14).

- 6] For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

“...mercy”: Cited by the Lord in Mt 9:13 and 12:7. חֶסֶד, *chesed*, lovingkindness, faithfulness. Israel’s sacrifices are meaningless without a corresponding loyalty to the One to whom those sacrifices were directed (cf. 1 Sam 15:22; Ps 51:16, 17; Isa 1:11-20; Jer 7:22-23; Amos 5:21-24; Mic 6:6-8).

How easy it is for us to sing, “I Surrender All” on Sunday morning, and then dedicate the rest of the week to our own self-centered interests...

- 7] But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

“...like men”: The Hebrew אֲנָשִׁים “like men,” has been translated variously:

- “At Adam” (RSV) requires a slight change in the Hebrew and suggests a geographical place near the Jordan River. The presence of the word “there” in the next line, as well as references to other places in 6:8-9, might support this reading. Identified in Scripture as the site where the waters of the Jordan divided (Josh 3:16), Adam had fallen like the rest of Israel in transgressing the covenant.

- “Like men” (KJV) takes the Hebrew in its widely attested generic sense, rather than as a proper name. In this case a comparison is made with fallen mankind, whose propensity to be unfaithful is well established.

Man’s *chesed* (“glory,” Isa 40:6) is as transitory as grass and flowers that wither in the sun (cf. Isa 40:6-8). On the other hand, the NIV and the

NASB suggest a comparison with the first man, Adam, who blatantly violated God's requirement by eating from the forbidden tree. These ambiguities of translation may have been deliberate word play. (See *Cosmic Codes* for other examples.)

- 8] Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity, and is polluted with blood.

"...them that work iniquity": Gilead is singled out as a city where murder reigned and covenant obligations were ignored. (Since Gilead was a district, not a city, the reference in is probably to the city Ramoth Gilead, east of the Jordan; cf. Hosea 6:8a).

The town had become a center for wicked men (lit., "workers of iniquity"). The city streets are pictured as being tracked with blood from the murderers' sandals (cf. 1 Kgs 2:5).

- 9] And as troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent: for they commit lewdness.

"...by consent": "שֶׁחֶם *Shechem*" (Hebrew). Again, the ambiguity may have been a *deliberate pun*. The language appears hyperbolic, perhaps pointing to the priests' false teaching and involvement in social exploitation.

The references to (Ramoth) Gilead and Shechem are well chosen: both of these towns were designated as "cities of refuge," where manslayers could find asylum (Josh 20:1-2). *Ironically, in Hosea's day these cities had become associated with bloodshed and injustice.* [A minister who stands in the pulpit and does not give out the Word of God is just as guilty as it is stated right here.]

"...company of priests murder": The priests' crimes were shameful.

"...lewdness": זִמָּה, *zimmah*, is used of the vilest sexual sins, including incest (Lev 18:17), cult prostitution (Lev 19:29), rape (Judg 20:5-6), and adultery (Job 31:9-11). This sexual connotation is probably applicable here because the priests' breach of covenant (Hos 6:6-7) is likened to prostitution (v.10).

- 10] I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel: there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled.

- 11] Also, O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people.

"...O Judah": The sins of v.10 were also rampant in Judah, which would necessitate a harvest of judgment there as well (Jer 51:33; Joel 3:12).

These final broken lines fall like tears from one with a broken heart... Don't depersonalize God. Allow Him to be the great personal God who discloses Himself in history and in His written Word. Don't presume on an expectation of automatic renewal.

Once you think of Him as impersonal, you empty the significance of the notions of "return" and "know God" of their validity and power for reformation...

What many people have is an emotional attachment to a cultural tradition—rather than a personal relationship with the Living God—and that comes from knowing Him through His Word.

Sin is rebellion. His righteous law holds us personally and individually accountable; in liberation from the oppression of the world's structures.

Faith is awareness. Evangelism is helping people become aware. But it all must begin with repentance.

Israel, having failed to repent, instead, would fall helplessly prostrate at the feet of her captors.

Hosea 7

- 1] When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without.

Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom—that is, Omri made it the capital, and then Ahab and Jezebel built a palace there. God longed to restore Israel to a place of blessing, but His efforts were met with new outbreaks of sin and crimes. Their widespread deceit and robbery epitomized their lack of regard for the covenant (cf. Ex 20:15). They were living a lie...

- 2] And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face.

"...beset them about": totally engulfed them. "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope" (Cf. "6 woes"): Isa 5:18 [Sound familiar?]

They overlooked the fact that God sees and remembers (Ps 14:2-4; 50:16-21).

3] They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.

A godly ruler was to oppose all forms of wickedness within his kingdom (cf. Ps 101), but these leaders delighted in it.

Qualifications of Leadership

It is an abomination for kings to commit wicked acts, For a throne is established on righteousness.

Proverbs 16:12

The abandonment of righteousness weakens the seat of government and the stability and security of the nation.

The king gives stability to the land by justice, But a man who takes bribes overthrows it.

Proverbs 29:4

The issue of bribery is at root the issue of private truthfulness and acting on principle as opposed to being driven by expediency. When integrity is forsaken justice is overthrown.

If a ruler pays attention to falsehood, All his ministers become wicked.

Proverbs 29:12

The minimizing of truthfulness corrupts others so that the entire government becomes corrupt.

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Galatians 5:9; 1 Corinthians 5:6

4] They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker, who ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened.

“...until it be leavened”: This figure of speech is tremendous. The baker had his oven ready but didn’t bring up the heat until the dough was kneaded and ready to bake.

Here God is not talking about spiritual adultery but about gross immorality. They had formerly kept their sin under cover, but now they are like an open oven, hot with passion.

These are not “harmless acts between consenting adults” that our society would make them out to be: they are passions inflamed by sin that eventually destroys the ones affected by them.

Background for Hosea 7:5-7

Between 752 and 732 B.C. four of Israel’s rulers were assassinated (cf. 2 Kgs 15). Not only the murders of Zechariah, Shlhum, Pekahiah, and Pekah, but it may also refer to the disastrous reign of Menahem, who allowed Israel to become a vassal of Assyria (2 Kgs 15:19) and prophetically to Hoshea (who was soon to be imprisoned by Assyria; 2 Kgs 17:4).

5] In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorn.

The “day [of the festival] of our king” probably refers to a special celebration in which the ruler was the center of attention. The king caroused with his princes, who are called scorners probably because they were completely under the influence of wine (cf. Prov 20:1). While they partied with the naive king, they plotted his overthrow.

6] For they have made ready their heart like an oven, while they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire.

The Masoretic text reads, “their baker sleeps” (cf. KJV). (The NIV rendering, “Their passion smolders,” requires a slight emendation of the Hebrew.) It is similar in thought to Hosea 7:4 and carries along the comparison of their hearts to an oven.

One might paraphrase v.6: “When they approach the king, their hearts, like an oven, contain a fire. Just as the fire burns lowly while the baker is inactive, so their scheme remains a secret. But when their time for action comes, the destructive plot is realized, just as a fire in an oven blazes forth when the time for baking arrives.”

7] They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; all their kings are fallen: there is none among them that calleth unto me.

“...all their kings are fallen”: The Northern Kingdom didn’t have a good king in the lot. Every king was as wicked as he could be. Ahab and Jezebel reached the bottom of the list, but some of the others would run them a close second. Many of their kings were assassinated: nine different changes of dynasty in their short history

A significant contrast: Judah had a few good kings—in fact, five kings of Judah led in revivals. God had chosen and promised to bless the line of David; He made no such promise to the kings of the divided kingdom in the north.

- 8] Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned.

“...a cake not turned”: A pancake that is not turned would be cooked on one side only. Ephraim launched a “half-baked” foreign policy (vv. 8-12). Israel had formed alliances with foreign nations (v. 11; 8:9).

- 9] Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.

“...yet he knoweth it not”: These alliances (and tributes) depleted their resources. The nation is compared to an elderly man who has failed to notice the gradual effects of the aging process (loss of physical strength, graying hair). We don’t “grow” old. We wake up one day and discover we are!

This loss was epitomized by the tribute payments that were an excessive drain on its wealth and economy (2 Kgs 15:19-20; 17:3) as well as the costly Syro-Epharaimite War, in which she allied with Syria (Isa 7:2). Like Samson, “He did not know that the Lord had left him” (Judg 16:20).

- 10] And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this.
11] Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.

In her efforts to arrange foreign alliances, Israel could be compared to a dove, which exhibits little sense. Under Menahem (ca. 743 or 738 B.C.) Israel submitted to Assyrian sovereignty (2 Kgs 15:19-20). Pekah (ca. 734 B.C.) joined a coalition against Assyria, which Tiglath-Pileser III violently crushed (2 Kgs 15:29).

[There are encryptions in the text of Isaiah 7 that highlight some background on this. See *Cosmic Codes*, p.48; and our *Expositional Commentary on Isaiah*.]

Hoshea (ca. 732-722 B.C.), after acknowledging Assyrian rulership for a time, stopped tribute payments and sought an alliance with Egypt (2 Kgs 17:3-4a).

This act of rebellion led to the destruction of the Northern Kingdom (2 Kgs 17:4b-6), the inevitable result of a foreign policy which for 20 years had been characterized by vacillating and expedient measures... like a silly dove, flying to and fro.

- 12] When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.

While Israel sought out alliances with all the naivete of a dove (v. 11), the Lord would come like a wise and well-equipped fowler and trap them.

“...chastise”: יָסַר *yasar*, speaks of the loving instruction of a parent for his child (Deut 8:5; Pro 19:18; 29:17; cf. Heb 12:5, 7).

Worst of all, Israel’s policy had no place for the Lord (cf. vv. 7, 10). Consequently, He Himself would intervene in judgment.

- 13] Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me: though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me.

“Woe...”: אָוִי *‘oy*, a cry of despair; A word reserved for the introduction of judgment upon heathen nations (Num 21:29; Isa 3:11; Jer 48:46; cf Mt 11:21; Rev 8:13). Despite the Lord’s longing desire to redeem them, they had spoken lies against Him.

“...redeemed”: פָּדָה *padah*, is used frequently to describe the deliverance from Egypt (cf. Deut 7:8; 9:26; 13:5; 15:15; 24:18; 2 Sam 7:23; Ps 78:42; Micah 6:4). It is term from commercial law that refers to reclaiming or ransoming of an obligated person by means of a payment.

The God of the Exodus is unchanged in His will, but because of Israel’s lies there will be no “exodus” from the Assyrian danger. *However, according to Hosea 13:14, God’s intervention will one day effect a full redemption for the nation.*

- 14] And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.

“...howled”: They howled, יָלַל *yalal*, and cut their bodies as they mourned over the crop failure. Israel’s rejection of the Lord is illustrated here. The nation desired a plentiful crop (grain and new wine) but refused to exhibit wholehearted devotion to God without which agricultural prosperity was impossible.

“...they assemble themselves”: The reading in the NIV margin (“They slash themselves,” following the LXX and some Heb. mss.) seems better than “They assemble themselves.”

Cutting oneself was a sign of mourning (cf. Jer 16:6; 41:5; 47:5) forbidden by the Law because of its pagan associations (Deut 14:1). The prophets of Baal cut themselves in an effort to arouse Baal, the storm god, to action (cf. 1 Kgs 18:28).

- 15] Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me.

Israel's rebellion also revealed her ingratitude. The Lord had bound (disciplined, trained) and strengthened their arms; Elsewhere the expression "strengthen the arms" can refer to divine bestowal of military might (Ezek 30:24-25). Israel's past military successes (including those of Jeroboam II) are in view (cf. 2 Kgs 14:25-28).

Despite experiencing divine aid in battle, Israel treated God like an enemy. The phrase "imagine mischief against Me" suggests intense hostility and ill will. Similar language is used to describe Joseph's brothers' schemes to destroy him (Gen 50:20).

- 16] They return, but not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

"...a deceitful bow": Israel was like a faulty bow. Such a weapon is unreliable because it fails to respond properly to the archer. In the same way Israel's hostile response to God's grace demonstrated her unreliable, disloyal character (cf. Ps 78:57).

The nation's leaders, who had rejected their true source of strength, cf. Hosea 7:15 would be destroyed in battle because of their pride.

"...the rage of their tongue" refers to a formal denunciation or curse. Israel's rejection of divine aid (cf. v. 13) in favor of foreign alliances is compared to a verbal reproach against God. Ironically Israel would become an object of derision among the Egyptians, whose aid they had foolishly sought (cf. v. 11).

These final broken lines fall like tears from one with a broken heart...

Next Session

Study Hosea Chapters 8 & 9.

The Book of Hosea Session 5 Chapters 8 & 9

The Indictment Fully Stated: Reaping the Whirlwind

God's justice had to be vindicated (Deut 28:15-68). Israel would now reap the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7).

- 1] Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.

A note of alarm: a trumpet is blown to signal an impending battle (cf. 5:8). The enemy (the Assyrians) was ready to swoop down on Israel like a powerful eagle (cf. the covenant curse of Deut 28:49). Judgment begins at the House of the Lord (1 Pet 4:17).

Historically, this was fulfilled in the invasion of Tiglath-Pileser III (734-733 B.C.) and the conquest of Shalmaneser in 722 B.C. (2 Kgs 15:29; 17:1-6).

- 2] Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee.

A last ditch pretense. That's a pretense prevalent today: people *claim* to know God—but they don't. They forget that God is to be *obeyed* and they therefore must live their lives differently: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Lk 6:46). [This is then followed by the parable of the man who built his house on sand and suffered the loss of everything...]

- 3] Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him.

Now follows a list of rejections of God: five grounds for God's judgment:

1) The Breaking of God's Covenant

Israel made a pretense of devotion to the Lord, addressing Him as her own God and claiming to acknowledge His authority over her. Yet, this profession, however, was mere lip service (cf. Hos 4:1, 6; 5:4).

Her sinful actions spoke louder than her words. In reality, she had rejected (cast off) what was good—the Lord's moral and ethical requirements (cf. Amos 5:14-15; Micah 6:8).

“...the enemy”: Consequently an enemy would soon pursue her. This sudden judgment will fulfill another covenant curse (cf. Deut 28:45).

- 4] They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.

2) The Choice of Ungodly Kings

“...but not by me”: They had appointed kings and other leaders without consulting the Lord. Jeroboam led a rebellion, and the line of kings which he set up did not include men who turned to the living God.

This alludes to the series of palace revolts that plagued the Northern Kingdom after Jeroboam II’s reign (cf. Hos 7:5-7). These kings never attempted in any way to bring the people into the worship of God. Instead, they all went into idolatry.

[America—also after 200 years of decline—a representative democracy, of/by/for the people; Where’s the outrage? Do you hold your elected representatives accountable to reflect your views? You have no right to bemoan the loss of what you have declined to defend.]

- 5] Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?

3) Idolatry

Bad leaders lead to bad religion and vice versa.

“Thy calf...”: Israel had also made idols for themselves in direct violation of the 2nd commandment (cf. Ex 20:4). The calf-idols were set up in Dan and at Bethel; expressly forbidden by God’s law (Ex 20:3-6; 34:17; Lev 19:4, et al; cf. 1 Kgs 12:28-31; Hos 10:5). *So do we.*

“...O Samaria”: Samaria had become the capital of Israel under Omri, the father of Ahab. Ahab married Jezebel whose father was a priest in Sidon among the Phoenicians, worshipers of Baal. Jezebel had transported to Israel several hundred prophets of Baal, and many Israelites became worshipers of Baal (cf. Hos 7:1; 10:7).

“...cast thee off”: The words “cast off” follow the Septuagint. However, the Hebrew is literally, “He has rejected your calf, O Samaria” (NASB). [This third person reference to God within a divine speech is unusual, but is attested elsewhere (cf. 1:7, “the LORD”; 2:22, “the LORD”; 4:6, “your God”; 4:10, “the LORD”; 4:12, “their God”; 8:13, “the LORD” and “He”).]

“Cast off,” *zanach*, makes a striking wordplay with the same word in v.3. Israel had cast off what is good and turned to idols; the Lord responded appropriately by casting them off. As Moses and Joshua had warned, the Lord’s anger burned against the idolaters. In despair the Lord asked, How long will they be committed to impurity? (Deut 11:17; Josh 23:16).

- 6] For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.

“...is not God”: How can the product of mere human craftsmanship be considered a god? (Cf. Isa 40:18-20; 44:9-20.) The words, “it is not God,” were a refutation of Jeroboam’s declaration, “Here are your gods, O Israel” (1 Kgs 12:28; cf. Ex 32:4). The destruction of this image would demonstrate the futility of idolatry.

Declaring it doesn’t make it so. We also follow manufactured “political correctness” rather than truth—in our science as well as our corridors of power... In our schools as well as our courts...

- 7] For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

“...reap the whirlwind”: After two centuries of rejection, two millennia of “reaping the whirlwind”—and, indeed, so are we! (Prov 11:29).

“...shall yield no meal...”: The agricultural metaphor continues. Israel’s crop would be worthless, containing only stalks without grain.

“...strangers shall swallow it up”: Even if she would produce grain, foreigners would take it away and the nation would not benefit from her labor. [Both our domestic and foreign policies will also be our undoing...] *Take a look at ourselves. Our administration is a mirror of our society, of our values...*

- 8] Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.

4) Alliances with the Ungodly Nations

Already Israel had been swallowed up by her foreign intrigues (cf. Hos 7:8-12), which was swiftly robbing the nation of its strength and identity as the Lord’s people, she finally loses the reason for her existence.

The words “a vessel wherein is no pleasure” are literally, “a pot in which no one delights” (cf. Jer 22:28; 48:38). [Most Americans have no idea of how much of the world hates us...]

Where is God’s pleasure in America? In our abortion clinics? In our schools? In our lives? *We are the primary exporters of all that He abhors.*

9] For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers.

“...a wild ass”: Those are *His* words, not mine! Said of Ishmael (cf. Gen 16:12).

“...hired lovers”: With profit as the only motive...

10] Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes.

Despite their desperate attempts to preserve themselves, God’s judgment was certain. His instrument of judgment would be “a king of princes” (i.e., of Assyria; cf. Hos 10:6) from whom, ironically, they had sought aid.

11] Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.

5) False Altars

“...altars to sin”: Religion has been the most damning thing this world has ever experienced. It all started with the coats of skins of Gen 3:21. Look at the bondage in India; the dragons of China; and the bloody history of Europe...

Empty Ritualism (vv.11-13)

The people had built many altars for sin offerings, but these altars had become altars for sinning, as the religious acts conducted there were hypocritical.

Observances of any kind are an offense to God when not combined with a wholehearted devotion to His commandments (cf. 6:6; Isa 1:11). So the Lord would not accept the sacrifices she offered Him. Instead He would punish her for her sins by sending her into exile.

The “Lite” Church

- 24% Fewer Commitments;
- Home of the 7.5% tithe;
- 15-minute Sermons;
- 45-minute Worship Services;
- We have only 8 commandments: your choice;
- We have just 3 spiritual laws.
- Everything you’ve wanted in a church...and less!

—*New Yorker* cartoon

12] I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.

They—and our nation as well—were ignorant of the Word of God; it is counted as “a strange thing.” [Hence, our mission statement: “to create, develop, and distribute educational materials for those who take the Bible seriously as the inerrant Word of God.”]

13] They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt.

“...return to Egypt”: When the Babylonians subsequently conquered Assyria, many from the Northern Kingdom joined the captives from Judah. We know from the Book of Jeremiah that many of the people went to Egypt. That may be what is alluded to here; alternatively, Egypt is used as an idiom of bondage...

Egypt

Egypt stands here as a symbol for the place of future exile and bondage (cf. Hos 9:3; 11:5; Deut 28:68). This highlights the appropriateness of God’s judgment: in the deliverance from Egyptian bondage Israel had experienced God’s grace; having spurned that grace, she would return to slavery.

14] For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.

“...hath forgotten his Maker”: This tells the tale: “Israel hath forgotten his Maker.”

“Forget,” *שָׁכַח* *shakach*, to forget, ignore, wither; to cease to care; better: neglect.

“...it shall devour the palaces thereof”: But the Lord was about to destroy (by fire) these sources of false security, fulfilling a covenant curse (cf. Deut 28:52). God’s judgment came through the Assyrians: Sennacherib “attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them” (2 Kgs 18:13).

It is our inescapable knowledge of God coupled with our unreasonable rejection of that knowledge that makes us guilty before Him (Rom 1:18-20). A final illustration of the nation’s unfaithfulness was her attempts at self-sufficiency. (Judah is also specifically included in the indictment at this point.)

And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 39:6

“...and among them”: In addition to Magog and Israel, a “3rd party” is involved!

“...dwell carelessly”: “carelessly” = *betach*: false confidence.

“...in the isles”: “Isles” is the Hebrew word *‘iy*. This word appears 36 times in the Scripture: “isle(s)” 30x; “islands” 5x; “country” once. It seems to suggest a coast, island, or shore; some suggest, even a remote continent?

America is great because America is good. If America ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.

—Alexis de Tocqueville: *Democracy in America*, 1815

Hosea 9

The Penalty for Ingratitude: They have forsaken God; God will forsake them.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| 1) Death of joy | vv. 1, 2 |
| 2) Exile from their land | vv. 3 - 6 |
| 3) Loss of spiritual discernment | vv. 7 - 9 |
| 4) Declining birth rate | vv. 10 -16 |
| 5) Cast out | v. 17 |

In this chapter:

- 1) God threatens to deprive this degenerate seed of Israel of all their worldly enjoyments, because by sin they had forfeited their title to them; so that they should have no comfort either in receiving them themselves or in offering them to God (vv. 1-5);

- 2) He dooms them to utter ruin, for their own sins and the sins of their prophets (vv. 6-8);
- 3) He upbraids them with the wickedness of their fathers before them, whose steps they trod (vv. 9-10);
- 4) He threatens them with the destruction of their children and the rooting out of their posterity (vv. 11–17).

- 1] Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor.

At every threshing floor Israel had erroneously attributed the prosperity of her harvests to Baal (cf. Hos 2:5). She had become an adulteress, offering worship to Baal and receiving from Baal the wages of a prostitute.

Those “wages” were wheat (at the threshing floor), vines and figs (Hos 2:12), and food, water, wool, linen, oil, and drink (Hos 2:5). That is, Israel believed that by prostituting herself in worship of Baal that Baal in turn blessed her crops and gave her other necessities of life. [Don’t we ascribe our economic success to Wall Street, et al.??]

- 2] The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her.

The plentiful harvests were about to end (cf. Hos 2:9-12). In fulfillment of several of the covenant curses (cf. Deut 28:30, 38-42, 51), the Lord would take away her grain and wine (cf. Hos 2:9; 7:14). Blessings abused are blessings withdrawn (Deut 30:17-18). Our nation today has also been deceived by prosperity.

- 3] They shall not dwell in the LORD’S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.

Moses had commanded them never to return to Egypt, which represents bondage (Ex 20:2). This judgment would be accomplished ultimately through invasion and exile. The land belonged to the Lord (cf. Ex 15:17; Lev 25:23), who was responsible for its fertility (cf. Deut 11:10-12).

When the people attributed the produce of the land to Baal they forfeited the blessing of living on it in peace and prosperity (Deut 11:8-21). Egypt is again mentioned as a symbol of the place of exile (cf. Hos 7:16; 8:13; 11:5). Assyria would be the actual location (2 Kgs 17:6). Some would go to Egypt also (Deut 28:68).

“...unclean things”: In an unclean land, Israel would be (cf. Amos 7:17) forced to eat ceremonially unclean food (cf. Ezek 4:13) rather than the

fruits of God's blessing. The punishment fit the crime: Israel had become defiled by her sin; how appropriate then that she eat defiled food in a defiled land (cf. Hos 5:3; 6:10).

Israel had proved herself unworthy of the freedom she had enjoyed in the land. [*How about us?*]

- 4] They shall not offer wine offerings to the LORD, neither shall they be pleasing unto him: their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the LORD.

Wine offerings to cease (Ex 29:38-41); wine also used with burnt offerings (Num 28:3-9) and peace offerings also (Num 15:8-10).

Sacrifices offered in a foreign land would not be acceptable to the Lord. They would have the same effect on a worshiper as bread eaten by mourners, who made everything they touched ceremonially unclean because they had contacted a dead body (cf. Num 19:14-15, 22). Such bread was not fit for use in worship.

In exile, opportunity for legitimate worship to the Lord would end. Again the punishment fitted the crime: it was highly appropriate since Israel's Levitical worship had been corrupted by hypocrisy (cf. Hos 6:6; 8:11-13). A nation that refused to conduct its formal worship in the proper spirit would be denied its privilege of worship. [*Our own nation's disdain for its heritage will cause it to lose the freedoms it has been provided...*]

- 5] What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the LORD?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the exiles' plight since Israel would be unable to celebrate the most important festival (both "day" expressions are both singular in Hebrew) on the religious calendar. Some suggest that the Feast of Tabernacles is specifically in view (cf. Lev 23:39).

- 6] For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles.

Destruction would sweep over the land (cf. Hos 7:13; 10:14). Those who happened to escape the sword of the invading army would face exile.

"...Egypt...Memphis": Same significance as in preceding verses. Memphis, about 20 mi S of modern Cairo, their capital at the time, was also

famous as a burial place. Here it may symbolize the ultimate destination of the exiles—a foreign graveyard. Few would ever return to their homeland (cf. Jer 44:1-14).

Meanwhile back in Israel the exiles' possessions (treasures of silver) and homes (tents) would lie in ruins and would be overgrown by briars and thorns (cf. Hos 10:8).

- 7] The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.

The people's hostility toward the true prophets of God was one of several reasons for judgment (vv. 7-9). [Idiot = the guy who is driving too slowly in front of you; Maniac = the guy who is passing you.]

This is similar to what was encountered by Amos: when he came preaching against Israel, he was met at Bethel by Amaziah, the official head of the Northern Kingdom's religious establishment, who regarded his words as treachery, and who arranged his dismissal (Amos 7:10-13).

Jeremiah got the same treatment (Jer 29:26). Even the Lord Himself was similarly accused of being demon-possessed by those who disagreed with His teaching (Jn 7:20).

"Hostility" (also used in Hos 9:8) refers to intense animosity, such as Esau felt toward Jacob after Esau had been cheated of the paternal blessing (Gen 27:41, "held a grudge").

The ungodly disregard God: they disobey Him when His will is made known to them; they despise Him when He chastens and judges them.

- 8] The watchman of Ephraim was with my God: but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God.

"The watchman of Ephraim": A watchman was responsible for warning a city of an approaching enemy (cf. Ezek 33:6). In the same way God's prophets were to warn the people of coming judgment on sin (cf. Jer 6:17; Ezek 3:17; 33:7-9).

"...the house of his God" refers to the land of Israel (Hos 8:1; 9:15). The irony of the situation is that Israel tried to ensnare the prophets God had placed as watchmen over the nation.

- 9] They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.

“...the days of Gibeah”: (cf. Hos 10:9; Judges 19-21).

Gibeah

Gibeah was a town occupied by the tribe of Benjamin and it had become a symbol from the terrible deeds done there. During the days of the Judges, a Levite, traveling and unable to reach home sought shelter for himself and his concubine. A band of depraved youth gathered outside his host’s house and desired homosexual relations with his guest. [Similar to the situation with the angelic visitors in Sodom (Gen 19)].

The host delivered the concubine instead. She was used all night and left on the doorstep dead. The Levite took her body home, cut it into twelve pieces, and sent the parts to each of the tribes of Israel. The shock succeeded: they rallied and attacked the people of Benjamin and almost wiped them out (all but 600!). Cf. Judg 19-21.

The atrocities—and the near wipe out of the Tribe of Benjamin—were indicative of the low point in the morality of the people of the times. On that occasion it was said, “Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt” (Judg 19:30). *But Hosea announces that that benchmark of history was now rivaled by Israel’s blatant sins against the Lord.*

10] I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.

“...that shame”: Lit., that shameful idol.

Baal Peor Idolatry

This section begins with a reference to Israel’s origins, when the Lord found extreme delight in the nation (cf. Hos 2:15).

“...grapes in the desert”: This would be an unexpected source of surprise and delight. The delicious early fruit on the fig tree was irresistible (cf. Song 2:13; Isa 28:4; Jer 24:2; Micah 7:1). However, the Lord’s attitude toward His people soon changed: when they arrived at Peor they engaged in sexual immorality with Moabite and Midianite women as part of the fertility rites associated with the worship of Baal Peor (cf. Num 25). This deity (which God called that shameful idol), may have been a local manifestation of the Canaanite fertility god Baal.

This event in Moses’ day was mentioned here because it set the pattern for Israel’s subsequent history, characterized by unfaithfulness.

In Hosea’s day Israel had also defiled herself by making Baal her lover and, like the generation at Peor, they too had engaged in fertility rites (cf. Hos 4:13-14). This movement from joy to despair is also found in the Song of Moses (Deut 32). (Compare this delight and subsequent disappointment with events in Mark 11:13-21! Cf. Lk 13:6-9.)

The Insanity of Paganism

It is staggering to attempt to understand the insanity of Paganism. Who can tally the blood which has been spilled upon the altars of the gods who are not, and the demons who are! When the knowledge of the true and Living God is refused, false gods inevitably fill the vacuum (Rom 1:22, 23). *And we become like the gods we worship!* (Ps 115:8, 135:15-18).

- Are idols of stone cold, unresponsive, impersonal? *If you worship them, you, too, will become cold, unresponsive, impersonal.*
- Is the world materialistic, harsh and unforgiving? *If you worship the world you, too, will become materialistic, harsh, and unforgiving.*
- And if you worship Christ, you will become like Him! *...Ah! Devoutly to be wished!*

Covetousness and greed—also called idolatry—have become the gods of America, too (Col 3:5).

11] As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.

Conception, birth, children to be taken away. Hosea, as no other writer of ancient times, traces the results of national immorality to a declining population. Ephraim’s glory, here associated with numerous offspring, would depart as swiftly as a bird.

The name “Ephraim” is used in (vv. 11, 13, 16) because it was associated with fertility and fruitfulness Irony: “Ephraim” means “fruitfulness” (cf. Gen 41:52; 48:19).

As punishment for Israel’s sin of involvement in the Baal fertility rites (v. 10), the Lord would bring the covenant curses of infertility (vv. 11, 14), death (vv. 12-13, 16), and exile (vv. 15, 17) on the nation.

- 12] Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!

Appropriately many of those who had tried to secure fertility through Baal worship would become sterile and barren (cf. Hos 4:10 and, in contrast, Deut 7:14).

- 13] Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer.

God had not yet judged Tyre, and it was at that time a great commercial center. Its prosperity was like a fever, and it had caught on in the northern kingdom which also became a commercial center. There was a false prosperity in the land, and the people were deceived by it (cf. Ezek 28).

(The RSV—following the LXX—translates Hosea 9:13a, “Ephraim’s sons, as I have seen, are destined for a prey.” This seems to provide better parallelism with verse 13b.)

- 14] Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.

Hosea’s prayer is broken off: despite his earnestness, he does not know what to ask... Childlessness might limit the miseries of the day of judgment. Again, many would miscarry or watch their children die in the forthcoming invasion (vv.12-13; cf. v. 16b). The women’s breasts would be dry for they would have no children to nurse. [In Exodus, Moses also breaks off in mid-sentence Ex 32:31, 32.]

- 15] All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers.

“...Gilgal”: Gilgal stood for both the historic rebellion against God in the establishment of a human monarchy (1 Sam 11:14-15; cf. 8:7; Hos 3:4; 7:3-7; 8:4; 10:3, 7, 15) and the current spiritual rebellion in the shrine to Baal (Hos 4:15; Amos 4:4; 5:5; cf. Hos 12:4).

“...I will drive them out of mine house”: Drive, גרש *garash*, as Adam and Eve (Gen 3:24); Cain (Gen 4:14); and, Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21:10). Also, driving the Canaanites out of the land (Ex 6:1; 10:11; 23:28-32; 33:2; Num 22:6, 11; Josh 24:12, 18; Judg 2:3; 6:9; 1 Sam 26:19; 1 Chr 17:21; Ezek 31:11; Zeph 2:4). Now the Israelites would be driven out.

- 16] Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.

Withering root = no hope for the future; ironically, because of widespread sterility and infant mortality (vv. 11-14). Ephraim, once a symbol of fruitfulness, would be compared to a withered plant incapable of bearing fruit.

- 17] My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

“...wanderers”: Because of her disobedience Israel would be rejected by God (cf. Hos 4:6). In exile, Israel’s people would become wanderers among the nations.

“Wanderers” translates the same Hebrew word, נָדָד *nadad*, as “strayed” in Hos 7:13. Again the punishment fit the crime. Those who willfully strayed from the path of covenant loyalty were condemned to wander aimlessly among those outside the covenant (foreign nations).

As in Hosea 9:15, the language in v.17 may also allude to the Genesis account. The same verb, נָדָד *nadad*, is used with respect to Cain (Gen 4:12).

Next Session

Study Hosea Chapters 10 & 11.

The Book of Hosea Session 6 Chapters 10 & 11

A Review of the Charges

- 1) Gross corruptions in the worship of God and Israel is threatened with the destruction of their images and altars (vv. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8);
- 2) Corruptions in the administration of the civil government and they are threatened with the ruin of that (vv. 3, 4, 7);
- 3) Imitating the sins of their fathers, and with security in their own sins, and they are threatened with smarting humbling judgments (vv. 9–11);
- 4) They are then earnestly invited to repent and reform, and are threatened with ruin if they did not (vv. 12–15).

- 1] Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.

“...an empty vine”: Again, a botanical metaphor is used to refer to Israel’s earlier history: the Lord planted Israel like a vine in the land of Canaan and blessed her with fruit (i.e., prosperity). Cf. Hos 9:10; Isa 5:1-7; Jer 2:21; Ezek 15, 19:10-11; Ps 80:8-10. Yet, always as a symbol of Israel’s *degeneration* (Rev 14:14-18); judgment yet to come.

So here, too, as the nation prospered she erroneously attributed her success to false gods rather than the Lord (cf. Hos 2:8; Deut 8:8-20).

“...the altars...”: The altars mentioned here probably refer to this hypocritical formalism (cf. Hos 6:6; 8:11-13), while goodly images allude to idolatry (cf. Hos 3:4; 10:2). [*Does that have any parallel in our own country, in our own times?*]

- 2] Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.

“Their heart is divided...”: Root trouble = double-mindedness (James 1:8). Elijah’s challenge: halting between two opinions (1 Kgs 18:21). Israel’s unfaithfulness established her guilt (cf. Hos 12:14, 13:12, 16) and necessitated her punishment.

“...divided”: חָלָאֵק *chalaq*, literally means “is slippery, smooth”; we would say “slick.” Often the term is used of deceitful, unreliable speech (cf. Ps 5:9; 12:2; 55:21). With their heart as the subject, *chalaq* refers to the *hypocrisy* which characterized her approach to the Lord.

Appropriately the Lord would destroy the sites of her hypocritical and false worship; cf. sacred stones (Hos 3:4; 10:1).

- 3] For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us?

(They never had one good king in the northern kingdom.) With the approaching invasion, the nation’s political structure would be shattered and her king removed (cf. vv. 7, 15).

In the aftermath of the calamity the people would recognize their own unfaithfulness as the basis for judgment. We, too, put “In God We Trust” on our coins, but resort to covenants with treacherous nations in the name of expediency.

- 4] They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.

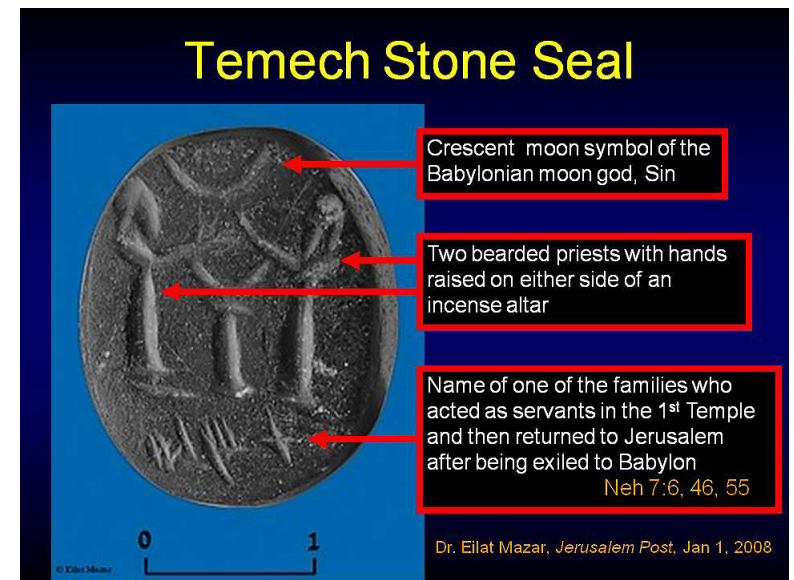
Israel swore falsely in making covenants: broke faith with Shalmaneser to make agreement with Egypt (2 Kgs 17:4; Amos 5:7; 6:12). Their attitude toward fellow Israelites (including frequently taking each other to court) simply reflected their lack of loyalty to God.

They had abandoned any sanctity of their commitments. *Does this sound like America? ...in our marriages? ...in our business practices?* Some details of the approaching judgment and exile are described in verses 5-8.

- 5] The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Beth-Aven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.

“...the calves of Beth-Aven”: The calf-idol located in Beth Aven (i.e., Bethel; cf. 4:15; 8:5) would be carried away by the victorious Assyrian army, causing great consternation among its worshipers.

“...priests”: כַּמָּר *kamar*, a rare term, implies idolatrous priests; used only of priests of Baal (2 Kgs 23:5; Zeph 1:4).



Dr. Eilat Mazar, *Jerusalem Post*, Jan 1, 2008

- 6] It shall be also carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

King Jareb, “great king,” refers to Assyria’s king (cf. Hosea 8:10). The reference to the Assyrian army carrying off the idols of defeated foes is abundantly illustrated in neo-Assyrian literature and art.

“...ashamed”: The text is better translated, “Israel will be shamed of its own counsel” (cf. KJV, NASB, NIV marg); the reference being to the nation’s unwise political policy of courting Assyria’s favor (cf. Hos 5:13; 7:8-9, 11; 8:9-10).

- 7] As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water.

Israel’s king, as well as her calf-idol, would be removed in the coming invasion (cf. vv. 3, 15). The nation would be floated away like foam or a twig floating on the waters, swept away by the current and brought to ruin.

- 8] The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.

“...the thorn and the thistle”: The sites of idolatrous worship would be destroyed as well, the ruins becoming overgrown with thorns and thistles (cf. Hos 9:6).

“The high places”: The reference to the destruction of the high places is ironic; when Israel entered the land the Lord commanded her to destroy these worship centers (cf. Lev 26:30-31 Num 33:52; Deut 12:2-3).

Because of Israel’s dismal failure in carrying out this charge, the Lord chose to use a foreign army to accomplish His purpose.

“...say to the mountains, Cover us’ and to the hills, Fall on us”: In utter desperation the people would beg the mountains to fall on them (Josh 10:16). Jesus made this same prediction (Lk 23:30). A similar plea will be made by unbelievers in the Tribulation in response to the terror of God’s wrath in the seal judgments (Rev 6:16).

- 9] O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them.

Again a reference to the shameful incident at Gibeah (cf. Hos 9:9). Since that time Israel had persisted in sin. The question is better translated

with the future tense: Will not war overtake the evildoers in Gibeah? (cf. NASB; Hos 5:8). How appropriate that judgment should “overtake” the city that had served as a pattern for Israel’s sinful history!

- 10] It is in my desire that I should chastise them; and the people shall be gathered against them, when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows.

“...chastise”: At the time of the Lord’s choosing He would punish Israel by gathering the nations against her.

The translation and meaning of the final line are uncertain. Probably a better translation is, “when they are harnessed to their double sin.” The imagery is that of plowing (v. 11) and Israel is pictured as yoked to her sin like a heifer (cf. Isa 5:18). (Following their two calves?)

- 11] And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods.

The comparison of Israel to a cow is continued (cf v.10). Israel (Ephraim = Northern Kingdom) was like a trained heifer that loves to thresh.

Threshing Heifer

A heifer would like to thresh because threshing was a comparatively light task, made pleasant by the fact that the creature was unmuzzled and free to eat as it pulled the threshing sledge over the gathered corn (Deut 25:4). However, Israel had abandoned this relatively easy task and had insisted on being yoked, as it were, to sin (cf. Hos 10:10b). So the Lord would place a different yoke on Israel’s neck and force her to engage in the extremely arduous work of plowing.

Even Judah was included in this judgment. “Jacob” referred to the Northern Kingdom (cf. Hos 12:2). The nation’s threshing corresponded to the service the Lord required within the covenant relationship; the plowing referred to the hardship that would accompany the exile.

The idiom of “threshing” is frequently used of the Tribulation (Ruth 3:13; Rev 3:10; Jer 51:33; cf. Ruth at Boaz’s feet during the threshing-floor scene in Ruth 3).

- 12] Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

A brief call to covenant loyalty is included here. Even in the midst of a message of condemnation and judgment, God held out the possibility of repentance and blessing (cf. Isa 1:18-20).

“...mercy”: Using agricultural imagery, He urged Israel to seek the Lord by cultivating righteousness (or justice) and reaping His unfailing love (חֶסֶד *chessed*, mercy, loyalty).

“...rain righteousness”: These words compare God’s future gift of righteousness (or just treatment in the form of deliverance; cf. Hos 2:19) to abundant rain (cf. Hos 6:3).

- 13] Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.

What a man soweth, so shall he reap (Gal 6:7, 8; cf. Ps 22:8; 2 Cor 9:6). Curse on the man that trusts in man (Jer 17:5). Rather than relying on the power of God, the nation had depended on her own military might. They do that today. *And so do we.*

The contrast between God’s desires and Israel’s response heightens her guilt. So the call to repentance (v. 12) had a two-fold function: it testified to the Lord’s grace and contributed to the development of the prophet’s accusation.

If you think you can escape the results of sin, you are making God out a liar.

Godless people cannot elect a righteous leader. If the people are liars, they will get a liar as a leader. If they are adulterers, they will get an adulterer. If they are thieves, that’s the kind of leader they will have.

J. Vernon McGee

- 14] Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-Arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.

“...Beth Arbel”: “House of the ambush of God.” In response to Israel’s pride, the Lord said He would destroy a source of her false confidence (fortresses); cf. Hos 8:14.

Shalman?

The severity of the judgment is emphasized by a comparison with a historical incident that was apparently well known to Hosea’s contem-

poraries. The most popular identifications of Shalman have been:

- Shalmaneser III (an Assyrian ruler who campaigned against the West in the ninth century B.C.),
- Shalmaneser V (the Assyrian ruler from 727 to 722 B.C.; but his invasion of Israel postdates Hosea’s prophecy), and
- Salamanu (a Moabite king mentioned in a tribute list of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III and was a contemporary of Hosea).

Beth Arbel

Beth Arbel has been identified by some (e.g., Eusebius) with modern Irbid (Arbela) in the northern Transjordan region about 18 miles SE of the Sea of Galilee and by others with modern Arbel two miles W of the Sea of Galilee (Arbela in the apocryphal 1 Maccabees 9:2). At any rate this particular battle was vividly remembered for its atrocities, especially the wholesale slaughter of women and children (cf. Ps 137:8,9).

Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, “Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.” O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. “Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.”

Psalm 137:8,9

“Rase it”: עָרָה *‘arah* make bare.

- 15] So shall Bethel do unto you because of your great wickedness: in a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.

Bethel, which here represents the nation as a whole, would experience a similar fate because of her great sin (cf. Hos 4:15; Amos 7:10-17). The Assyrians came, and overnight Israel was being transported to Assyria and a life of slavery (cf. Hos 10:3, 7; 2 Kgs 17:4-6).

After Hoshea, the Northern Kingdom would never know another king apart from the Davidic line; the royal office was completely abolished in the Northern Kingdom with the Assyrian captivity.

The True Vine

This chapter opened with an allusion to a vine. The *Menorah*, the seven-branched lampstand, is the symbol of Israel. We must have the “true vine”: Jesus Christ (Jn 15:4-6).

Organization of Hosea

- The first ten chapters: the disobedience of God’s people and their inevitable judgment as a consequence.
- The last four chapters: The Love of God.

General Background

When Moses went to Pharaoh to “Let my people go,” Pharaoh responded, “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?” If Pharaoh could have read the Book of Hosea, he would have known that the Lord was:

...a <i>Sovereign</i> God	Chapters 1-3
...a <i>Holy</i> God	Chapters 4-7
...a <i>Just</i> God	Chapters 8-10
...a <i>Loving</i> God	Chapters 11-14

Pharaoh never had the benefit of the depth of knowledge that Israel was given through the mouth and pen of the prophet Hosea...and yet the people were as stony-hearted toward God as Pharaoh was those many centuries before.

Chapters 11 - 14

The climax of God’s plan for the final redemption of His chosen people. Everything that befell Israel was intended to instruct her and bring her back to God. Hosea now delves into the past, present and future history of redemption for His people. *The Lord’s self-disclosure in these following illustrations is so intense that many rank this chapter as one of the greatest in the Bible.*

Hosea 11: The Troubled Heart of God

But first, a lesson in Hermeneutics...

A Lesson in Hermeneutics

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When

he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Matthew 2:13-15

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

Hosea 11:1

Hosea 11:1 was written 700 years before Matthew!

Pattern is Prophetic

Exodus 4:22: Israel nationally spoken of as God’s son (Jer 31:9; Rom 9:4-5). *All through Isaiah, the thought shifts between the nation and the Messiah:*

- Isaiah 41:8: Abraham as the friend of God, and Israel spoken of as if the nation was an individual, here Israel my servant.
- Isaiah 42:1-4: ...“spirit upon him,” subject changed, no longer referring to nation, but now the Messiah.
- Isaiah 52:13 - through 53: the Jews interpret this chapter nationally, not individually.

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Matthew 2:16-18

Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

Jeremiah 31:15

In Genesis 35:18—Death of Rachel: As she died in labor, she called his name Ben-o-ni, “son of my sorrow, or travail.” Jacob renamed to Benjamin, “Son of my right hand.” Isaiah 53 notes “a man of sorrow.” Psalm 2, the “Son of my right hand.”

1] When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

“...called my son out of Egypt”: Love was the basis of election and subsequent redemption from Egypt.

“Called” קָרָא *qara*, to summon a relation; speaks of the adoption, as the Lord has adopted as His own son and also foretells the distant future when His act of love would call His own Son out of Egypt (cf. Mt 2:15).

Just as Israel grew into a nation in Egypt where it was out of reach of the Canaanitish ways, so was the child Jesus hidden in Egypt from the hostility of Herod.

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch,
Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes, Vol 10.

The Fatherhood of God

This passage must have been particularly stirring to Hosea and his listeners as the idea of God being a father was not common in that day. There are some who hold the view that this idea of the Fatherhood of God was introduced in the New Testament. Jesus always called God “my Father” (e.g., Jn 20:17).

The only time Jesus *didn't* call Him Father was when He was on the cross—in our shoes—and cried out, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Ps 22:1ff). In the Old Testament, God is only called the father of Israel as a whole, never of individuals 14X: Ex 4:22; Ps 103:13; Isa 64:8; Jer 3:19,20; et al.

Hebrew Language

The Hebrew alphabet consists not only of *phonemes*, but of *sememes*, units of meaning. *Aleph*, א, the first letter, originally written like an ox's head, means strength, or leader (being first). *Bet*, ב, originally written like a tent or teepee, means house. (*Beth-Lehem*, house of bread; *Beth-El*, house of God, etc.) An *Aleph* + *Bet* = “the leader of the house”; i.e., *Father*. Insert a *Heh*, ה, or breath, and you get the essence of the father, *Ahab*, the word for love, which is indeed, the heart or essence of the Father: John 3:16.

2] As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.

Like the prodigal son. In response to the love of God as seen in the redemption from Egypt, Israel turned a deaf ear to God's prophets,

choosing Baal and other idols instead (v.2, v.7; 2 Kgs 17:13; Jer 7:25; 25:4; Zech 1:4; et al). Israel quickly forgot the lessons of the wilderness when she dwelt in Canaan. *How often do we rely upon God in our distress, and then neglect Him when blesses us?*

3] I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.

He didn't just adopt them; He cared for them. How tenderly and compassionately the Lord taught and cared for His son, Israel. These words seem to parallel Moses' description of Israel's being carried through the wilderness as a father carries his son (Deut 1:31-32; 32:10-11).

There is little doubt that Hosea's own suffering over the lot of Gomer and their children contributed to the unparalleled insight Hosea gives us into the heart of YHWH. Yet the entire text of Hosea says nothing about the prophet's inner life—it is not about Hosea; it is about God. It is not about Gomer's disloyalty but Israel's. *And a warning about ours.*

4] I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

Adjusting the yoke away from the jaws when feeding...The fatherly care exhibited in the past could not be counted in the present due to their obstinate disobedience

5] He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return.

The rejection of their divine King would lead to an even more severe bondage.

6] And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels.

A whirling sword represents this exchange of kings.

“...branches”: כַּדָּיִם *badim*, cross-beams; gate bars; their security will fail...

7] And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.

“...bent”: תָּלָא *tala*, addicted to; impaled; on the hook of sin. Verses 8-11 will sum up the central message of the entire book: God's unmerited love toward His covenant people.

- 8] How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

“...Admah? Zeboim”: A nation as deserving of annihilation as were Admah and Zeboim—among the five cities of the vale of Siddim (Gen 10:19), which were consumed along with Sodom and Gomorrah as a display of God’s righteous anger (Gen 14:2; 19:24-29; Deut 29:23).

It is not just Israel’s sin that is the problem: it is the grim *lack of repentance*. Yet, “How can I give thee up?” The heart of a loving Father who cannot surrender the son He has loved and nurtured...

The divine complaint expressed in self-directed questions lays bare the intensity of the covenant love in terms *unsurpassed in the OT*. His covenant love will transcend the legal regulation of the law, which would have dictated that He have His rebellious son stoned to death (Deut 21:18-21; cf. Rev. 16:21!).

- 9] I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.

“...I am God, and not man”: Key issue: God is God and not man. He is also not a distant “clock maker,” who set the universe in motion and then retreated to detachment, He is the same God who would, in His redeeming love, send His only Son to stand in the place of sinners (Rom 6:23).

- 10] They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.

With the penalty of sin satisfied in the death of Christ, the Lord will create in His people a new heart (Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:25-27). With a heart implanted, Israel will at last walk after the Lord.

“...roar like a lion”: The lion’s roar, summoning Israel back to its own land like a pride of skittish cubs (cf. Amos 3:4-8).

“...from the west”: This cannot be an allusion to Assyria or Babylon, which would be from the east! This would seem to be a reference to the Diaspora, and the regathering of the Jews in the end times (Deut 30:3-4; Ezek 20:37-38; 37:1-4).

- 11] They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD.

[This vers ends Chapter 11 in the Hebrew Bible.]

Hosea leaves the glory of a future day to return to contemporary reality. During the 200 years after Solomon’s death, the Northern and Southern Kingdoms had gone their separate ways. Although separated, they are still both inextricably connected: although they declined at different rates, they each had forgotten God.

- 12] Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.

“...but Judah”: The Southern Kingdom is also already in view...

Next Session

Study Chapter 12. How are rhetorical devices (similes, allegories, analogies, et al) employed in the Biblical text? (Hos 12:10). Our final session will explore Chapters 13 & 14.

The Book of Hosea Session 7 Chapter 12

- 1] Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt.

The precarious nature of Ephraim’s futile and elusive foreign policy is exposed.

“...the east wind”: The dry, searing sirocco winds that blow from the eastern deserts.

“...make a covenant”: While it is hazardous to make a covenant with the east wind (2 Kgs 17:3), an even greater danger was created when that covenant was broken (2 Kgs 17:4-6).

“...and oil is carried into Egypt”: Israel’s foreign policy was such that she could make a covenant with the Assyrians while at the same time export olive oil to Assyria’s rival, Egypt. Assyria, like the sirocco blast, was not Israel’s friend, but an uncontrollable power that would mercilessly consume all that stands before its fiery rage.

- 2] The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.

The example of Jacob, the ancient deceiver, who through repentance obtained the power of God.

- 3] He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God:

From the womb until the wrestling with angel, Jacob (*Ya'cov*, heel catcher), grabbed the heel of his brother—prophetically depicting the gaining of his brother's birthright (Gen 25:27-34) and stealing the all-important deathbed blessing of the firstborn by his father (Gen 27:5-29).

“...by his strength”: Jacob thought he could manipulate God. *Have you ever been guilty of trying that? With rituals or procedures? With sacrifices or negotiations? ...*

- 4] Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us;

At the River Jabbok, he contended with God and prevailed and his name was changed to *yisrael* (from the verb *sara*, to strive or struggle; and *el*, God; cf. Gen 32:28). Jacob had always striven for God's blessing through his own deceitful means, but now God would teach Israel His way.

Under his new name he sought the Lord at Bethel (Gen 28:11-19), *the very site where his descendants would worship golden calves*. Hosea reminds his contemporaries that when God spoke to Jacob He spoke to all the future generations in Jacob's loins (cf. Heb 7:9-10). He set the stage for v.5.

- 5] Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial.

“...LORD”: יהוה, *Yehovah*, (derived from the verb *hayah*, to be); God of the covenant solemnly entrusted His memorial name (Ps 135:13; cf. Ex 3:14; 6:3).

- 6] Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.

At Bethel, Israel the patriarch repented and followed the Lord's instruction to “observe kindness and justice and wait on your God continually...” The pleas is that Ephraim, too, would emulate his ancestor...

- 7] He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.

Upon entering the land, they were specifically told to separate themselves from the practices of the Canaanites, the people they were to destroy (Ex 33:2; Deut 7:1; 20:17; Josh 3:10; 17:18). This speaks of dishonesty in business, something of which God does not approve.

“...a merchant”: סוּרָן *canaan*, a term referring to a merchant people (Isa 23:11; Ezek 17:4) and implying corrupt business practices (Amos 8:5-6). Israel had not only followed the Canaanite in his licentious religion, but also had adopted his wicked business practices.

Canaan = Merchant

The word “merchant” is identical with the word *Canaan*. As a geographical designation it meant the lowland and was applied to Phoenicia as well as to the other parts of Palestine (Isa 23:11).

“Canaanite” thus became a synonym for merchant (Job 41:6; Prov 31:24; Zeph 1:11; Ezek 17:4). The evil reputation of Phoenician traders is reflected in Homer [*Odyssey* XIV, 290, 291].

- 8] And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.

The description of their sense of well-being, power, and prestige under Jeroboam II. When prosperity had arrived, Ephraim took it as an indication that nothing was amiss (Zech 11:5; cf. Rev 3:17).

“...I am become rich”: Monetary success has never been an accurate barometer on one's status before God (Ps 37:16; Prov 11:4; 23:4; Eccl 8:11-14; Mt 5:45). This was also the emblem of the Laodicean Church (Rev 3:17).

[I have experienced a higher standard of business ethics and practices among secular businessmen than I have experienced within the “professional” Christian community...]

- 9] And I that am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast.

Having forgotten the source of their blessings, it's back to the tents...

“...tabernacles”: Tents, אֹהֶל *'ohel*, stress the inconvenience, the unsettledness, and the anxiety of living in land not their own. Full circle: delivered out of Egypt and bondage; but now, back in...

“...solemn feast”: The feast is probably the Feast of Tabernacles, where they were to remember their wilderness wanderings by living in booths (Lev 23:42).

- 10] I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

“...used similitudes”: Their destiny should come as no surprise; God had done His part (cf. Amos 7:1 - 9:15).

This is a key verse, highlighting the Lord’s use of figures of speech and rhetorical devices, such as similes, metaphors, analogies, allegories, parables, types, et al. Examples: Types: the *Akedah* in Gen 22; the *goel* in Ruth; etc. Also, the “rock” in 1 Cor 10:4, etc. There is a catalog of over 200 different types of such devices in Appendix A of *Cosmic Codes - Hidden Messages From the Edge of Eternity*.

- 11] Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields.

“Is there iniquity in Gilead?”: Gilead is the place where there should be a balm to heal the wound, but Gilead was then a place of sin.

“...Gilgal...heaps”: Heaps of stones גללים *gallim*; the use of this Hebrew word, which is a play on the name Gilgal, facilitated by the repetition of the “g” and “l” sounds, is another example of Hosea’s poetic techniques: *Gilgal* would become *gallim*.

- 12] And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.

Again, a contrast with Jacob whose deception of his father had forced his fleeing to Padan-Aram for safety (Gen 27:43-28:2). Still, he never forsook the Lord even though he had to work as a slave tending sheep for over 14 years.

- 13] And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.

Israel, which had been in slavery in Egypt, did not work for her freedom nor for the gift of the promised land (Ex 3:8-10). Despite her receiving every possible benefit through the prophet Moses, *she still continued to reject the Lord* (Ex 32:7-14; Num 14:1-45; 16:30-33).

- 14] Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

“...blood”: The Lord’s anger, provoked by centuries of ingratitude for His benefits, will result in being held responsible for her “blood guilt” incurred through her robbery, bloodshed, adultery, oppression of the poor, dishonesty, idolatry, etc. (Ezek 18:10-13).

Unless there was a proper atonement for the sin (Deut 21:7-9), justice against that person had to be executed or else God would step in to avenge the wronged party (Gen 4:10-12; 2 Sam 4:11; Isa 26:21; Ezek 24:8).

Note: Throughout the book of Hosea, the word translated “Lord” refers to YHWH, the covenant-keeping God of redemption (Ex 3:14).

“...Lord”: This one exception is significant in that אדוני, *Adonai* (“my master”) is used as her *avenger* rather than her redeemer. (This is the word used frequently in the book of Amos in his even harsher messages.)

Summary

This is not merely Israel’s history: it is the story of the human race, and ourselves in particular. There is not one of us who has not run from God in spite of His common and abundant grace, and there are many (believers) who have turned from Him even though they have been adopted into His family. Only the horror of sin explains how we can scorn such love.

The Bible does not end with Hosea. His name means “salvation.” In the fulness of time, One came whose name was *Yehovah, Yeshua*, and Jesus.

He came unto His own, but His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them who believed on His name.

John 1:11, 12

[See our book, *Alien Encounters*, or our *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, for a more detailed and provocative study of the more precise significance of the Biblical term, “Sons of God,” a direct creation of God. Adam was a direct creation; we, however, are sons of Adam until we take advantage of John 1:11, 12!]

God is both the Just and the Justifier. The dilemma presented in Hosea is the ostensible tension between the holiness and righteousness of God, and His love and frustration with a rebellious and ungrateful people.

Yet through His Son, the claims of justice are met, the glory of holiness maintained, and His redemption is not a pity that agrees to ignore sin, but a power that cancels it and sets the soul free from its dominion.

Through Him the loved one is regained, restored, and renewed: the Gospel is gleaming in Hosea. The key thought of the whole review of Israel's history is that there is hope beyond judgment—a hope based on the unique nature of God.

Next Session

Wrap up: the death of a nation and the death of death: the final triumph God's grace. Study Chapters 13 & 14. Review your entire notes...

Addendum:

Hermeneutics, Rhetorical Devices & "Figures of Speech"

Hosea 12:10

Similes and puns are a trademark of Holy Spirit, especially in Hosea. The Scripture employs many forms of multi-level and reflexive codes and rhetorical devices, such as puns, similes, analogies, and other figures of speech (1 Cor 2:13; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21, etc.).

Figures of Speech

A "figure of speech" is a legitimate departure from the usual laws of grammar or syntax for a special purpose. As alluded to in Hosea 12:10, the exploitation of metaphors, analogies, similes, and types in the Bible are particularly provocative in that they often reach across the individual books, the individual authors and even the eras in which they were written. The *Akedah*, Abraham's offering of Isaac in Genesis 22, for example, *anticipates* the sacrifice on the cross at Golgotha twenty centuries later.

The ancient Greeks had several hundred of their *Schema*, and the Romans their *Figura*, but with the decline of learning in the Middle Ages,

the study of such linguistic structures seems to have died out. Here are some examples of some of the diverse devices employed in the Bible. [Source: Cf. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1898.]

Some are subtle; some are structural; some operate at several levels; yet all demonstrate *deliberate skillful design*. Their use can also be forms of

- *Microcodes*, exploitation of individual letters, etc. or
- *Macrocodes*, broad structures which can *anticipate* information that is, as yet, forthcoming.

[For a catalog of over 200 different rhetorical devices, see Appendix A of *Cosmic Codes - Hidden Messages From the Edge of Eternity*.]

Common Examples

- **Puns:** denotatively, a homonym; often with a humorous implication; connotatively, any double reference—not necessarily restricted to humor (Jn 3:14, cf. Num 21:8, 9).
- **Double entendre:** A word or phrase with a double meaning, often, but not necessarily, with a salacious or sensuous overtone (Isa 52:13).
- **Oxymoron:** Wise-foolly; a wise saying that seems foolish; a self-contradictory phrase (1 Tim 5:6).
- **Synecdoche:** Transfer; the exchange of one idea for another associated idea.
 1. Of the Genus: When the genus is put for the species, or universals for particulars (Gen 6:12; Mt 3:5).
 2. Of the Species: When the species is put for the genus, or particulars for the universals (Gen 3:19; Mt 6:11).
 3. Of the Whole: When the whole is put for a part (Gen 6:12).
 4. Of the Part: When the part is put for the whole (Gen 3:19; Mt 2:4).

Logical Errors

- The legitimate connotative transfer (puns, et al.).
- The illegitimate connotative transfer:
 - “The outer darkness”? (Mt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30);
 - “The darkness outside”;
 - τὸ σκότος noun accusative neuter singular common;
 - τὸ ἐξώτερον· adjective normal accusative neuter singular comparative.

Elaborate Rhetorical Devices

- **Allegory:** Comparison by representation (Gen 49:9; Gal 4:22, 24).
- **Simile:** Resemblance; a declaration that one thing resembles another (Hos 12:10; Gen 25:25; Mt 7:24-27).
- **Metaphor:** Representation; a declaration that one thing is (or represents) another (a simile resembles it; a hypocatastasis implies it); Mt 26:26.
- **Hypocatastasis:** Implication; an implied resemblance or representation; teaching a truth about one thing by substituting another for it that which is unlike it (Mt 7:3-5; 15:13) or the Aleph and the Tau in several texts as Gen 1:1; Zech 12:10; et al.
- These can appear in the form of *macrocodes* and *microcodes* below.

Macrocodes

The more elaborate forms of these can be classified as *macrocodes* in that they are anticipatory and can encompass a comprehensive overview of forthcoming events before their actual appearance in the time dimension. The best example is what is often called a **Type**: A figure or example of something future, and more or less prophetic, called the Anti-type (Rom 5:14; Gen 22, 24; Ruth, et al.).

Genesis 22: The Offering of Isaac (The Akedah)

- 1] And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.
- 2] And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.
- 3] And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

No test could have been more severe than the one God now imposed. And no obedience could have been more perfect than Abraham's.

- 4] Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

Why a **three-day** journey? (~50 miles) Why *there*?

- 5] And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.
- 6] And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

- 7] And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?
- 8] And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

“...provide himself...”: Who?!! Cf. v.14.

- 9] And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.
- 10] And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

A true worshiper of God holds nothing back from God but obediently gives Him what He asks, trusting that He will provide.

- 11] And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.
- 12] And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

“Young lads”: Armed soldiers; Isaac 32 years old? Abraham did not withhold his son. Similarly Paul wrote that God “did not spare [*epheisato*] His own Son, but gave [delivered] Him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32). A form of the **same Greek word** is used of Abraham in the Septuagint: “Thou hast not spared [*epheiso*] thy beloved son” (Gen. 22:12).

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Romans 8:32

And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar.

Leviticus 1:11

- 13] And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.
- 14] And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

Substitutionary ram: (cf. Gen 3:22). Lev 9; Ex 29; Num 5; Gen 15. A name only relevant in a *Prophetic* perspective! Abraham knew he was acting out a **prophetic** ritual. Jesus should say: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (Jn 8:56).

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Hebrews 11:17-19

- 15] And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,
 16] And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:
 17] That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

God again confirmed His covenant with Abraham (cf. Gen 15:5, 18-21; 17:3-8). His descendants would be numerous like the stars (cf. Gen 15:5; 26:4), like the sand on the seashore (cf. Gen 32:12), and “like the dust of the earth” (cf. Gen 13:16; 28:14). God then added another element: Abraham’s descendants would be victorious over the cities of their Canaanite enemies. This was done by Joshua in the Conquest.

- 18] And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.
 19] So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

Where’s Issac? A mystery regarding verse 19 will be explored next...

A Bride for Isaac : Genesis 24

- Abraham commissions Eleazer to gather a bride for Isaac.
- Eleazer qualifies her by a well;
- She agrees to marry the bridegroom;
- He gives her gifts...
- She joins her bridegroom at the well of *Lahai-Roi*

Typology

- Abraham = The Father
- Isaac = The Son
- Eleazar = The Holy Spirit
 ...sent to gather the Bride for the Son

Where’s Isaac?

Isaac is personally “edited out of the record” until he is united with his bride by the well of *LaHai Roi*...two chapters later. (The well of *LaHai Roi*: “the well of Living One [who] sees me.”)

One Integrated Design

The New Testament *is in the Old Testament concealed*;
 The Old Testament *is in the New Testament revealed*.

Marriage Model

- Gentile Brides

Eve	Adam
Rebekah	Isaac
Asenath	Joseph
Zipporah	Moses
Rahab	Salmon
Ruth	Boaz

...All have no death recorded!

Microcodes

- **Anagrams:** transposing letters of a word to make a different word or phrase. In the Kabbalistic writings called *temurah*, change. Gen 6:8 can be viewed as a transposition of Gen 27:36; Isa 61:3 as a transposition of Ps 6:11; also 1 Chr 6:9.14.
- **Acrostic:** a repetition of the same or successive letters at the beginning of words or clauses Psalm 111, 112, 119, and others
- Acronym: an acrostic, usually employed for mnemonic purposes.
- **Notarikon:** an acrostic composed of the initial letters of successive sentences; alliteration. Song of Solomon 6:3, Elul, the month of preparation before Tishri, an acrostic which contains the fall feasts.)

Enigmatic Devices

- **Enigma:** a dark saying, or a truth expressed in obscure language; Gen 49:10; Judg 14:14.
- **Remez:** a hint of something hidden or deeper; not merely a fluke or variation. 1 Kings 7:23, which seems to also depend upon one of the most exotic aspects of all.

- **Gematria:** exploiting the numerical value of the letters of a word; (only valid in Hebrew and Greek) 1 Kings 7:23.

Specific Examples in Hosea

- Harlotry and adultery are metaphors for idolatry and pervade the book (Hos 1:2; 2:4-5; 3:3; 4:10-15, 18; 5:3-4; 6:10; 7:4; 9:1).
- Powerful and shocking figures are used to describe God's pervasive and irresistible judgments:
 - pus and infection, Hos 5:2
 - lion, panther, bear Hos 5:14; 11:10; 13:7,8
 - trapper Hos 7:12
 - vulture or eagle Hos 8:1
- More comforting are the pictures of YHWH as
 - a husband Hos 2:14-23
 - parent Hos 11:8-9
 - lover Hos 14:3-7
- Israel is vividly portrayed as
 - a stubborn heifer Hos 4:16
 - snare and net Hos 5:1
 - a heated oven Hos 7:3-7
 - treacherous bow Hos 7:16
 - useless vessel Hos 8:8
 - grapes and fig tree Hos 9:10
 - luxuriant vine Hos 10:1
- Israel is also portrayed as
 - trained heifer Hos 10:11
 - crooked merchant Hos 12:7
 - a stupid baby Hos 13:13
 - and its lack of stability is pictured as mist, dew, chaff, smoke Hos 13:3
 - the futility of her foreign policy as riding herd on the wind Hos 12:1
 - and the fate of her idol worship as bobbing like a chip on the water Hos 10:7

Puns

- Puns were also part of Hosea's arsenal of irony.
- *Jezreel* with its double meaning: "God will scatter" like seed in judgment (1:4), and "God will sow" (or inseminate) in restoration (2:22-23).

- *Sabbaths* and "put an end" (Heb. הָבַס) (2:11).
- *Ephraim* = wild ass or fruitfulness (Heb. רָפָּ and רָפָּ) (8:9).
- Use of verbs (Heb בָּקַר and רָיַס) related to their ancestors double name, Jacob and Israel (12:3-4).
- The mocking of Beth-El with Beth-Aven (10:5) and Beth-Arbel (10:14).
- The jeering at Gilgal's future as "stone heaps" (*gallim*, 12:11 [Heb v.12]).
- The labeling of princes as rebels (Heb. *sarim, sorrim*, 9:15).

Ellipses

- These biting word plays would not have been lost on his listener's ears.
- These word-pictures must have been graphic mirrors of their wickedness and folly.
- There is also the structural device of an *ellipsis*: an omission; when a gap is purposely left in a sentence or passage of text through the omission of some word or words.

Absolute Ellipsis

This is where the omitted word or words are to be inferred from the nature of the subject.

1. Nouns and Pronouns (Gen 14:19, 20; Ps 21:12).
2. Verbs and participles (Gen 26:7; Ps 4:2).
3. Certain connected words in the same member of a passage Gen 25:32; Mt 25:9 (Called Brachylogia or Brachyology.)
4. A whole clause in a connected passage (Gen 30:27; 1 Tim 1:3, 4).
5. An entire interval of time omitted (Cf. the 24 dispensational intervals).

Dispensational Ellipses

1. Ps 34 10-12 (quoted, 1 Pet 3:10-12)
2. Ps 118 middle v. 22
3. Isa 9:6 after 1st clause
4. Isa 53 middle v. 10
5. Isa 61 middle v. 2
6. Lam 4 21, 22
7. Dan 9 26, 27
8. Dan 11 20, 21
9. Hos 2 13, 14

10. Hos 3 4, 5
11. Amos 9 10 ,11
12. Micah 5 2, 3

Relative Ellipsis

1. Where the omitted word is to be supplied from a cognate word in the context (Ps 76:11).
2. Where the omitted word is to be supplied from a related or contrary word (Gen 33:10; Ps 7:11).
3. Where the omitted word is to be supplied from analogous or related words (Gen 50:23).
4. Where the omitted word is contained in another word, the one word comprising the two significations (Gen 43:33).

Ellipsis of Repetition

1. Simple: where the ellipsis is to be supplied from a preceding or succeeding clause (Gen 1:30; 2 Cor 6:16).
2. Complex: where the two clauses are mutually involved, and the Ellipsis in the former clause is to be supplied from the latter; and, at the same time, an Ellipse in the latter clause is to be supplied from the former (Heb 12:20).

Ellipsis of Reversal

This is the most unusual of all and we will encounter one of the most dramatic of all which ties Hosea's fabric to the centroid of the entire New Testament in Hosea 13:14!

Next Session

Read Chapters 13 & 14. Review your notes on the entire book.

The Book of Hosea Session 8 Chapters 13 - 14

No other messenger gives so complete an outline of the ways of God with His earthly people as does Hosea: 1) God suffers when His people are unfaithful to Him; 2) God cannot condone sin; 3) God will never cease to love His own, and, consequently; 4) He seeks to win back those who have forsaken Him.

Hosea's Message

Hosea's message (like those of his 8th B.C. century contemporaries, Amos, Isaiah and Micah) must be understood against the instruction of Deuteronomy 28, the covenant between YHWH and Israel:

- Israel was to maintain loyalty to the Lord by worshiping Him alone and obeying His commandments;
- Obedience would bring blessing (Deut 28:1-14);
- Disobedience would bring judgment and eventual exile (Deut 28:15-68).

Hosea emphasized idolatry, and compared Israel's relationship as spiritual adultery, using his own marriage to an unfaithful woman as an illustration. Hosea's own reconciliation also illustrates Israel's ultimate restoration. Other sins mentioned include:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| • social injustice | Hos 12:7 |
| • violent crime | Hos 4:2; 6:9; 12:1 |
| • religious hypocrisy | Hos 6:6 |
| • political rebellion | Hos 7:3-7 |
| • foreign alliances | Hos 7:11; 8:9 |
| • selfish arrogance | Hos 13:6 |
| • spiritual ingratitude | Hos 7:15 |

Any of this sound familiar?

In addition to exposing the nation's breach of covenant and God's intention to implement judgment, Hosea also confirmed the Deuteronomic promise of ultimate restoration (Deut 30:1-10).

The major themes of Hosea's message are sin, judgment, and salvation. His style is abrupt, sententious, and ungrounded; the connecting particles are few; there are changes of person, and anomalies of gender, number, and construction. His name means *Salvation*.

Hosea Quotes in the New Testament

- "Out of Egypt I have called my son" (Mt 2:15)
- "I will have mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt 9:13)
- "I will have mercy, not sacrifice." (Mt 12:7)
- "My people which were not..." (Rom 9:25, 26)
- "O Death, where is thy sting..." (1 Cor 15:55)
- "My people which were not..." (1 Pet 2:5, 10)

Outline of the Book

- The prophet's married life Hos 1 - 3
- Israel's unfaithfulness and consequent judgment Hos 4 - 13
- Israel's conversion and renewal Hos 14

The History of Israel

- 1) **Jezreel** (1:4) means "scattered," referring to the time when God would scatter Israel among the nations;
- 2) **Lo-ruhamah** (1:6) means "unpitied," meaning that God would lift His mercy from the nation and permit her to suffer for her sins;
- 3) **Lo-ammi** (1:9) means "not my people," indicating this present time in God's program when Israel is out of fellowship with God and its people are not His people as once they were.

All three children here, regathered, embraced:

- *Jezreel* = "sown; or planted"
- *Ruhamah* = "mercy; pity"
- *Ammi* = "my people"

This is quoted by Paul in Romans 9:25-26; cf. 1 Peter 2:10.

National Repentance and Restoration

It is strange that so many scholars ("Reformed" scholars) still deny that there will be a regathering of Israel and a national repentance of Israel in the last days yet to come. They argue that Israel's failure when she rejected Christ caused a forfeit and fulfillment will be in the church.

The promises of Israel's regathering and restoration made in the OT (Deut 28:64-67; Isa 11:11, 12; 60:12; Jer 16:14-16; Ezek 36:24-28; Amos 9:14; et al.) *are repeated* in the NT *following* their rejection of Christ.

In the opening verses of Romans 11, it is clearly not true that God has utterly cast off His people (Rom 11:1). Paul highlights this interval of focus and opportunity for the Gentiles; and then Paul goes on to restate and further define the OT prophecies of a time of future blessing and usefulness for Israel (Rom 11:25-27). They still have not turned to the Lord; and they still are in peril of losing Jerusalem, etc. *But they will*

return, and they will seek the Lord their God and David their king. God keeps His promises: to Abraham; to Moses; to David; and to Mary... And to you and me!

The Case for the Prosecution

- Formal Charges: lawlessness; immorality; ignorance of God's Word; idolatry. Covetousness is idolatry (Col 3:5). *Is there any nation more committed to covetousness than America?*

God's law, while given specifically to Israel, sets out the pattern for any nation which wants to be blessed. Here, the charges are disclosed in a manner whose depth is unparalleled in the rest of the OT. God's holiness demands an indictment for Israel's sin; God's justice requires that she should be punished.

Organization of Hosea

- The first 10 chapters: The disobedience of God's people and their inevitable judgment as a consequence.
- The last 4 chapters: The Love of God.

General Background

When Moses went to Pharaoh to "Let my people go," Pharaoh responded, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?" If Pharaoh could have read the Book of Hosea, he would have known that the Lord was:

...a <i>Sovereign</i> God	Chapters 1-3
...a <i>Holy</i> God	Chapters 4-7
...a <i>Just</i> God	Chapters 8-10
...a <i>Loving</i> God	Chapters 11-14

Pharaoh never had the benefit of the depth of knowledge that Israel was given through the mouth and pen of the prophet Hosea... and yet the people were as stony-hearted toward God as Pharaoh was those many centuries before.

Chapters 11 - 14

The climax of God's plan for the final redemption of His chosen people. Everything that befell Israel was intended to instruct her and bring her

back to God. Hosea then delves into the past, present and future history of redemption for His people.

The Death of a Nation

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:23

Sin also causes the death of family life, culture, movements of history, even the death of nations.

How Do Nations Die?

Oswald Spengler, in his massive two-volume work, *The Decline of the West* compares the movements of history to the stages of biological life: civilizations are born, grow strong, deteriorate and finally die. (While he made no attempt to link this inevitable death to sin, and he apparently knows nothing of redemption, his work is provocative.) There are three stages:

- Stage 1: They die in spirit first.
- Stage 2: Next, the soul of a nation dies: its national character deteriorates.
- Stage 3: The final stage is when the body of the nation dies. This seems to be the pattern of the Northern Kingdom that Hosea is dealing with.

Hosea 13

- 1] When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.

“...Ephraim”: Fully devoted to the realm of death. Ephraim’s prominent (exalted) place among the tribes of Israel was well known (Gen 48:13-20). Jeroboam I, who had led the Northern Kingdom’s secession, was an Ephraimite (1 Kgs 11:26; 12:25). However, this prominent tribe had also taken the lead in Baal worship and was as good as dead.

The Sealing of the 144,000: Revelation 7

Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasseh were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Revelation 7:5-8

Why Not the Tribe of Dan?

- Prophecies: Jacob called Dan “a serpent...” (Gen 49:17); Moses: “Leap from Bashan” (Deut 33:22).
- Left allocated territories (Judg 18); Deborah: “Didn’t leave his ships” (Judg 5:17).
- Omitted from genealogies (1 Chr 1-8).
- Not sealed in the Tribulation (Rev 7).
- Tribe through which idolatry entered the land (Lev 24:10-16; Judg 18:1,2,30-31).
- A leader in apostasy under Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:28-30) and 100 years later (2 Kgs 10:29): The “Voice of Calamity” cf. Jer 4:14 (Heb); Amos 8:14 (Heb). Cursed in Jer 8:16: *Idolaters name to be blotted out* (Deut 29:18-21).

Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law:

Deuteronomy 29:18-21

And Yet... Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel (Gen 49:16) and Dan inherits in the Millennium (Ezek 48:1).

Ephraim: Also Omitted

Ephraim is also referred to only elliptically:

Joseph = Manasseh + Ephraim

thus: Joseph - Manasseh = Ephraim

Ephraim was also associated with Jeroboam's idolatry (Hos 4:17...38X!).

Stage 1

They die in spirit first. When it forgets God and begins to worship that which is not God...worship of race (Nazi Germany)...worship of material prosperity (as the U.S.). The first step is when God-consciousness dissipates, or worse, is deliberately removed. Prayer; Bible reading... identifications with Biblical principles. Weapons and diplomacy quickly replace dependence upon God.

- 2] And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.

“...kiss the calves”: “Kissing,” paying homage to (Cf. Ps 2:12). As the Ephraimites (and the other Israelites they represent here) multiplied their idols and images, they added to their guilt. They debased themselves even further by kissing the calf-idols in conjunction with their many sacrificial rites (1 Kgs 19:18; cf. “calf-idol” in Hosea 8:4-5; 10:5).

Stage 2

Next, the soul of a nation dies: its national character deteriorates. Lowering moral climate; accelerated corruption of leadership; breakup of families; materialism; increase in crime and violence. Failure of even the government to keep faith with its people and other nations.

One measurable example of the failure of keeping faith is the debasement of its currency: inflation = 50% in ten years. [*Ours: 13% per year!*]

Another is failure to honor treaties and trade agreements [Repudiated the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1971; NATO's redefinition violated *every* previously accepted international law: the Helsinki Accords of 1975; the Vienna Convention of 1980; the UN Charter; even our own War Powers Act had expired on the issue. [Our tattered support of Israel vs. its enemies...]

- 3] Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.

Each of the four similes (mist, dew; cf. 6:4 chaff, smoke) emphasizes the extremely transitory condition of the idolaters.

Stage 3

The judgment of God would make these idolaters quickly vanish. It would result in the complete dissipation of the nation. The final stage is when the *body* of the nation dies. And it doesn't necessarily happen cataclysmically by sudden or total overthrows. It can happen by degrees...

Bit by bit: The police become ineffective; the courts become technical battlegrounds where justice is perverted; politicians pander to the elite; schools cease to educate; the population, oblivious to the trends, drifts into oblivion....

- 4] Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.

“...I am the LORD thy God”: Cf. Isa 43:11, 54:21. The first commandment was lost in Hosea's day (Ex 20:3-6). [*How about ours?*]

- 5] I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.

Once more the LORD reminded Israel of His gracious deeds at the beginning of their history (cf. Hos 12:9a, 10, 12-13). He led them from Egypt (cf. Hos 11:1; 12:9, 13); cared for (literally, “knew”) them in the wilderness (Hos 13:5); and, allowed them to feed in the Promised Land (v.6).

- 6] According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.

Here He describes them as sheep or cattle grazing peacefully. In return for such blessings they should have acknowledged the Lord as their God and Savior (v. 4). Instead they became proud and forgot Him. [*How about us?*]

- 7] Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them:

- 8] I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.

Like a vicious and powerful wild beast (lion, leopard, or bear) the Lord would attack His people (still viewed here as a helpless flock or herd); cf. Hos 13:7-8; cf. 5:14.

[It is interesting that the four animals portrayed—the lion, leopard, bear, and wild beast—are the same that appear in Daniel 7. (However, they are in a different order.)]

- 9] O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.

Ironically the Helper of Israel would become her Destroyer because she was against Him. [*Where is America? What should we expect?*]

- 10] I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?

When the Lord would come to destroy (v. 9), no one would be able to save the people, not even the political leaders they had demanded from the Lord (Cf. 10:3, 7, 15).

- 11] I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.

This probably refers to the Northern tribes' part in crowning Saul (1 Sam 8:6-9; Hos 12:12), as well as their secession under Jeroboam I (1 Kgs 12:16). This probably also refers to the cessation of Israel's kingship with Hoshea (2 Kgs 17:1-6).

- 12] The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid.

God had not overlooked Israel's guilt (cf. 10:2; 12:14; 13:16). Ephraim's sinful deeds were compared to a document which is bound up and a treasure which is stored up.

Through both figures Israel's sins were pictured as something guarded carefully till the day of retribution when they would be brought forth as testimony against the nation (Cf. Heb 8:12; 10:17).

- 13] The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.

Any basis for hope had all but disappeared. Israel had not responded to God's call for repentance during the period of grace He had extended. The procrastinating nation was compared to a baby which does not come out of its mother's womb despite her strenuous efforts in labor.

"...an unwise son": Such a delay will result in death for both mother and child. Since the baby seemingly does not observe the proper time for his birth, he is referred to, figuratively, as without wisdom, "an unwise son" (cf. Eccl 8:5).

- 14] I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave": Traditionally verse 14a has been interpreted as an expression of hope and a promise of salvation (NASB, NIV). However, this view is contextually problematic.

"...O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction...": Though Hosea's prophecy is characterized by abrupt changes in tone, such a shift would seem to be premature here (the shift in this section appears to come in 14:1) and would leave 13:14a awkwardly connected with what follows (cf. v. 14b, I will have no compassion).

The first two statements may be translated better as rhetorical questions implying a negative answer: "Shall I ransom them from the power of sheol? Shall I redeem them from death?" (RSV)

The next two questions: "Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction?" would thus be appeals for death to unleash its "plagues" and "destruction" against Ephraim, does not appear to be a triumphant cry of victory over death (cf. vv. 14b-16).

How do we solve this exegetical enigma? (Cf. confusion by Boice, et al.) *By putting Christ right in the middle of it!*

Ellipsis of Reversal

Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, applied the language of this text in the *opposite sense*:

*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*

1 Corinthians 15:55, 56

This is the most unusual and most dramatic ellipsis of all, which ties Hosea's fabric to the centroid of the entire New Testament in Hosea 13:14! [Ellipsis of Reversal: A contrast where the ellipsis reverses or supplies an opposite sense from a preceding or succeeding clause.]

- 15] Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.

With the Lord's compassion removed (v. 14; cf. 1:6), Israel's prosperity would come to an end. The LORD would come like a hot east wind which dries up everything in its path. The reality behind the figure is the Assyrian invasion, as the references to plundering and military atrocities make clear.

[Hebrew Bible Chapter 13 ends here.]

- 16] Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

Thus Hosea 13:15-16 correspond to the plagues and destruction of death mentioned in verse 14. The language is that of covenant curse (cf. Lev 26:25; Deut 28:21; 32:24-25; Amos 4:10). Again, destruction would come, God said, because Israel had rebelled against Him (cf. Hos 7:13; 8:1).

Hosea 14

- 1] O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

“...return”: Hosea's prophecy ends on a positive note with an exhortation to repentance. He never tired of forming that one word “Return.” (Heb., שׁוּב *shuwv*).

- 2] Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.

“...calves of our lips”= fruit of their lips: prayers of forgiveness (Ps 51:17, et al.). *Something is not truly learned until it results in changed behavior.*

Though this final appeal would surely be rejected by His arrogant and stubborn nation (cf. Hos 10:12-15), it would instill hope in the hearts of a righteous remnant and provide the *repentant generation of the future* with a model to follow in returning to the Lord (cf. Hos 3:5; 5:15b-6:3).

True repentance would eventually involve an acknowledgment of sin; cf. Israel's ultimate repentance (Hos 5:15).

- 3] Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

No longer will Israel trust in Assyria or other nations, nor will she call her hand-made idols our gods.

- 4] I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

In the day of Israel's repentance the Lord will turn from His anger and demonstrate His love by healing her (cf. Hos 6:1). At that time the Lord's blessing will return to Israel.

- 5] I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

Like . . . dew it will cause the nation to blossom like a lily which was renowned for its beauty (cf. Song 2:2). This is a complete reversal of the imagery used in Hosea 13:15.

- 6] His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

Israel in her prosperity is also compared to a cedar of Lebanon, whose deep roots, luxuriant growth, and aromatic smell (cf. Song 4:11) were well known; and to an olive tree, widely recognized for its luxuriance (cf. Ps 52:8; Jer 11:16).

- 7] They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

His shade (or shadow) could refer to the Lord's protection (cf. v. 8, where He is compared to a “pine tree”); cf. Isa 4:6.

However, as Keil notes, it is more likely that “Israel is itself the tree beneath whose shade the members of the nation flourish with freshness and vigor.” [Cf. Keil, “Minor Prophets,” *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, 10:166.]

This seems more consistent with the imagery in Hosea 14:5-6, which compares Israel to trees. The picture of Israelites again growing grain points to the return of covenantal blessing (cf. Deut 28:4, 8, 11; 30:9; Hosea 2:21-23; Amos 9:13-15). Once again Israel will be “like a” fruitful “vine” which produces the best wine (cf. Hosea 10:1).

- 8] Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.

The contrast with Ephraim's earlier attitude is stark (cf. Hos 2:8; 4:17; 8:4-6; 13:2).

"...observed": The Lord confirms His concern for Israel: The word שׁוּר (implied "lurk" in 13:7) here implies "care for." The same God who stealthily watched Israel like a leopard ready to pounce on its prey will now become the One who carefully watches over His people to protect them!

"...like a green fir tree": Comparing Himself to a green pine tree, the Lord also asserted that He is the nation's source of prosperity: "Your fruitfulness comes from Me."

- 9] Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

The book ends with a word on wisdom. One who is wise and discerning will learn a threefold lesson from Hosea's message.

Threefold Lesson

- 1) The ways of the LORD (i.e., His covenantal demands) are right.
- 2) The righteous walk in (i.e., obey) them and experience the blessings of loyalty (cf. Deut 8:6; 10:12; 11:22; 28:9; Judg 2:17).
- 3) The rebellious falls, stumble over (not in) them, in the sense that destruction (stumbling) is the direct result of disobedience (cf. Hosea 7:13; 8:1; 13:16). *The broken commandments become the ultimate reason for their downfall* (cf. Hos 5:5; 14:1).

The Character of God

Hosea, through his enduring through the profligacy of both his wife and his country, and his comprehensive exposition, reveals the character of God:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| – His <i>sovereignty</i> | Chapters 1-3 |
| – His <i>holiness</i> | Chapters 4-7 |
| – His <i>justice</i> | Chapters 8-10 |
| – His <i>love</i> | Chapters 11-14 |

Hosea appeals to his audience to not only *understand* intellectually his prophecy, but to discern how that knowledge can *apply* to their daily living...

An Incomplete Assessment

However, *Hosea's preaching was a failure!* His contemporaries did *not* walk in the paths of righteousness but rather stumbled into captivity. Yet, God declares, "*My Word will not return void*" (Isa 55:11).

How can this be? Where will the fruit from Hosea's words come? From *you!* His words are for you and me. *We* need to be the fruitbearers...

"It Could Never Happen Here"

That was the cry in Eastern Europe, doubting that Communism would ever take over. That is the presumption that pervades our own country regarding God's judgment. It is the slogan of a fool in ignorance of God's nature and His commitments.

We, too, live in a declining culture, and God's judgment appears overdue. He, again, may use our enemies as His mechanism of judgment. Our only hope is national repentance.

Our Present Predicament

America is in moral free fall. We are victims of *spiritual* warfare: We have a media masking truth. We have courts perverting justice. We have schools deliberately "dumbing down" our youth. We have replaced our traditional heritage with "multiculturalism," revisionism, and values relativism. Traditional patriotism is now relegated as an obsolete idol worship.

Life Cycle of Democracies

"A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse... from the public treasury... the average age of the world's greatest civilizations has been 200 years."

Alexander Tyler

Cycle of Nations

- Alexander Tyler
- Edward Gibbon
- C.E.M. Joad
- C. Northcote Parkinson
- Jim Black

When Nations Die, by Jim Nelson Black

- **Social Decay:** Crisis of Lawlessness; Loss of Economic Discipline; Rising Bureaucracy.
- **Cultural Decay:** Decline of Education; Weakening of Cultural Foundations; Loss of Respect for Traditional Values.
- **Moral Decay:** Rise of Immorality; Decay of Religious Belief; Devaluing of Human Life.

The Only Exception

The Pagan Capital of the World —Nineva—was 40 days from “ground zero!” Jonah was the reluctant prophet. His message was, “40 days and you get yours!” The Greatest Miracle in the OT happened!

If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves; and pray; and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14

For a more intensive review of the impending judgment upon our own land, review our Briefing Pack, *Twilight's Last Gleaming*.

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About The Cover Design

(on the tape cassette volumes)

The “Front” cover:

The Greek border: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:8).” The center design element symbolizes the Word of God Incarnate, illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

The “Back” cover: (the “front” to the Jewish reader)

The Hebrew border: “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (from the Sh’ma, Deut 6:4-5).”

The center design represents the Burning Bush, made up of Hebrew letters which proclaim “the Eternal One cannot lie.”

The Spine:

The spine includes a Menorah from the Old Testament, a Maranatha Dove suggesting the New Testament, and the Koinonia House logo at the base.



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