

# Hosea #2 Ch. 2-3 Seven Blessings of Israel

by Chuck Missler

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*Chuck Missler's sermon on Hosea explores God's enduring love for Israel amidst their unfaithfulness and the implications for modern society.*

**Duration:** 58:49

**Scripture:** Ephesians 5:22-32

**Topics:** "Blessings"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the significance of Hosea chapter 2 in the Bible. The chapter is described as one of the greatest prophetic pronouncements in the entire revelation of God. The speaker highlights the moral decay in America and how it parallels the story of Gomorrah and Israel in the Bible. The chapter emphasizes God's judgment and lack of mercy upon the sinful nation and its people. The sermon encourages the audience to reflect on their own relationship with God and to keep His name unspotted before the world.

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## Transcript

I'm really finding, not only this book, but our timing of studying this book, really ordained of the Lord in many ways. Just a little background, we'll be jumping into chapters two and three tonight, but for those that may have just joined us, Hosea, of course, was a contemporary of Isaiah and Amos and Micah. He was sort of a century earlier, an anticipatory, if you will, of Jeremiah, in the sense that Hosea was the prophet to the northern kingdom, right after Solomon, of course, there was a civil war, and the idolaters, Jeroboam took the northern kingdom into idolatry, and the faithful migrated south and so forth.

Those that were interested in idolatry moved north. So the point is, we have the northern kingdom that Hosea is going to minister to. The northern kingdom went from bad to worse, increasingly in the idolatry and the rest.

The southern kingdom declines later, and most of us are familiar with Jeremiah's writings, as he wept over the death of his nation. That was the house of Judah, the southern kingdom. But Hosea is, in a sense, very parallel to Jeremiah earlier, addressing the issue of the northern kingdom.

And one of the things that hits us right between the eyes is to understand the predicament of the northern kingdom, because they were in unparalleled prosperity. Jeroboam had a standing army, they conquered all the old territories, they conquered all the way to Damascus, they enjoyed unprecedented prosperity,

not exceeded since the days of Solomon. So it was the best of times, and it was the worst of times, to quote Charles Dickens' famous opening line of *The Tale of Two Cities*.

The best of times, it was prosperous, people enjoyed multiple houses, they've had... everything was, you know, the stock indexes were breaking 12,000, whatever. And yet it was the worst of times. It was morally the nadir of that nation, and they had plunged into every conceivable sin and idolatry that one can imagine.

And so Hosea is faced with dealing with a nation that's prosperous and not interested in listening, warning them that God's patience had a limit, that there would be a time that he would say enough's enough, and he was going to judge the northern kingdom by using their enemies as his instruments of judgment. That's the message of Hosea, in a quick nutshell. And of course, that should hit us right between the eyes, because America has never been more prosperous in many, many ways.

Technologically and in terms of investment performance, the stock indexes are defying gravity, and everybody is enjoying a life financially that's unprecedented. And yet it doesn't take a lot of insight to look behind that and realize that behind that there's some very serious decay. And I don't mean just the erosion of the military and some of these other things.

The real root problem of America is its moral decay, never in its history has America been more openly condoning of immorality, of corruption in high office, make the list. And our entertainment industry takes pride in exporting adultery. They don't make a movie without it, it seems.

The whole... it's not just the sin, it's the open cultural condoning and encouragement of sin. There's always been homosexuality, but it's when it's openly condoned and given special rights and so forth. That's a measure of its biblical standards.

So there are some startling parallels in the predicament of the Northern Kingdom in America, and there's also some disturbing parallels, potentials, between God's remedy for that, which in the Northern Kingdom was use their enemies to, in the Northern Kingdom's case, wipe them out. A century later, the same thing happens in the Southern Kingdom. Their kings go from bad to worse, and they had a couple of good ones, but they also went down, and it was Jeremiah that had to face the same predicament in the Southern Kingdom when Babylon was God's instrument.

The Assyrians were God's instrument in the Northern Kingdom, Babylon in the Southern Kingdom. But having said all that, we finished last time with Hosea. All you have to do is go to Daniel Turnright.

Hosea chapter 1 is where we finished. In the last couple of verses of chapter 1, we saw several prophecies all wrapped up there. In chapter 1, verse 10, we discover that Israel will experience a great increase in population, Hosea tells them.

He also indicated that in the nation there will be a great turning back to God ultimately. Also, he predicted that the Northern and Southern Kingdoms would once again ultimately be reunified into a single nation. He also indicated that they will appoint themselves one head ultimately, who of course will be the Messiah.

Now, these prophecies are yet future. They're not to be realized in the lifetimes of his hearers, but there is a positive subsequent destiny laid out. There's a fifth prophecy that shows up in verse 1 of chapter 2. And I think I mentioned last time that the Hebrew chapters and verses in the Hebrew Bible are a little different.

We're going to pick up the thought in chapter 2. Now, chapter 2 of Hosea could be called the Valley of Achor. And you're going to discover that Hosea's wife proves faithless, Israel proves faithless, but God proves faithful. And you may recall in chapter 1 that God is going to use Hosea's wife as an example, as a model of Israel.

And we'll see that develop in chapter 2. But chapter 2, verse 1, Hosea continues, Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi, and to your sisters, Ruhamah. Now, remember when we were back in chapter 1 that Gomer, Hosea's wife, had three children. The first was a son who was named Jezreel.

And we went into the whole background of Jezreel. And the word itself can mean sowing or gathering. It's kind of a pun.

You're going to discover if you actually get into the linguistic structure of Hosea, Hosea probably more than any other writer of the Old Testament, indulges in wordplay and puns and subtleties that we miss in the translation. And I won't try to derail the continuity of our study by getting too much into that. But one of the important ones is this whole business of Jezreel.

It can mean both scattering and gathering depending on how you use it. And that ambiguity in his name is exploited by God in subsequent passages. And I won't get into the whole background of Jezreel and the Valley of Armageddon.

We talked about that last time. But that was the first son was Jezreel. Then they had a daughter.

And in verse 6, God said, call her name Lo-Ruhamah. Lo means no in Israel, no or not. Ruhamah means mercy or pity.

No mercy, no pity is what the name is, what God instructs Hosea to name the kid. Kind of a rough handle to go through school. It means not loved in effect.

That's a horrible name to give a girl. But it's going to change. Relax.

But God is using this to get a message across. Then they have another daughter that is, in verse 9, God says, call her name, or excuse me, it's another son, call his name Lo-Ami. Lo, not.

Ami, my people. You are not my people. Boy.

And so this, he's implying in the names of these children that he's severing his relationship with the people. I won't go through, I won't try to rebuild the whole chapter again, but that's the background. And what you find in chapter 2 is a positive step.

In chapter 2, verse 1, God says, say to your brethren, Ami, and to your sisters, Ruhamah. In other words, he removes the no. Ami, you are my people.

Ruhamah, you are going to have pity or mercy. And so God is announcing by this name change in his children that the day is coming when he's again going to be saying, you are my people. He's not saying it there.

That's a prediction that it ultimately happened. Now it's interesting, as you go through this study of Hosea, a lot of other issues are lurking beneath the surface. There are those very prominent in many denominations that teach that God is permanently through with Israel.

We're going to think, they discount or they spiritualize God's commitment to Israel. They argue by a variety of reasonings that the promises to Israel devolved upon the church. And the tragedy of that viewpoint is, beside being wrong, is that it causes you to dismiss a good part of the Old Testament and surprisingly a major part of the New that depends on that.

And so it's very, very important. And God is not through with the nation of Israel. And that's going to, one of the main themes that Hosea is going to document, and it's also one that Paul picks up in the book of Romans.

We'll be talking about that. God is not through with Israel. But let's turn to verse 2. I mean all the way to verse 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. God is going to be drawing a parallel between Gomer's relationship to her husband Hosea and Israel's relationship to Yahweh or Jehovah or the God of Israel. It's interesting, we're going to, this is one of the prominent evidences in the scripture, how God uses the marriage institution to communicate His most intimate truths.

He did that in the Garden of Eden. He did that with Boaz and Ruth, the book of Ruth. You go all the way through the scripture to the climax, and certainly Paul develops this in Ephesians chapter 5 in instructions to husbands and wives.

And of course it climaxes in the marriage supper of the Lamb and so forth. There's a very, very provocative intimacy between God's use of the marriage in that way and His most intimate truths, most intimate spiritual truths. The only thing that survived the Garden of Eden beside Adam and Eve was the institution of marriage.

It was born there and carried forward. Very, very important. And God is using it here to communicate a fundamental truth between Himself and His chosen people, Israel.

So when you see the discussions about Gomer, recognize that by implication God is talking about Israel as well as His wife Gomer. Now God told Hosea that his wife would be unfaithful, turn to prostitution, she's going to do that. But that serves God's purpose because she then becomes a model of exactly what Israel did, by turning from the true worship of God to the idolatries, which in spiritual terms is a form of parlatory.

So verse 2 starts to pick that up. Plead with your mother, plead. Now the word plead implies contention.

And the contention of course is Gomer went back to prostitution. There's all kinds of scholastic debate. Had she been a prostitute prior and there's different... experts have different views.

We don't know whether she did or that was just predictive on the part of God. That's sort of irrelevant to the story in a sense. See, whatever her beginnings were, she was to etch her name on the infamy of the nation.

Because throughout eternity her name will be associated with the faithlessness of Israel. And all this, of course, Hosea's heart is broken. Because despite all that, Hosea loved her.

Let's not emphasize the text, you have to infer it from a number of things, but it's pretty clear, I think, that he loved her. He wasn't just... he was being obedient to God indeed, but his heart was in it. He loved her.

The worst sin you can commit. We've often said, asked questions, what's the most painful sin you can do? And we've suggested that is gossip. It's not murder, that's pretty quick.

Gossip isn't. The innuendos and the reputations it destroys just continue. Gossip is perhaps the most painful sin.

What is the worst sin you can commit? It's been suggested that the worst sin you can commit is to be unfaithful to one who loves you. In the interpersonal sense, that's certainly true. And in the theological sense, the ultimate sin is to be ungrateful to the Creator that provides and redeems and deals with us.

And that's what this is going to hit. The greatest sin a Christian can commit is being unfaithful to the God that has redeemed you and who loves you still. So this passage is going to demonstrate in some strange ways the nature of God's love toward those who have been... who have proved unfaithful to Him.

And I won't ask for a show of hands, because if we were honest, all our hands would go up. Have we all been unfaithful to Him? Absolutely. So we want to understand, what's His attitude about that? What's He going to do? You know, to the Greeks, God was unfeeling.

Their word was *apathia*, which... from which we get the word *apathy*. To the Muslims, Allah is capricious, unknowable. But not the God of the Bible.

The God of the Bible weeps for His people, yearns for them, and works for their deliverance. And we could go through a lot of examples, and some of the more interesting examples would be out of the second chapter of the book of Jeremiah, but we'll keep moving here. See, if it were you or me, and we were God, or if we were Hosea maybe, we might give up.

But God continues to work to turn sorrow into joy, tragedy into unfaithfulness. How does He do this? Through the triumph of love. That's His best shot.

But even God reaches a point where beyond that, He would be a namby-pamby yielding... He would violate His other nature of righteousness and justice and the rest. There is a point which even God, in His mercy, has a point of... beyond which He will not go. And that's also the deal here.

So verse 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. Now he's speaking to... in terms of Gomer, but he's talking about Israel. If she does not repent, God is going to judge her.

This is hard for us to relate to, probably, because in our culture, we tend to glamorize adultery. We don't admit it openly, but our entertainment media hangs on those affairs, they politely call them, and so forth. Adultery is the chief product of Hollywood.

But see, God is going to tell it like it is. Nothing glamorous here. Her life, Gomer's life, is going to go downhill, and so is Israel's.

Verse 4, And I will not have mercy upon her children, for they be the children of whoredoms. Boy, that's tough language. Some scholars believe that that's an indication that the children were illegitimate.

Other scholars debate that from a number of points of view. But in any case, God is applying the sins of the nation to the individuals that compose the nation. Can't escape that application.

And it's interesting how we look at our nation, and the prevalence of adultery has turned our nation into the debris of broken homes, single parent families, offspring incapable of intimacy or commitment. We've even degenerated into a culture in which family values are an issue of debate. People argue about that? You've got to be kidding.

They're debated within the corridors of power. So anyway, at this time in Israel, the entire nation had turned to idolatry. I'm always intrigued, you know, we read about the Canaanite gods, the Balaam and so forth, that they worshipped and idols, and you think how silly that is, how nonsensical that is.

But wait a minute, gang. In our culture, we've devised or invented the most insulting God of all. These ancient civilizations would carve out something out of stone or wood and worship it, and so on.

Of course, you look at that, it's hard to understand the insanity of paganism. And yet, in our nation, not only is paganism the enforced religion within our schools, we've invented a God that's even more insulting than one of wood and stone. We've invented a God called random chance.

It's not that we're ascribing the creation to a false God. We're saying we don't need one. It just happened, a random accident.

We teach our kids that there are random accidents of chance that have no destiny, and then we wonder why we have circumstances like Columbine High School. It's a natural product. There are going to be more of those.

It's interesting when you read Exodus chapter 20, there is that exhortation that God says, I will visit the iniquity to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. Remember that passage in part of the passage of the Ten Commandments? That's attached to a specific commandment. The second commandment, thou shalt have no other gods before me.

God is serious about that. And Israel had her way of following an other God, and we in our culture have ours. But that is something that ignites His fury ultimately.

Verse 5, God continues, 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, and my wool, and my flax, mine oil, and my drink. Goldberg had turned to prostitution for money.

Now Hosea may not have been a wealthy man and may not have been able to provide for her luxuries. She may have only provided for her necessities. But she wanted her own way.

So Israel also, in the broader sense, had turned to idols or spiritual adultery. And she was giving the idols credit for what God was providing. How to make God feel? God is providing their prosperity.

They're more prosperous than they've ever been in their history in the Northern Kingdom. And they're ascribing it to these false gods. How do you think that makes God feel? Change the subject.

What has made America great? I grew up in a first-generation family. Loved this country, its opportunity, the incredible efficiency of capitalism. Great believer in that.

Entrepreneurship, our freedoms, a nation that admired achievement, a meritocracy, came close to being one. Was that what made America great? Many of us fall into the trap of believing that. And indeed those things are wonderful things, I believe.

I'd defend them. But is that what made us great? No. Alexis de Tocqueville had a tour of America in 1815 and to try to understand this incredible country.

And he wrote a famous book, Democracy in America. His conclusion was, America's great because America's good. If America ceases to be good, she'll cease to be great.

That was his conclusion. So we does America attribute its greatness, its prosperity, the freedom of its borders, to the one that's protected her and provided for her? The one that has been the foundation of her heritage? No, it's disparaged. It's outlawed.

Saw a great little quip, Dear God, why did you let happen what happened in our high school, Columbine, Colorado? And it said, Signed, Susan, 12th grader. Letter comes back, Susan, I'm not allowed in your schools. Signed, God.

Says it all, doesn't it? So God's love is also disciplining love and we're going to see the rest of this passage segmented by three therefore's. In verse 6, verse 9, and verse 14, it says, therefore. What do you mean therefore? Because of all this, because Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea.

He's using that as the idiom. Israel is unfaithful to God. Therefore, verse 6, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns and make a wall that she shall not find her paths.

Now, we're all reminded of the hedges in the book of Job, where God had put a hedge about Job to keep Satan from being able to touch him. Satan complained. And of course, you know the story of Job, where progressively Satan was allowed to pierce that hedge and take away Job's prosperity and his family, even his health and so forth.

Now, Job didn't have the benefit of chapter 1's conversation between God and Satan, so he was faced without that. And of course, Satan had misjudged Job. Job ended up coming off pretty good.

But the point is, even there in the book of Job, God did not allow Job to be tempted beyond that he was able, as Hebrews 2.13 promises us. But now in the case of Gomer, it's the other way around. The hedge is there to serve as a protection against Gomer herself in finding the evil things that she desired.

So verse 7, and she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them, and she shall seek them, but they shall not find them. And then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now. See, there comes a day when a girl who has become a harlot is no longer attractive to her clientele, and they lose interest in her.

And she sinks lower and lower in the social scale of the city, and ultimately is unable not only not to get luxuries, but even necessities. So she's in trouble, and hungry and clothed in rags, not fancy garments. And this is exactly what would be happening to Israel.

And so when that happens, then the people will say, now let's return to God. Which sort of reminds you somewhat of the prodigal son. You remember that in Luke chapter 15, one of the sons takes his inheritance, and goes off and riots his living, and eventually, of course, spends all his money, ends up in trouble.

He's finally feeding pigs, and realizing that even the servants back at home did better than he's doing, and he went back home just to be a servant. And you know the story, how he gets there, and the father sees

him coming, and kills a fatted calf, and so forth, and celebrates the return of the lost son. One of the unnoticed morals of that whole parable in Luke 15, is that the son never lost his sonship, despite his embarrassing behavior, and so forth.

Despite his errant ways, he never lost his sonship. Anyway, verse 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. God's pointing out that her disdain of her provider, whether it's Gomer's disdain of Hosea, or whether it's Israel's disdain of her God, affects the same.

And it's interesting. Multiplied her silver and her gold. By the way, some of the experts believe silver was more valued than gold in their economy.

Small point, but I mentioned in passing. There again, see, we do the same thing in America. We're certainly at this three level.

There's Gomer, as a type of Israel, and yet what happened to Israel applies to us. Why do I say that? Because of Romans 15, verse 4. Whatsoever things are written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through the patience and the comfort of the scriptures might have hope. So as we study this ancient book, 8th century B.C. book, about Hosea, and Gomer, and Israel, and so forth, let's consider at least the possibility that there's a parallel with America.

And we don't realize who gives us our prosperity, who controls the world we're really in. And so we ascribe, of course, all this to our own self or the luck of the draw, if you will. Verse 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.

God's declaring here through Hosea, in this passage, that he's going to judge Israel. And of course, that from the time of his readers, that's yet future, but history bears it out. And I suspect the same predicament may be facing America.

We're so sophisticated that we condone homosexuality as a normal lifestyle. We don't punish murders, we subsidize them. We have too many judges that twist the laws, rather than acknowledge the God that overrules the laws of a nation.

Verse 10. And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. I will also cause all her mirth to cease her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

This is one of those places, by the way, that Hosea deals with a pun that I can explain easily. The word cease there, I will cease her mirth, is Shabbath. And the word Sabbath is Shabbat.

And in the Hebrew, the letters are the same, they're pointed, they're pronounced differently. So again, it's a pun, it's a play on words, if you will. And this occurs all through Hosea, and if I take each one, it'll distract us from the main theme, but just be aware of the high level of communication taking place here.

Verse 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 fields shall eat them.

And I will visit upon her the days of Balaam. Balaam is the plural of Baal. One is Baal, Balaam is multiple Baals, false gods.

Wherein she burned incense to them, she decked herself with earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, said the Lord. Baal had many variations. The word Baal actually in the Chaldean meant Lord, but it's used as an idol.

He's pictured in Canaanite worship with a bull-like helmet wielding a thunderbolt, with a spear-sharp point in one hand, and a battle mace in the other. He's typically associated in Roman terms with the god of war, Mars. Baal is associated with the planet Mars.

And the word planet Mars is associated with war, even to this day. We do speak of martial arts and so forth. And there are some that believe this all started because the planet Mars actually had near pass-bys to the earth, and there's a whole thing about that I won't get into here, but our briefing pack, Signs in the Heavens, deals with this, and also in some detail our commentary on the book of Joshua, when the sun stood still and so forth.

Deals with the possibility, these very interesting conjectures about the planet Mars having caused all calendars to change about 701 BC. But be that as it may, we'll continue from verse 13. I will visit upon her the days of Balaam, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with earrings and jewels, and went after her lovers, and forgot me, said the Lord.

See, behind all of Gomer's problems is her ingratitude to Hosea. Behind all of Israel's problems, God is saying, is they forgot the God they worship. And I submit to you that behind all of America's forthcoming problems is that she's forgotten God.

And we're going to reap the world with it, as a result. By the way, J. Vernon McGee, in his commentary, has expressed the view that the Depression of the 30s, the Dust Bowl, all that was sent to us to speak, to warn us of judgment. And he has the view that if we had repented and heard God at that time, we never would have had to fight World War II, Korea, or Vietnam.

And we would ... we've been sending out missionaries rather than soldiers to suffer in prison camps and so forth. That's J. Vernon McGee's view. Very interesting view.

Verse 14, Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. What? Therefore, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. We're going to discover what God tells Hosea to do is when she finally, out of desperation, turns back.

To do what? Take her in and love her. And clothe her. Wow.

See, that's, to me, the mystery here. Why does God bother with us? Why does God bother with us? That's the ... that's the story here. Here is Gomer, unfaithful, turning to prostitution, total ingratitude towards her benefactor.

Modeling, of course, Israel, turning her back on the God that brought her through the Red Sea and all that stuff. And what's God going to do? He's going to take her back in. The mystery is why.

Donald Gray Barnhouse, one of my favorite writers, he writes, Who can explain the insanity of true love? Love is of God and 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 who is playing the part that God has played with you all of your life and with me. This was out of his commentary on Romans, but he's commenting on Hosea, and I thought it would be useful to share with you. And he does an eloquent job.

I don't normally like to read some of these things, but I think this is worth it. Hang in there with me. Barnhouse says, 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 we have outdistanced him. Just as we are about to congratulate ourselves on our achievement and 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 so well and awaited you here at the crossroads. We have torn ourselves free from his grasp and rushed off again through the deepest woods and the farthest swamp.

And if you 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 we turn quickly.

We find that he is there pleading with the eyes of love, showing himself once more to the tender in faith and 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 pursued you to tell you that when you are tired of your running and you're wondering, I will be there to draw you to myself once more.

When you see his love at work through the heart of Hosea, we may wonder if God is really like that, but everything in the word and experience shows us that he is. Let me continue with Barnhouse. He will give man the trees of the forest and iron in the ground.

He will then give to man the brains to make an axe from the iron to cut down the tree and fashion it to a cross. He will give man the ability to make hammer and nails, and when the man has a cross and 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 the cross, and in so doing will take the sins of man upon himself to 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, to enter into the prospect and the hope of glory with him forever.

This even our God, and there is none like unto him. Hallelujah. Are you like Gomer in the depths of your misery? Are you like the prodigal son in a foreign land? Don't just sit there.

Go. Return to God. Remember what he said? Come unto me all ye that are weary and are burdened and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11, 28. Let's continue. Verse 15 takes us into the Valley of Achor.

This is a strange idiom we're going to encounter here. 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 the day

when she came up out of the land of Egypt. She's speaking here idiomatically of Israel, and using Achor as a model, the Valley of Achor, really means the Valley of Trouble.

It's mentioned three times in the Bible. First time, prominent time, is Joshua chapter 7. You may recall they had the victory of Jericho. How many knew that there was a battle of Jericho? How many thought Joshua fought the battle of Jericho? Who really fought the battle of Jericho? Jesus Christ.

The last few verses of chapter 5, after dinner one night, Joshua's going, there's a man there with a sword, and he challenges him like a sentry, are you for us or our enemies? He says, take off your shoes, you're on hallowed ground. No angel allows himself to be worshipped. Who is this requiring worship? Jesus Christ.

And he's using the very phrase that Joshua would remember from the burning bush. He was up there too, you may recall. Battle of Jericho is a mystery.

Every rule in the Torah is violated. The Levites were not supposed to go to war, they went first. They're supposed to work six days, rest the seven.

On the seventh day they went seven times around. The whole thing, starting the battle of Jericho, it's a very, very strange experience. Beside the fact the walls came down.

I won't start, we'll lose our time. But they really scored, right? Then came Ai. They were told in Jericho not to touch any unclean thing.

One guy out of the whole gang, one guy. Soft garment, kind of cool, you know, neat threads, grabbed it. And because of that they went to Ai, which should have been a pushover, little town, no problem.

They got clobbered. And what does Joshua do? He goes crying to the Lord. Oh, he's really upset.

Really, really upset. And he fell on his face in Joshua 7. And the Lord said, get off your face. You must deal with sin before you can have a victory.

Don't pray to me, you got sin in the camp. Go deal with that first. And they do.

They cast lots, they discover that Achan had stolen his garments. They took Achan and his possessions and destroyed him and the possessions. Where? In the Valley of Achor.

From then on they had victory. And what's God's principle here? You deal with the sin first. So Valley of Achor means the Valley of Trouble.

It was a trouble, yes, but it was a trouble that they took care of. It was sin they acknowledged and dealt with. From that point they had victory.

So even though it's a valley of trouble, it's a valley of hope. Because if we deal with the sin, there's hope on the other side. That's the point.

It's a strange idiom until you understand that. See in Isaiah 65, 10 is the second place Achor shows up. And it speaks of a day when it is a resting place for herds.

But again it's the trouble that led to being rest. And then of course the third place is where we're seeing it here in Hosea chapter 2. And how can a valley of trouble, which is what Valley of Achor means, be a

valley of hope? How can a valley of trouble be a valley of hope for us? Remember what Jesus said in the final hours of death? Now is my heart, what? Troubled. And what shall I say? Father save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.

That was in John 12, verse 27. Then we're told, Jesus was troubled in spirit, John 13. Why was he troubled? Because he was troubled in our place.

It's on the basis of his death that our sins are taken care of. And that's why he can say to us now, as he did in John 14, do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. The valley of trouble that he took care of is our hope.

What are the ultimate results? Let's continue with Hosea, verse 16. It shall be in that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt call me no more Baeli. Ishi means my husband.

So Israel will say to him, you're my husband. Gomorrah will say to Hosea, you're my husband. Israel will say to God, you're my husband.

And no more call me Lord, but the word here Baeli means Balaam, because what they were doing in effect, they had been attempting to place the Lord on the same level as the false idols. You're never more going to do that anymore, he said. And see the husband relationship is used here to indicate that which is intimate and personal.

And of course it's a relationship based on love. It's the highest relationship in the human family. In Song of Songs, 6-3, I'm my beloved, and my beloved is mine.

Can you call Christ yours? That's the question. Not everyone who calls him Lord. Many will call me Lord, Lord.

They'll say, depart from me, I never knew you. Do you really have a personal relation? Richard Wurmbrand, in his message called Preparing for the Underground Church, he highlights something very profound. You won't survive persecution unless you're prepared for it, and it doesn't matter how many Bible verses you've memorized, that's not the point.

The only thing that'll get you through is your personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is what you know. Isn't it verses you've memorized? No, it's your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

There are pastors that I've dealt with that are not making it. They have wonderful teaching ministries, there are some of them very well known, but it's a head trip. Their devotional life, apparently.

You get your knowledge of the truth from the Word of God. You get your fear of God from your devotional life. No, it's your personal relationship with Jesus Christ that gets you through.

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

In that day, it says. That's the millennium. That's when the lion and the lamb will lie down together.

How many knew that? Okay, remember that phrase from Isaiah 65, I believe. The lion and the lamb lay down together today, except the lamb's usually inside the lion, but that's another issue. Verse 19, And I will betroth thee unto me forever.

Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. The word betroth, by the way, kind of a formal name, but it means to woo a girl, to court a girl. And that's what God would do to Israel.

Verse 20, And I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. Now, by the way, that hasn't happened yet. This is all prophetic.

Let's not lose sight of the fact. They're going to go into judgment. And this is yet to happen.

And the way, if you want to get into this, you have to read Ezekiel 36. In the interest of time, I won't get into that here tonight. 36, 37, 38, and 39.

Lay out the story. And 36, verses 18 on. God says, I don't do this for your sake, Israel.

I do it for my name's sake, because I said I was going to do it. Very interesting passage, but in the interest of time, I'll keep moving. Verse 21 in Hosea here.

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. And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto me in the earth, and I will have mercy upon her that hath not obtained mercy.

And I will say unto them, which were not my people, thou art my people, and they shall say, thou art my God. There's no greater promise than this one. Let's go through that very carefully.

They shall hear Jezreel, meaning planted. Not just sown, but planted. See, all three children are hidden here in the language.

Jezreel. I will sow her unto me in the earth. That's the Jezreel.

I will have mercy upon her that hath not obtained mercy. Lo, Ruma becomes Ruma. And I will say unto them, which are not my people, thou art my people.

Not lo ami, but ami. And they shall say, thou art my God. Has that happened yet? No.

There is an interval between this judgment and the time that this prophecy is talking about, and that interval is what we're in right now. So we have Jezreel, sown or planted. Ruma, mercy or pity.

And ami, my people. And this incidentally is quoted by Paul in Romans 9. But in the interest of keeping moving, I'll let you look that up on your 925, 26, where this is quoted. But we're now going to come, you say, gee Chuck, we've got most of the time gone, we've got another chapter to do here.

Yes. Chapter 3 has five verses. So we're going to take chapter 3, but it may be a bad decision because what we're now coming to is what some people have called the greatest chapter in the Bible.

Wow. I'm not defending that, but it must be important if somebody at least feels that way. Only five verses, but they portray the greatest story in the Bible.

The death of the Lord Jesus Christ for his people in the most concise and poignant form found anywhere. Dr. Charles Feinberg, who is a very noted Jewish believer and Hebrew scholar, says of this chapter, quote, if it rightfully takes its place among the greatest prophetic pronouncements in the whole revelation of God, close quote. So let's take a look at it.

To really get the background for this little five verse chapter, you need to know three chapters of Paul. Paul wrote his definitive declaration of the Christian gospel. It's called the book of Romans.

And in the book of Romans, there are three chapters, 9, 10, and 11, that if we're doing this formally, we would just jump in right here. Chapter 9 is God's past dealings with Israel. Chapter 10, his present dealings with Israel, when Paul was writing.

And chapter 11, his future dealings with Israel. He hammers away. And those that build their doctrine on the idea that the church has replaced Israel have profound problems in the New Testament as well as the old.

We shouldn't have those problems in this gathering because we recognize, in fact, our ministry is based on the observation that we have 66 books penned by 40 different guys, more than 40 different guys probably, yet it's an integrated message. Total integration. Every number, every place name, every detail is evidence of supernatural design.

But let's just jump in, take a quick look then at what this incredible chapter 3 says. Verse 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. So, Hosea is now getting instruction from God to go and take this adulterous wife back and love her the way God loves Israel, who also was unfaithful.

See, Hosea still loved her despite her unfaithfulness, so the model works. He says, he speaks of flagons of wine, it's a mistranslation, he means cakes of raisins, but what it deals with is something that was used in the sacrificial feasts of the Canaanites, the heathen worship that Israel had adopted. Verse 2, I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an omer of barley, and a half omer of barley.

See, Gomer had sold herself, she is sold at auction. Homer had to go down there and purchase her. Right? Now, by the way, when you were put up at auction in the Greek culture, you were stripped naked.

There are three ways you could become a slave. The first is by conquest, the second by birth, the third is by debt. She was by debt.

You and I are slaves by all three. Conquered by the world, we're slaves to sin, we have a debt we can't pay. By the way, slaves are always sold naked, so are we.

She was put up at auction, the bidding started, I'm guessing. Twelve pieces of silver, no, thirteen pieces of silver, fourteen, fifteen, finally fifteen, and a bushel and a half of barley. What does that tell you? Here's Hosea bidding for her, he went all the way to fifteen, and now he's counting a small change.

His pockets are empty, he can't go sixteen, well, how about a bushel and a half of barley? Done. So he comes home with his pockets empty, but with his wife. Now, he owned his wife.

He had the right to kill her if he wanted to. She was property, she could do whatever she wanted to. What did he do? He took off her rags, whatever was left, and clothed her and took her home.

And that's us. We're Gomer. We were slaves sold on the auction block of sin, the world bids for us, promises of fame, wealth, prestige, influence, power, that's the world's currency.

Yet we too have been redeemed, purchased, despite our despicable character. What were we purchased with? The blood of Jesus Christ. And I won't go through all the verses there, it's pretty obvious to most of you.

The mystery to me is why. I can't escape that. Now, there's another aspect, the answer to why, by the way, is in Ephesians 2.7. We'll take the time for this one, it's important.

We all quote Ephesians 2.8 and 9, for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It, that is even the faith, is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. But nobody reads the verse before that.

8 and 9 we all memorize as part of everyone's little memory list, if you're into that sort of thing. But Ephesians 2.7 holds the cosmic key to the whole thing. Why? That in ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

We're going to be His trophy of just what infinite love is all about. Well, maybe that explains it, I don't know. You know, you hear a lot about dedication and commitment, turning your life over to the Lord, but that all comes later.

Something has to come first. You and I are in the desperate need of redemption. Let me give you an analogy that I really enjoy.

It's like going to a graveyard and proclaiming, listen everyone, let's start doing better. Let's start committing our lives to the Lord. Wait a minute, everyone there is dead.

What good is that going to do? They're all dead. Until we come to God for salvation, you and I are dead in trespasses and sins. You can go out and sell all your goods to the poor, you can do all kinds of wonderful things and the world will properly applaud you, that's great, but that doesn't count.

That's works. We have no life to commit to Him, we're dead in trespasses and sins. 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.

See, before Gomer does anything for Hosea, Hosea purchased her. And yet he's purchased us. And he's clothed us, not with our filthy rags, but with his garments.

Praise God. Verse 3, And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days, thou shalt not play the harlot, thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee. It's interesting, if you go to a so-called church that has a man in the pulpit that denies the word of God, that denies the deity of Christ, that denies that he died for sinners, it is not a church, it is a brothel.

That's what God says right here. That's exactly what He says right here. If you go into a church that denies the deity of Christ, that denies the word of God, that denies that he died for sinners, that's not a church.

In the idioms of Hosea, it's a brothel. Verse 4, For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice, without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Many days without a king.

That's rather strange. It doesn't give a number. It says many days.

That's very unusual. Israel was told three times in their history that they would be put out of the land and later returned. The first time was Abraham.

The two previous times, they were told precisely how long they'd be out of the land. First time was 430 years. The second time was Babylon.

They were going to be there for how long? 70 years. And 70 years to the day, they were returned. This third time, it's speaking of the northern kingdom, by the way, which never did actually return.

But how long is many days? Everybody's got theories. Some people say, well, it's the year 2000. Well, as the year 2000 gets closer, there's going to be a lot more theories about that, and diagrams, and manuscripts, and so forth.

The suggestions will come out of the woodwork, believe it. See, we're in a hiatus between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel. And in Daniel 9.26, the real action is going to resume when the church is out of here.

69th week, the clock has stopped. We're in this interval. That interval shows up in the text 24 different times in the 66 books of the Bible.

But when the church is out, the clock starts, and what's my authority is Paul in Romans 11.25. That Israel is, you know, set aside or blinded until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. Then that starts the clock. If you want to count 40, you know, within one generation, that's the generation you're worried about.

See, the reason that the days are detailed here, or I should say is not detailed here, that in the Scripture, the church is nameless and dateless. Do you know the church has no name? We give it kinds of names. It's called the Ecclesia.

They call it out of assembly. It has no name. We're going to be called by His name when the time comes.

That's dateless. We're a heavenly people having no name but His. It says we'll be without a king.

Why? Because the king of kings is presently on the Father's throne. Hosea will have much more to say about this later in the book of Hosea. It says they'll be without a prince.

That's indeed, that's the Mashiach Nagid, which in Daniel 9.26 was cut off. To really get into this, you really have to understand the 7th week of Daniel. Without a sacrifice.

Indeed, they are without a sacrifice. There is no temple. There is no altar to have a sacrifice.

The entire Torah, the entire Old Testament hangs on that. Without the shedding of blood, there's no remission of sins. Where are they going to shed blood? There's no altar to do that.

They're without a sacrifice. There will be a sacrifice. They will rebuild it.

Why? Because the prince that shall come is going to interrupt their sacrifices and cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease in Daniel 9.27. They'll be without an image. It is interesting that since Babylon, they have solved the problem of idolatry, at least in traditional forms. Without Nephi, there's without a priesthood.

All these things are true today, still. What Hosea is talking about here is yet to happen. And verse 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.

Wow! Afterward in the latter days. Again, no date setting here. Now, this whole tour de force in chapter 3, ending in verse 5, deals with the national repentance and restoration of the nation Israel.

If the covenant theologians are right, if the so-called reforms are right, then Israel is set aside and never to be dealt with again, then this passage will never be completed. Nonsense. But God means what He says and says what He means.

And there's still so many reform scholars that say that there will be no regathering of Israel and deny the idea of a national repentance in the days yet to come. They argue that, you know, she's been rejected and so forth. And the promises of Israel's regathering restoration are made in the Old Testament.

There's a list, there'll be a list of them in the notes. Are repeated in the New Testament following the rejection of Christ. See, it's not just that their Old Testament prophecies will be fulfilled, they are reconfirmed in the New Testament after Christ was rejected.

So those arguments actually unravel that the critics advance. And in the opening verse of Romans 11, it's clearly not true that God has cast off His people utterly. Check it out.

Paul highlights this interval of focus and opportunity for the Gentiles and then goes on to restate and further define the Old Testament prophecies as a time of failure, excuse me, a time of future blessing and usefulness for Israel. So they have not yet turned to the Lord and they are still today in peril of losing Jerusalem and so forth. But they will return, 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. That's the great miracle here. And so our standard should follow Hosea's and to study that you should study Ephesians chapter 5 verse 22 through 32.

In the interest of time, I'll forego that. But we are to, the husband is to be the head of the family. He is to love the wife the way Christ loved His church, give Himself for it.

And that's heavy stuff. Now we must remember as we think of our relationship with Christ that it's not we who sought Him. It was He who sought us and joined us to Himself.

He courted us, He brought us to the Father and He vowed in effect, I Jesus take thee sinner to be my wedded wife. 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 sorrow, in sickness and in health for life and for eternity. In effect.

And what did we do? We looked in His face and said after Him, I sinner take thee Jesus to be my Savior and Lord and do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be thy loving and faithful Bride and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health for this life and for eternity. And so therefore we

took His name and became His and now we must be careful to keep His name unspotted before the world. Let's stand for a closing word of prayer.

We crammed a lot in this hour. I challenge you to read Romans 9, 10, 11 and also Daniel, the last four verses of Daniel 9 if you haven't reviewed that lately. It all ties together and this little chapter 3 in Hosea incredible, incredible in terms of its implications.

It's amazing what little nuggets are tucked away in the so-called minor prophets. These little small prophecy books in the Old Testament. Rich.

And boy does Hosea still have some surprises for us forthcoming. Let's bow our hearts. Oh Father, we thank You that Your love goes to such extremes.

We thank You, Father, for Your mercy and Your grace and Your love. We thank You, Father, You've gone to such initiatives to draw us to You and we have rewarded You with our ingratitude, our presumptions and our apathy and our chasing after foolishness. Father, we just come before Your throne acknowledging our sin.

We acknowledge that until we're born anew that there's nothing we can do to please You for we are faithless and unbelieving. But Father, we do come before You without one plea save that Jesus died for me. We thank You, Father, for the message of Hosea We thank You that like Gomer You have taken us in and You have shed our filthy rags and replaced them with Your imputed righteousness because of the purchase that was consummated on that wooden cross erected in Judea so long ago.

Oh, Father, we just would ask that You would receive us forgive us, cleanse us that we might somehow through Your Spirit be more pleasing in Thy sight. And yes, Father, we do ask for discernment in our decisions illuminate the path before us help us to understand what You would have of us in the days that remain that we indeed might be profitable to You as we commit ourselves afresh into Your hands in the name of Yeshua our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

God bless you.

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