

Hosea #1 Ch. 1 Introduction

by Chuck Missler

Hosea's message emphasizes God's suffering and judgment, but also His love and restoration, and the promise of ultimate restoration and fulfillment.

Duration: 1:06:16

Scripture: Deuteronomy 28:1-14, Hosea 1:10, Matthew 21:33-41, Romans 9:24-27

Topics: "Hosea"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses various themes found in the book of Isaiah and draws parallels to the current state of the country. The sermon touches on topics such as violent crime, religious hypocrisy, political rebellion, and selfish arrogance. The preacher emphasizes the need to recognize and address these issues that offend God. Additionally, the sermon mentions a parallel story in Matthew 21, where a vineyard owner sends servants to collect the fruits of his vineyard but they are mistreated and killed by the tenant farmers. The preacher uses this story to highlight the consequences that await those who offend God.

Transcript

Well, we start a new book tonight, and we're going to turn tonight to what's called, unfortunately, the Minor Prophets. That's a strange designation. It really comes from the church, not from ancient divisions and so forth.

The church collections divided the major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, as the larger, major meaning larger in size. And then the remaining twelve they called the Minor Prophets because the books are smaller. And it's misleading to a Bible student because it sounds like they're less important.

Hardly. They are perhaps some of the most profound, pithy, and relevant to our day kinds of passages. And we're doing this for a couple of reasons.

One is we're trying to work our way through the entire Bible, of course, but, and this also, this and Micah will complete our series in the Minor Prophets. But it's interesting, I was quite startled as I started to refresh in this book. I was really startled at how it is so relevant for you and I today in some surprising ways.

Hosea was a contemporary of Amos, Isaiah, and also Micah actually. And Jeremiah was the weeping prophet focusing on Judah. Jeremiah had the unpleasant task in effect of presiding over the death of his nation.

But that was a hundred years in the future. This book by Hosea focuses on the decline and judgment on the northern kingdom. You may recall after Solomon passed away, the kingdom divided.

His son, Rehoboam, took the southern group, but the northern group, Rehoboam, rebelled. And they called themselves the House of Israel, and the southern half of the nation was called the House of Judah. We often get confused in many passages where it'll speak of Israel referring really to the northern kingdom, not the total nation.

Unless you're sensitive to the context, that can be confusing. The northern kingdoms also sometimes called Ephraim, one of the prominent tribes that designated a major part of that area. And now, the capital was Samaria, so we also speak of the fall of Samaria in 722.

And what Hosea deals with are the circumstances leading up to that, and they'll be quite surprising in many ways. There's a lot to learn as to how God deals with His earthly people. Few do this as thoroughly as Hosea does.

And we'll learn at least four major aspects of the way God deals with His people. First of all, we'll discover God suffers when His people are unfaithful to Him. That's a strange idea that the eternal God, the creator of the universe, can suffer.

But He's hurt. He feels pain, in effect, when we are unfaithful. We'll also discover something that doesn't come as a surprise, and yet we don't probably fully appreciate that God does not condone sin.

We're so conscious, especially from New Testament teachings of God's grace, that we often fail to fully appreciate that a holy God cannot condone sin. It has to be dealt with. We'll also discover, though, despite some of the dark aspects of this book, we're going to discover that God will never cease to love His own.

He never ceases to love us. And consequently, the fourth item is He always seeks to win back those who have forsaken Him. So we're going to see some very strange things occur, but we'll always notice that there's always an interlude and always an emphasis on what the ultimate end will be.

So now, the book of Hosea is surprisingly quoted in the New Testament, many, many places. One of the strangest passages to me, and we'll deal with that when we get to chapter 2 in 215, there's a passage, "...out of Egypt I have called my son." And yet when you read that passage in the context, it clearly is referring to the nation of Israel as His firstborn son. He's using it idiomatically.

And yet, and yet, the Holy Spirit moves Matthew to apply that to Jesus Christ when they, when Mary, Joseph, and Jesus come back out of Egypt, having fled there for refuge from Herod. And so we begin to get a glimmer that many of these passages are Holy Spirit puns, if you will. They have a double application.

The application context in Hosea 2, of course, is the nation, yet specifically Matthew, chapter 2, verse 15, quotes Hosea out of that. Matthew 9, 13 says, "...I'll have mercy and not sacrifice." We find that quoted twice in Matthew 9, 13 and 12, 7. And we also find, we'll look at this a little later, in Romans 9, "...my people which were not faithful and so forth." It's quoted both by Paul in his epistle to the Romans and also

by Peter in his first letter, and we'll deal with that when we get there. And remember the famous passage that Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 15, the resurrection chapter, which says, "...O death, where is thy sting? Grave thy victory." That's a quote from Hosea.

So we quickly recognize that the New Testament writers were very, very conscious of the book of Hosea. Hosea, we all probably remember the way Charles Dickens opens his novel, *The Tale of Two Cities*. He says, "...it was the best of times and it was the worst of times." And he uses that colorful opening to open his novel.

Well, it's interesting, that famous phrase that's often applied to many things certainly fits the times that Hosea is dealing with, because it was the best of times. The Dow Jones was over 10,000. I mean, it was great, great prosperity.

And yet, what will clearly be evident, it was also the worst of times. And material prosperity was really the descriptor of our society, especially in the Northern Kingdom. Their prosperity was unequaled since the days of Solomon.

And we find that in 2 Kings 14, 2 Chronicles 26, we'll detail all that historically. We won't take the time here to get into that. But Jeroboam, the king, was able, had been able to recover all the territory that had previously been lost to Israel.

He even had possession of Damascus. So they were very, very successful militarily, with a standing army and all the rest. But one of the lessons we're going to learn as Hosea deals with the Northern Kingdom and the predicament, is that no material prosperity is a guarantee of safety to that people whose stability rests not on their moral basis of the fear of God and obedience to his laws.

Material prosperity is no guarantee of safety. Your safety always comes from the moral basis that's built upon a fear of God. And that should start to bother us a little bit.

Because as we study Hosea, as we read the records, and we try to get a background, we see a disturbing parallel between the predicament of the Northern Kingdom and ourselves. Strong military, enjoying unparalleled prosperity. A prosperity that's even baffling the analysts.

The strength of this economy, apparently, seems boundless. And so much so that we have an utter disregard for our heritage. All the things that made America great.

All the things that we held dear in the 40s, 50s, 60s. The American heritage. Gone.

Ridiculed. Stripped from our museums in Washington. And stripped from even the rhetoric.

We're gonna have campaigns where character doesn't count. We're gonna have impeachment proceedings which essentially rule in the Senate that it's okay to conduct perjury, to lie under oath if you have high enough office. Stop and think about what this means.

Not about him, but the culture that permits this, that encourages this. For righteousness, you look for justice but behold oppression. For righteousness, I saw a charming little couple of little notes.

A little 12th grader wrote, dear God, how did you let happen what happened in Columbine High School? Note comes back, dear so-and-so 12th grader, I'm not allowed in the schools. Signed, God. Just a cartoonist little quip, but he gets the point.

So anyway, Hosea's message, just like his 8th century contemporaries, Isaiah, Amos, Micah, needs to be understood against the background of Deuteronomy, particularly Deuteronomy 28. If we were going to conduct this as a course, one of the prerequisites would be having had a study of Deuteronomy. Particularly to understand the covenant relationship between God and the nation Israel.

Between Yahweh or Jehovah or however you care to pronounce it. See that the deal was, the covenant relationship, is that Israel was to maintain loyalty to the Lord by worshiping Him alone and obeying His commandments. And that was their part of the deal.

His part of the deal is as long as they were obedient, that would bring blessing. And if you read Deuteronomy 28, the first 14 verses are the blessings for obedience. The next 14 verses, or in fact more than that, from 15 all the way to the end, disobedience would bring judgment and eventual exile.

It probably would behoove us to mark your place here in Hosea, let's drop back to a Deuteronomy 28 and just sample it a little bit to get a flavor of the Torah on this subject. First 14 verses are the things that will bring a blessing upon Israel. Verse 1, it shall come to pass that if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God and observe and do all His commandments which I command thee this day that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.

That's God's commitment. And by the way, one of the most important theological discoveries is that we worship a God that delights in making and keeping His promises. That's distinctive by the way.

The Allah of the Quran is presented as being arbitrary, capricious, unknowable. That's their conception. No, the God of the Old Testament, the Living God, is quite of a different, in fact the opposite character.

He delights in making, keeping His promise. Here's His promise. If you'll do that, then I'll set thee high above all the nations.

And all these blessings shall come on thee, verse 2, and overtake thee if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, blessed thou shalt be in the field. And he goes on and on here for 14 verses of all the blessings and if they'll keep His commandments.

Take it down to verse 15. Let's pick up 14 just to tie off the first 14 verses. He says, and thou shalt not go aside for many of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

And verse 15, it gives you the other side of the coin. But it shall come to pass if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.

And it goes on and parallels the previous passage. And you can, you know, read that at your leisure. We'll keep going forward here.

Well, as we leave Deuteronomy 20, let's stop at chapter 30. Chapter 30. That's going to come up here shortly.

Let's look at the promise, these blessings and cursings. In chapter 30, there is a commitment you really need to understand. And this is at the root of a great deal of controversy in the church today, strangely.

In Deuteronomy 30, we have the promise of Israel's ultimate restoration. Deuteronomy 30 verse 1, it shall come to pass that when all these things are come upon thee, and the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, that thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations to which the Lord thy God hath driven thee. Because it previously chapters talked about the diaspora, that they would be scattered throughout the world.

And thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God and shall obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart and with all thy soul. Then the Lord thy God will return thy captivity and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations where the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the uttermost parts of heaven, from there will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from there will He fetch thee.

And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it, and He will do thee good and multiply thee above thy fathers." And it goes on. Now, we quickly recognize there's been just a miraculous movement of God in our history, recent history, by the reestablishment of the state of Israel. Profound fulfilling of prophecy.

And yet as we read the rest of Deuteronomy, as we read the prophet Hosea, we realize that there's still yet a dramatic future yet to happen. And strangely, that's quite controversial within the church. We'll get to that as we go.

But, so one of the things that Hosea is going to do, in addition to exposing the nation Israel's breach of covenant, and God's intention to implement judgment, he's going to deal with that, he also confirms the Deuteronomic promise of ultimate restoration and fulfillment. So yes, we see the beginning of that has started with the reestablishment of the state of Israel on the planet Earth, but there is a great deal yet to come, and Hosea will emphasize that. The major themes in Hosea will be the sin, the judgment, and ultimate salvation of the nation.

And now Hosea is going to emphasize idolatry, spiritual idolatry. And he's going to do this, God is going to do this through Hosea in a very strange way. He's going to do it by means of Hosea's marriage.

And it's very interesting how God always uses the marriage to demonstrate, describe, explain, teach us his most intimate truths, in both the positive way and also the negative way. And he's going to have Hosea marry a woman that he tells Hosea will be unfaithful to him. And in spite of that harlotry, in spite of that adultery that she's involved with, he takes her in and restores her.

As God's way of committing to Israel, he's going to treat Israel the same way. Just as Israel has been unfaithful to him, he will still ultimately restore Israel back to himself. And that's one of the key things, especially in this first chapter of Hosea.

But as we get into Hosea, we're going to discover that in addition to the idolatry, which is the core issue here, we have other sins mentioned. In chapter 12 we'll find there's social injustice. What do we mean by social injustice? That you can buy the decisions you want.

That somebody might quip in our country, here, you can get away with murder if you have enough money and whatever. It'll talk about violent crime in chapter 4 and 6 and 12. It's going to talk about religious hypocrisy.

It'll talk about political rebellion, chapter 7, foreign alliances. It'll also talk about the selfish arrogance and the spiritual ingratitude that characterize the nation. As we go through these things, I think we will be unable to deny the parallels to our own predicament in this country.

Not only are unbridled, unparalleled prosperity on the one hand, and yet never in the history of this country has there been more open condoning of virtually everything that's an offense to God. You can make a list of those things that offend God. And they're the things that are not only around, they've probably always been around, but openly condoned and celebrated in our culture.

Oh, one other thing I'll mention before I just start jumping into the detail. In chapter 1, we're also going to encounter the bloodiest parcel of ground on the planet Earth. If you take the globe, planet Earth as you know it, and try to summarize all of history in your mind, where is that piece of ground that's probably seen more battles, had more blood spilled than any other, you know, acreage on the planet Earth? There are a lot of good competitors, a lot of blood spilled around the Earth, but in one place over and over and over and over and over again, which is also going to be the scene of the final climactic blood spilling on the planet Earth.

A place that's just outside of Megiddo. A place that has an eschatological name, Armageddon. Armageddon, Mount Megiddo.

But what it really overlooks is the Valley of Jezreel, also called the Plain of Esdraelon. And interestingly enough, Hosea is going to zero in on this one. So let's jump in.

Chapter 1, verse 1. We got through an introduction in record time. We're really into the text. Great.

Usually takes me a tape or two to get into the text. Okay. Chapter 1, verse 1. The word of the Lord came unto Hosea, the son of Beerai, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, the kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel.

Kind of a strange list, by the way. There's a whole bunch of kings. I'll go that in a minute.

But you'll notice there are four kings of Judah mentioned, and only one of the northern kingdom. And that's very strange, because during the reign of Hosea, he's actually going to embrace a lot of kings. You'll see as I get through in a minute.

But it's interesting that he emphasizes the series of kings for Judah, which is the other guys down south. That's the kingdom of Judah. And there's a lot of conjectures as to why is this strange imbalance.

He mentions just the one king, the then extent king, Jeroboam, which will be succeeded by others before the era is over. But he lists all four of the kings of Judah. And the conjecture is just an academic conjecture, but it may be very valid.

It's almost as if to emphasize the legitimacy of the Davidic throne, even though they're the rebels. They're the northern group that have spun off. Down south, they worshiped Yahweh, in large measure.

That's where the temple was, in the Levites. Up in the north, they worshiped the golden calf. They worshiped idols, Baal, you name it.

A mess. And I should explain something about that, so you get the picture here. When the Civil War took place, when Jeroboam rebelled against Rehoboam, in 1 Chronicles 11, you'll find that the Levites, which

are scattered throughout the land, migrated south.

Why? Well, if you were a Levite committed to the worship Yahweh, and the temple down south, and you were suddenly in an area that had separated itself from the nation, and that had committed itself to idolatry, you were obviously in the wrong place. So what did you do? You packed up and went south to Judah, where they were worshiping in that consistent with the way that you chose to worship. When the Levites go south, what also happened, and the text says so, the faithful, throughout the land, up north, migrated south.

If you were of one of the tribes, of Ephraim or anywhere else, but wanted to stay committed to the worship of Yahweh or Jehovah, you probably packed up and went south, because you were politically incorrect up there. They were going, they would move to idol worship. Conversely, if you were down in Judah, and kind of fed up with the Levites and the temple and all that stuff, you had enough of that stuff, when, after the Civil War, you would pack up and go north, where you could, you know, worship the way you wanted to worship.

You follow me? So there's a myth, because they speak of tribes two ways. Tribes are spoken of as the genealogical clustering of people, but it's also spoken of as the land that is allocated. So when they speak of Ephraim, that doesn't just mean that, that can mean the people that descended from Ephraim, or it can also mean the people that live in the area that was allocated to Ephraim.

The point is, the faithful went south, the unfaithful stayed there, and, as we'll see, when the Assyrians finally capture them and take them captive and deport them, they disappear from history. There's a myth about the ten lost tribes. There aren't ten lost tribes.

The ten, the tribes did not maintain their integrity in that sense. The faithful from all ten tribes, all twelve tribes, typically migrated south. And you'll discover that the terms are used interchangeably, Jew and Israel, Israelite and Jew, throughout the Old Testament, subsequent to this, and the epistles are written to the twelve tribes and so forth, Peter and the rest, and James.

So the point is, you'll hear a lot, there's a lot of literature, a lot of views, built on a false premise, that the ten lost tribes, on the theory that the ones that Assyria captured are somehow lost to history and infiltrated Europe, and are really this, that, or the other thing. And those are myths. Because they don't have a scriptural basis.

People don't like to hear that, because a lot of people are really into that stuff. But we try to have something to offend everyone, we don't play favorites, we try to get us over that. Anyway, we have here Hosea, the name, Hosea, by the way, Hosea is a derivative of Yeshua, or Yehoshua.

There's, just like many of our other names, they have slightly different, same name as different derivatives. Anne and Nancy actually have the same root. And different names have, you know, Diego and James and so forth, you know, they have, so the point is, Hosea is really a derivative name from the same name from which we get Jesus, interestingly enough.

But it means salvation of Yehovah. Salvation of Yehovah. His father was Biri, which means the well of Yahweh.

Be'er Sheva, well of the covenant. These kings, not to spend a lot of time on it, but Jeroboam II is the one that, where Hosea, he's the one that brought in this great prosperity, and where Hosea begins. And he

succeeded by Zechariah, but he reigned only six months, he was murdered by Shalom.

Then Mannheim took charge, and he was extremely cruel, he was a puppet of Assyria, he really sold out. His Democratic National Committee took bribes from one of the foreigners, and he sold out. And Pecahiah was then, he was killed by his successor, Pecah, Pecah took charge, he was killed by Hosea.

And it was about that time the Galilee captivity took place, which is about 734. King Hosea in the north was the king that was king when it finally fell, the fall of Samaria in 722 BC, one of these major milestone dates when the Northern Kingdom finally falls. That's the end of the Northern Kingdom.

And of course, Hosea is prophesying during this period. Down south, Uzziah was a good king, and that's when, he was a king when Hosea began his ministry. He was succeeded by Jotham, who was also a pretty good king.

He was succeeded by Ahaz, and he was a bad dude. He was a very, very, very, very wicked. He's a subject of a lot of discussion.

He married a gal by the name of Jezebel. We'll talk a little bit about her before it's all over. And he was in turn succeeded by Hezekiah.

He was a pretty good king, all in all. So, I won't get into the dates. They varied among different scholars anyway, and there's some very interesting difficulties in some of the chronology of the kings, but that's not critical to our issues here.

Most of these reigns are recorded in 2 Chronicles, from about chapter 26 to 32 in that area, you'll find all these guys. But, and anyway, as Hosea foresees, Tiglath-Balazer III in Assyria was expanding westward. Assyrians had ruled the world for centuries, but they're expanding westward.

And about 733, they make the northern kingdom a puppet state. This would have been in the reign then of, in effect, Mannheim and following. And the violence of... Now, by the way, this is the other thing to notice as we try to characterize the times.

Southern kingdom had a succession of four kings. Three out of four were pretty good guys. Northern kingdom is one after the other, reigning six months, murder to this guy, murder to this guy, murder to this guy, you know.

It sounds like a banana republic, doesn't it? And what other country does it sound like? I don't know if they promoted the myth of the lone assassin to explain all these, you know. They always... That's a great American myth. It's always alone, whether it's Abraham Lincoln or whoever.

It's always some crackpot working by himself. Anyway, it is disturbing to stand back and see the violence in our country. And I don't mean just the Columbine High School kind of thing.

At the highest levels of office, the shenanigans, the murders. On internet, you can find lists that purport by name of over a hundred of people that have somehow entangled them or been entangled and then been removed before they could give evidence. So it's interesting that we see the same kind of overtones to the northern empire here.

But in any case, the northern empire becomes a puppet state of Assyria. And this is 2 Kings 15, for those of you taking notes. And they were a puppet state, but after they plot revolt under Hosea and... Not Hosea,

Hosea the king up there.

And they were finally, after finally revolt, Israel was given a shattering military defeat in 722 and were ultimately deported. That's in 2 Kings 17 and 18. It's all through there.

And so, by the way, Judah to the south was also incorporated as a vassal state into the Assyrian empire during Hosea's time and in 2 Kings 16. But because they're faithless, God intervenes supernaturally and has an angel one night after dinner wipe out 185,000 soldiers. They packed up and went home.

Didn't bother them anymore. You don't mess with angels. So anyway, verse 2. The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea.

The Lord said unto Hosea, said to Hosea, a strange command. Think about this, guys. Go take thee a wife of Hortems and children of Hortems, child of Hortems, for the land hath committed great Horem departing from the Lord.

Now the scholars debate a great deal on whether she was a whore already or whether that was just a prediction of the way she would behave. A lot of debates about that. Sort of academic really.

The point is God informs Hosea what he's getting into. And he marries her. Because she's going to be a model of God's dealing with Israel.

And I'm not implying this is some great sacrifice of Hosea. He may have been madly in love with her anyway. But the point is God instructs him to go ahead and do this because he's going to show himself.

He's going to teach through this how these Hortems are going to be dealt with. And it's important, this whole concept of marriage, we take that so for granted. But it is the model of love, intimacy, privilege, and responsibility.

It had its origins in Eden. It's the only institution that survives Eden, comes out of Eden. Marriage.

Very, very dear to God for lots of reasons. Not just a relationship of convenience to somehow get along through life. It's the basic molecule of our nation.

As the marriage goes, as the homes go, so goes the nation. And that speaks volumes also of our country. As not only do we have such horrible statistics, we have a government that's encouraging them.

And it's always a mystery until you really analyze it. Why is it in the government interest to promote immorality? To promote teenage pregnancies? Because the government gets stronger if there's social crisis. What creates social crises? Immorality.

So is it any surprise the government has an incentive to promote immorality and increase its power of the people? But anyway, moving on. To get some feeling of this, again, to set the stage here, turn to Exodus 34. Think about verse 14.

For thou shalt worship no other god, for the Lord whose name is jealous is a jealous God. Verse 15. Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land that they play the harlot with their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice, and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters play the harlot with their gods, and make thy sons play harlot with their gods.

Play the harlot is an alternative rendering the King James says, going a whoring after. Same concept. And I want you to notice that the two things here, the idiom of harlotry is being applied spiritually.

Spiritually. For someone in a covenant relationship with the Lord God, the living God, to worship other idols is equivalent as far as he's concerned as adultery. You're going whoring after other gods.

So when you bow down to an idol to worship that idol, you are in effect committing a spiritual abomination. And this is exactly what Ahab and Jezebel promoted in the northern kingdom. When Ahab took over, he married Jezebel, I'll come to all that in a little bit here, who introduced and enforced idol worship throughout the land.

He said, well gee dad, we don't have idols here. Wrong. Your tax dollars are enforcing paganism in your schools.

But let's move on here. Let's pick up a few others as we go forward. Let's take Leviticus 17.

Talking about instructions here for the priests and so forth. It says, they shall no more, verse 7, they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto demons after whom they have played the harlot. There shall be a statute forever unto them throughout their generations.

Again, this idea of offering worship or obeisance to idols is called harlotry, but it also acknowledges these things are not simply carved of wood and stone. They in effect represent demon entities. And that's again, so we're not warring here against superstition or the evils of ignorance.

Something quite the contrary. These things have behind them sentient malevolent beings. And turn over to another page Leviticus 20, verses 5 and 6. God says, then I will set my face against that man and against his family and cut him off and all that play the harlot after him to commit harlotry with Moloch from among their people.

And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits and after wizards to play the harlot, after them I will even set my face against that soul will cut him off from among his people. What's he talking about? Mediums, channeling, practices of the new age are simply modern packaging of exactly those same things. Commerce with demons called collectively in the scripture harlotry.

Let's keep moving. We can go to Deuteronomy 32, verse 16. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods and with abominations provoked they him to anger.

Here again is I want you to notice the vocabulary abominations. Abominations is an equivalent term to the harlotry towards false idols. The extreme form of that is the abomination that makes desolate.

The abomination of desolation which will be a climactic event in Israel that preparations are already positioning themselves for. You might skip down verse 20, 21. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God.

They have provoked me to anger with their vanities. I will move them to jealousy with those who are not a people. I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

So God's going to use the Gentiles for his method of judgment here. Let's pick up one more and we'll get back to the text. Isaiah 54, Isaiah 54, verse 5. For thy maker, speaking Israel, for thy maker is thine husband.

The Lord of hosts is his name and thy redeemer the Holy One of Israel. The God of the whole earth shall he be called. The Lord hath called thee like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, a wife of youth.

When thou wast refused, saith my Lord, and he goes on. Isaiah deals with the same issue. Again God is going to use in Hosea this whole institute of the marriage between us as people to model or communicate the relationship that God holds between himself and his nation Israel.

Where nation Israel is the unfaithful wife and he's the husband. He's the injured husband so to speak. And of course we find this same idea modeled in more positive terms perhaps in the book of Ruth.

Where there too Boaz, the kinsman redeemer, is the husband taking to himself a Gentile bride Ruth and by doing so Naomi, a type of Israel, is returned to the land. And the whole book of Ruth is an elegant, eloquent model of the church in the Old Testament. And that's again obviously a whole other study.

You can also in your notes, to use our time best, I'll keep going, but in your notes you might put Ephesians 5, verse 25 through 32. Because in Ephesians 5, starting about verse 25, Paul gives us instruction, husbands and wives, how you should behave to one another. And the wife is instructed to submit to her husband.

I know all you girls have had that pointed out to you already, that passage. But the husband has a counterpart. He is to love his wife like Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.

Boy, did Christ love the church a lot? Boy did he. And that's our example guys. That's our example.

And I'll forego going through, from here we usually go through a whole side trip on examples of that, but I think you get the message. And just about the time, as you go through Ephesians 5, from 25, you hear all this admonitions about husbands, wives, what you're supposed to do. Just about the time you think you're getting it, you get to verse 32, where Paul throws you a curveball.

He says, but I speak of Christ and His church. Meaning, he turns it over. Once we understand how we are supposed to relate to our wife in both ways, he then says, that's the clue about the relationship between Christ and church.

We are to hold Christ preeminent, above all things. And he has given himself, everything he is, on our behalf. Staggering, as you try to get your mind around that one.

Verse 3, we're making great progress. We've got two verses, okay. God gives him, in verse 2, the commandment, go take thee a wife of whoredoms and so on.

Verse 3, so what does Hosea do? Argue with him? Stall? Look for more analysis? No. So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Deblim, which conceived and bear him a son. By the way, the name Gomer seems to imply filling up with measure.

Filling up to measure. I don't know what that means. Does that mean he got fed up later? But anyway, Deblim is a double cake of figs.

It's suggestive, really. It's an idiom, perhaps, of sensual pleasure. But that's an inference.

But verse 4 on, we're going to jump into now a topic called the blood of Jezreel. We need to understand this for our, you know, what's wonderful about some of these passages, you not only learn what the

passage has to bring to you, but by understanding that passage, you also begin to put together all the rest of the scripture. There are certain subjects and topics and links that link the whole rest together.

And Jezreel, the blood of Jezreel, the plain of Jezreel, the valley of Jezreel, are one of those issues. Verse 4, the Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel. Gomer had a son.

She's going to have three children, a son, a daughter, and another son. And these three children, God tells him how to name them. And their names turn out to be relevant to God's purpose.

The Lord said unto him, the Lord's telling Hosea how to name this first son here. 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.

The word Jezreel can mean several things. It can mean sown of God. Sown of God.

Now, sowing can be a blessing, or it can be a judgment. Okay? It's actually what's called a homonym. Two different words that sound exactly the same, yet have different meanings.

And one of the meanings is God may scatter. It's used that way in Jeremiah 31.10. Jezreel can mean, implies scattering. It also can mean sow, a slightly different kind of thing, Zechariah 10.9. You see, God was about to cast Israel, that is the northern kingdom I'm talking about, not the nation, the northern kingdom, out of His sight among the Gentiles, in order for them to be chastened for their iniquities.

Now, the reigning house of Israel, the northern kingdom, had succeeded to the throne, the very blood of Israel. Jehu, King Ehad, went after Ahab, and he was supposed to do that. That was appropriate.

But he went at it so ruthlessly, so violently, that he overdid it. His ruthless massacre of the entire house of Ahab, at where? Jezreel, is part of what God hears. He's saying, I'll avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.

If you read the story, you'll discover Jehu, or Yehu, was supposed to do that, but he just did it with a vengeance that was dishonoring. And so, now, so that's why it's mentioned here, but it's also going to turn out, before we're through, to also be the scene, Jezreel will also be the scene of Israel's demise. This is where they're going to have their final battle, as far as, before the, under the Assyrians.

But this is also, in a sense, going to echo the final battle in Revelation 16. All occur in this place, in this geography. And the, this whole thing about Ahab and Jezreel, and so forth, is in 2 Kings 9, chapters 9 and 10.

We'll look at it a little bit here. You may also recall, if you've done any reading in Revelation, remember we talked about Jesus in his letter to Thyatira, talks about that woman Jezebel. And to understand what he's saying there, you need to understand the Old Testament story of Jezebel and Ahab.

There was a guy by the name of Naboth that had a vineyard in his family. And King Ahab really wanted that vineyard. He wanted to buy it from Naboth.

Naboth didn't want to sell. It was his, he didn't want to sell. So the king comes home in a pout.

And Jezebel says, no sweat, let me handle it. So what does Jezebel do? She rounds up some, some, some witnesses that accuse Naboth of heresy. So they kill him and possess the lands to the crown.

And she gives Ahab this vineyard that he wanted so badly. Now that's the Old Testament story. Jesus makes reference to that in a prophetic sense.

You see, of another churchy organization that gathered lands through inquisition and so forth. So if you want, if that sounds contrived or far-fetched, I encourage you to do a study of the seven letters of seven churches. Study of Revelation 2 and 3. Revelation is the only book in the Bible that has the audacity to pronounce a special blessing on the reader or the student.

But the most fruitful part of the 22 chapters of Revelation are the chapters 2 and 3. They're the ones that apply to you immediately and they're also prophetic in dramatic ways. I encourage you to refresh your memory on that if you haven't done it lately or if you haven't undertaken a study, I encourage you to do a careful study of Revelation chapters 2 and 3. But the point is, you learn this, to understand the letter to Thyatira, you have to get in this whole, every one of those letters has Old Testament background. The book of Revelation has 404 verses that include over 800 allusions from the Old Testament.

And so to really understand Revelation, one of the reasons it's a blessing is you have to get into almost every book in the Old Testament, in the whole Bible. And so anyway, when you get to that letter to Thyatira, you get back into Naboth and all this, that's all familiar to you. But what you may not realize is Naboth's vineyard was where? On the plain of Jezreel.

Same place. So his blood cries out from the ground. Also.

And all that is in 1 Kings 21, if you want to do your homework on that. And by the way, the name Jezebel means, you ready for this? Chaste. You know? And from 1 Kings 16 through 2 Kings 11, there are all the exploits there and so forth.

Her father was Ephbaal, the king of Phoenicia. He assassinated his predecessor and established his reign when he was 36 years old, reigned for about 32 years. His dynasty lasted for about 94 years.

But the main thing, when Jezebel marries Ahab, they systematically destroy the leadership that is committed to the worship of Jehovah in the northern kingdom. And of course, for all that, that's in 1 Kings 18, Elijah pronounces judgment upon Jezebel and Ahab, because they're so vigorous here. Turn to chapter 21 of 1 Kings.

From verse 17 on, Elijah pronounces judgment on Ahab and Jezebel. And in verse 19, for an example, it says, Where is that? Jezreel. Come down here to verse 23.

And of Jezebel also spoke the Lord, saying, The dog shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Well, having said all of that, turn with me to 2 Kings 9. Ahab is going to get slain in the battle of Horeb of Gilead in 1 Kings 22, and he's succeeded by Joram. Joram or Jehoram is the same guy.

And Jehu is anointed by Elisha, and he sets out to put Joram to death. Jehu meets Joram and also Ahaziah, the king of Judah, at the land where Naboth had his vineyard, way back, pierces him through with an arrow and casts his bleeding corpse into the plot of Naboth. So that gets fulfilled.

Ahaziah also gets smitten, and he dies at Megiddo, which is the mount right next door to it. But Jezebel also meets her fate, because what's going to happen here in 2 Kings 9, Jehu tells them, she's up in a window, throw her down. And so they cast her down, out of the window, and she gets trampled to death.

Jehu goes off and he comes back. Let's see if they described it so vividly, we can't miss this. 2 Kings 9, excuse me, 9 verse 30.

Jehu has come to Jezebel, heard of it, painted her face, attired her head, looked out through a window. As Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, had Zimri peace? Who slew his master? And lifted up his face to the window and said, Who is it on my side? Who? And there looked out from the window two or three eunuchs. And he said, throw her down.

So they threw her down, and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses, and he trod her underfoot. When he's come in, they did eat and drink and go see this cursed woman and bury her, for she is the king's daughter. And they went to bury her, and they found no more of her than the skull, her feet, and the palms of her hands.

Wherefore they came again and told him, and said, This is the word of the Lord, as he spoke by his servant Elisha the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel, and the carcass of Jezebel shall be as a refuse upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel. To that they shall not say, This is Jezebel. In other words, they won't be able to tell where she is.

So this is all part of what the word Jezreel conjures up, all these stories, all this carnage, all this bloodletting. And you think, now did they learn any of their lessons? No, they failed to profit from the lesson of God's hatred of sin and His abhorrence of idolatry in particular, because this same Jezreel is going to be the scene of their final judgment. And where the Assyrians capture them and their captivity begins.

Now Jezreel is about 10 miles in breadth. It goes from the Mediterranean all the way to the Jordan, from the Galilee to the mountains of Ephraim. This is the great battlefield where Gideon had his big victory back in Judges 6. But it becomes a symbol of national disgrace and defeat.

This is where Saul died. Saul's death was right there, a mountain overlooking it. And now, dispensationally speaking, just as it's Naboth's vineyard literally, it's also the whole area is Yahweh's vineyard.

And turn with me to Isaiah 5, because this all ties together. Isaiah was a contemporary of Hosea. First few verses of chapter 5 of Isaiah.

Isaiah says, Now I will sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. He dug it, gathered out the stones, planted it with the choicest vine, built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress in it, and looked for it to bring forth grapes.

And it brought forth wild grapes. The analogy is like weeds. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Isaiah is speaking to Judah, northern, southern kingdom, but you get the same, it's contemporaneous.

Judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard, what could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Why? When I looked for it to bring forth grapes, brought forth wild grapes. And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away its hedge, and it shall be eaten up and break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down, and I will lay it waste, and it shall not be pruned nor digged.

But there shall come up briars and thorns, and I will also command the clouds that they know rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant. And he looked for justice, but behold, oppression, for righteousness, but behold, a cry.

And then he goes on for the next two dozen verses to talk about six woes that describe the situation he finds there. Now people ask me often, is America, is the United States in Bible prophecy? I don't happen to hold to these people, they may turn out to be right, I just don't happen to agree that it's Babylon or any of these things in a literal sense at all. But is American prophecy? Yes, it's in Isaiah 5. It's described in these six woes.

Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till where there is no place that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth. In other words, sprawling subdivisions, prosperity, building, house to house. Get down here to verse 11.

Woe unto them who rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink, who continue until all night, till wine inflames them. And it goes on, revelry, parties, enjoyment, that sort of thing. Get down to verse 18.

Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were, with a cart rope. That say, let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it. And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come, that we may know it.

These are taunts. Woe unto them that draw iniquity as with a cart rope. It doesn't say they're in iniquity.

Indeed they are. It's more than that. They are parading it.

They draw iniquity as if it's in a cart. They're drawing it through the crowds to show it off. Does that remind you of some pride parades from time to time? The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not homosexuality.

Sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was the condoning of homosexuality. Verse 20. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, and put darkness for light, and light for darkness, and put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

What do you mean bitter and sweet? It's all relative. Absolute truth? You've got to be kidding. Good and evil? You have your truth, I have mine.

Come on. Verse 21. Woe unto them who are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to make strong drink, who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him, bribing of judges, buying the decisions you need at court.

I won't even talk about the corruption of the Department of Justice in this country or the rest of it. Do your homework. Look around.

Come to your own conclusions. Now there's another parallel story to Isaiah's. Turn with me to Matthew 21 and verse 33.

Here another parable. There's a certain household who planted a vineyard, hedged around about, dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and leased it to a tenant farmers, and went to a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the farmers that they might receive the fruits of it.

The farmers took his servants, and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did the same to them. Last of all he sent unto them his own son, saying, They will reverence my son.

But when the farmers saw the son, they said unto themselves, This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

When the Lord therefore of his vineyard cometh, what will he do to those farmers? Even a casual listener would get outraged at this point, at the ingratitude of the tenants to their patron. They shall say unto him, He will miserably destroy them. This is the Pharisees response.

They'll miserably destroy those wicked men, and will lease his vineyard to other farmers, who shall render him the fruits of their seasons. And Jesus said unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same as become the headstone of the corner? This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits of it.

Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind them to powder. And I love verse 45. And when the chief priests and Pharisees heard these parables, they perceived that he spoke of them.

No kidding Dick Tracy. Sown of God is the term in Hosea. They were sown in Jehovah's portion.

They 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 husbandmen, claimed the vineyard as their own. And because of this, the Gentile oppressor was permitted to overturn the kingdom, and power was transferred to the nations.

And Paul talks about how long, not forever, Romans 11, 25, until the fullness of the Gentiles would come in. Now their blood, Israel's blood was poured out, and they have also been devoured by dogs, that is the unclean Gentiles. See there's an analogy here all the way through.

Now the question now is, have the Gentiles learned any lessons from any of this? Far from it. They too will be cut off, and thus will God avenge upon them again the blood of Jezreel. Where does that take place? Revelation 16.

And he gathered them together in a place which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Har-Magedon, the plain of Jezreel. And verse 5, It shall come to pass at that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. Break the bow is really referring to the destruction of the nation's military might.

We find that in 1 Samuel 2, Psalm 46, Jeremiah 49, and elsewhere. This is really referring here to the fall of Samaria, back in 722 B.C. And this prophecy was fulfilled some 50 years after this, in the days of Hosea the king, who was imprisoned by Shalmaneser V, the Assyrian ruler, and the northern kingdom was taken captive. Verse 6, that's just the one son, we've got a couple more to go.

She conceived again, verse 6, and bare a daughter. God said to them, Call her name Lo-Ruhamah. For I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, I will utterly take them away.

Lo-Ruhamah, lo means no, it's a negative. Not, no. Ruhamah comes from the word meaning, from the verb Racham, which means, it describes the tender feelings of compassion, typically that of a parent to a child.

At Sinai, God calls himself El-Racham, the compassionate one. But this is Lo-Racham, no compassion, no pity, in effect. See, El-Racham was a compassionate God who was willing to forgive iniquity.

But Exodus 34, verses 6 and 7 points out, he is compassionate, but there comes a time when he will also punish iniquity. He can no longer leave the guilty unpunished. And such a time had come for the Northern Kingdom.

The question that none of us know the answer to, is when will that time come for America? Too much is given, much is required. And our heritage has been incredible, and we've cramped it. It's hard to visualize us cramming it any further.

And there will come a time when God will say, OK, enough's enough, and use our enemies to be his mechanism for judgment. This prophecy here, Lo-Ramah, is interpreted for us in Romans 9, verses 24 through 27. We won't take time here.

Basically talking about how Israel will be set aside or blinded until the fullness of the Gentiles will come in, until those fruits are gathered. And 1 Peter 2, verse 10, also speaks of them not having obtained mercy and so forth. So this is the status of Israel since they've been cast out of their land.

Verse 7, But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow or by sword, nor by battle, by horses or by horsemen. He's talking, verse 7, of the Southern Kingdom. Northern Kingdom is going to get theirs.

But he says, But I'll have mercy upon the house of Judah, those guys down the south. And he's not going to do it by military might. Not by bow, sword.

The Syrians are setting on them too. But in 701 B.C., we have this strange event where this angel slaughtered, one night, 185,000 Syrian soldiers. And ending their campaign against Judah, they went home.

That's in 2 Kings 19, for those who want to track it down. It also might be a foreshadowing of Ezekiel, chapter 38 and 39, which could be on our horizon. Verse 8, Now when she had weaned Lo-Ramah, she conceived and bare a son.

And then God said, Call his name Lo-Ami, for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. Oh boy, I thought Israel was God's chosen people. Not right now.

If they were in the past, they will be again. They're not right now. What's my authority? Right here.

See, Lo-Ami means not my people. See, in the ancient covenant formula, God had declared, quote, I will walk among you and be your God and you will be my people. That's in Leviticus 26.

It's also Exodus 6 and Deuteronomy 26. It's several places in the Torah. But see, now this relationship between God and Israel had been severed by Israel's spurning the covenant.

And by the way, he says, I will not be your God. That's not exactly what it says. The clause, the last clause in that verse actually says, And I am not, I am to you.

Remember the I am, that's really what it's saying. When Moses says, What's the name of God? He says, I am that I am. Here he's saying that I, and the am is implied, am not, I am to you.

He's saying the covenant relationship severed. It's going to be reestablished, but they've been cut off. And because they haven't broken the command that they entered into and ratified.

They entered into Sinai and they ratified at the plains of Moab. God gives them up for the time being. And this sentence remains unrepealed to this present day.

This doesn't mean he doesn't watch over them invisibly. In the book of Esther, he's clearly at every turn of that story, but invisibly behind the scenes. And a coincidence is when God is working undercover, right? And the book of Esther, we've just been through that.

That really gives an example of how God, despite the fact that formally the relationship severed, he's still there watching over them. And by the way, this verse is also a rebuttal to the amillennialists. Some eschatology in some Christian quarters has this view that the church has replaced Israel.

If that's true, then God is a liar. He's got his promise to restore Israel specifically as it will start to unfold here. And he's not through dealing with the nation of Israel.

He's been set aside for a time. By the way, this verse also ends chapter 1 in the Hebrew text. But we'll pick up a couple of verses to finish this chapter so we can start chapter 2 next time.

And there's a remarkable shift of tone here in verse 10 because the Lord declares that the effects of the judgments would someday be reversed. And Paul quotes this in Romans 9, verses 24 to 27, applying to the Gentiles. The Jew and the Gentile today are on the same ground.

It's not the ground of Sinai, but rather the ground of Calvary, the blood of Christ. It's on grace, not on the basis of works or legal performance. The sand of the sea, of course, is a phrase you may remember from the original covenant of grace that El Shaddai, the Almighty, made in Genesis 22.

Remember Abraham offering Isaac and that was the phrase that he used there. Verse 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. And so, as they had been divided after the Days of Solomon, they'd be reunited under a singular Davidic ruler in the Kingdom Age.

That, of course, is the Messiah. And from here you can put a list of verses. Hosea 3, 5. We'll get to that later.

Isaiah 9, 6, and 7, every Christmas for, you know, unto you a child is born and a son is given. And the rest of that verse, the next few verses you should read, is, again, a commitment to that. And Amos 9, 11, Micah 5, 2, Bethlehem thou efforteth.

There will be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be, what? A ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from everlasting to everlasting. Promises of a throne that have yet to be fulfilled. The field of blood, Jezreel, it will once again become the vineyard of Jehovah.

And they will be ultimately sown of God, just as the word implies, in the land of their fathers, never to be uprooted again. But that's yet future. And this future day of restoration is going to be ushered in by, again, a military triumph like that of Gideon and a number of other pastors.

We call it Armageddon. And that's somewhere on the horizon. Every day that goes by brings it a day closer.

So that launches us into this interesting book, Hosea. We had the valley of Jezreel, chapter 1. Next week we'll talk about the valley of Achor and all its implications. Let's stand for a closing word of prayer.

And let's bow our hearts. Father, we come before your throne grateful, oh ever grateful, for your grace and your mercy that has been extended to us through Jesus Christ. We thank you, Father, that you indeed love us so much to go to these extremes, to bring us into your kingdom.

And Father, we come before your throne grieved over the state of our nation as we too have trampled underfoot the incredible heritage that you've given us that has come at such a high price. We thank you, Father, for the freedoms that we've enjoyed for so many generations. We thank you, Father, for the rule of law that has given us peace and comfort, freedom of expression and the freedom of worship.

And yet, Father, we acknowledge before you our ingratitude and our lack of stewardship, our lack of diligence to have allowed these precious, precious laws and precious, precious freedoms to be eroded, to be trampled, to be shredded and set aside. We confess, we assume responsibility, Father, it's our negligence and our lack of stewardship that has allowed this to happen. And yet, Father, we look to you as the author and finisher of our faith and we pray that you would forgive us for these iniquities as we confess them before you and as we plead the blood of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

We do pray, Father, that you would indeed help us to know your heart in these matters, help us to discern that path you have for each of us in the days ahead. That we might be fruitful stewards of your gifts, that we might participate in the fruits of your kingdom, not by power nor by might but by your Spirit. Father, we just commit ourselves afresh into your hands, pleading the blood of Yeshua HaMashiach, our Lord and Savior, he that will indeed be ruler in Israel.

Amen.

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