

(Through the Bible) Hosea 5-9

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of returning to the Lord and seeking His face, as seen in the prophecy of Hosea 5-9, which speaks of the nation Israel being smitten for almost two thousand years, but then being revived and raised up in the third day, corresponding to the millennium and the thousand-year reign of Christ.

Duration: 1:02:02

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the consequences of living a life without a moral foundation or absolute truths. He emphasizes that relying solely on personal feelings and subjective interpretations leads to despair and hopelessness. The speaker also highlights the emptiness and lack of fulfillment that comes from pursuing selfish desires. He connects this to the rejection of universal values in society, particularly in education and art. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the importance of acknowledging our offenses, seeking God's face, and returning to the Lord for healing and restoration.

Transcript

So we begin tonight with chapter five. In chapter five, Hosea the prophet speaks for the Lord unto the priest and unto the princes of Israel. Unto the house of the king, hear ye this, O priest, hearken, you house of Israel, give ear, house of the king, for judgment is toward you, because you have been a snare on Mishpah and have spread a net upon Tabor.

Now Tabor is a mountain that is very prominent in the area of the Galilee. It is easy to spot because it is a round domed mountain. Constantine's mother, Helena, felt that that was the spot where Jesus was transfigured.

And so they built some churches of transfiguration on top of Tabor. But from scriptural evidence, inasmuch as Jesus went into a high mountain apart, it probably wasn't Tabor because it isn't really very high and it's not apart, it's right in the center of things. He was probably transfigured on Mount Hermon.

Now Mishpah was one of the peaks at Mount Hermon. Tabor in the middle of the country, that is of Samaria, and Mishpah up in the northern end near Lebanon. According to tradition, when the northern kingdom established the northern empire, Jeroboam was quite concerned about the people returning to Jerusalem to worship.

And so he instituted the calf worship in the northern kingdom and he set up centers of worship in Bethel and in Dan. And his fear was that if they continued to go back to Jerusalem for the feast, that their hearts might be again united with the king of Judah. So he sought to keep them from returning.

Now they say that there were men who would stand on Tabor and stand on Mishpah to watch to see if anyone was returning to Jerusalem during the feast periods in order that they might fall upon them and destroy them. So they would set a snare or a trap for those who might be going down to Jerusalem to worship. That's one view.

The other which I feel is probably more legitimate because there are several objections to that. Number one, you could get to Jerusalem without being seen from Tabor quite easily. If you were going through the Jordan Valley, there's no way they would see you from Tabor.

And actually again from the area of the northern Galilee, you couldn't really tell too much from Mount Mishpah. The other is that this was a great area for hawking, for bird snaring. And the picture is these fellows setting their bird snares, the fowlers who were setting their bird snares, those that were hawking in these areas.

And so it becomes a picture of these who had spread their snare on Mishpah and their net was spread upon Tabor. The revolvers, he said, are profound to make slaughter. When they offered their sacrifices unto the gods in the northern kingdom, they would do it with great flair.

Again trying to make a big deal out of it so all of the people would be in awe. So that is what is meant by profound to make slaughter. Though the Lord said, I've been the rebuker of them all.

I know Ephraim, the major tribe of the northern kingdom, and Israel is not hid from me. For now, O Ephraim, you are committing whoredom and Israel is defiled. They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God, for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them and they have not known the Lord.

The pride of Israel doth testify to his face. Therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity and Judah also shall fall with them. So because they had turned from God and were worshiping these false gods, that was always considered by God as whoredom.

You've gone away from the true and the living God. You're worshiping Baal or you're worshiping the other idols. And God looked upon that as spiritual adultery, as whoredom.

And because of it, they are going to fall. And here's the prediction of the fall, not only of the northern kingdom of Israel, but also the southern kingdom of Judah. Now they shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him, for he has withdrawn himself from them.

Though they try to return to God with a lot of sacrifices and all, God said, I've withdrawn from them, they won't find me. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord, for they have begotten strange children. Now shall a month devour them with their portions.

Blow the cornet in Gibeah, the trumpet in Ramah, cry aloud at Beth-Avon after thee, O Benjamin. For Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke among the tribes of Israel, have I made known that which shall surely be. So God declares, I've declared to you what's going to surely come to pass.

The princes of Judah like them that remove the boundaries, therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water. Now when the northern kingdom was going to fall, Judah rather than mourning over the fact that the northern kingdom had fallen, looked upon it eagerly as an opportunity to expand its boundaries. Inasmuch as Assyria is attacking from the north, and all, if Israel falls to Assyria, then Judah was looking at it as an opportunity to expand its borders.

And so the Lord rebukes them for this attitude, rather than mourning and lamenting over the fact that the northern kingdom had fallen, they were eager for the opportunity to expand their borders. Therefore the Lord declares, I will also pour out my wrath upon them like water. Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because they willingly walked after the commandment.

Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth that is eating it, and unto the house of Judah as rottenness. When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian and sent to King Jared. Yet could he not heal you nor cure you of your wound.

For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion and a young lion to the house of Judah. Even I will tear and go away, I will take away and none shall rescue him. I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offense and seek my face, and their affliction they will seek nearly.

Now, the Lord is here speaking of how that they turn to the arm of flesh for help. In the time of their calamity, rather than really turning to God, they turn to the Assyrians and looking for the arm of flesh to help them. On the way out this evening, I was talking with my son-in-law, as we were riding together in the car, and I was remarking to him as we were talking about the book of Acts and the work of the Holy Spirit in the early church.

I was remarking how tragic it is that the church has sought to substitute the wisdom of man for the work of the Holy Spirit. For the day that we felt that we no longer needed that dynamic work of the Spirit to guide and to direct the affairs of the church. But having gone to seminary and gotten our degrees, we feel that now we have the capacity.

We have the understanding. After all, don't we have a minor in sociology? And don't we understand human behavior? And don't we know how to manipulate people? And the church has trusted in the wisdom and the abilities of man, rather than in the work and in the power of the Holy Spirit. And that is why the church is so weak today.

Looking to the arm of flesh, looking to the abilities of the flesh to do the work of the Spirit. This was the sin of Ephraim. Looking to the arm of flesh, looking to Assyria for help.

When ultimately Assyria would be the rod that God would use to punish Ephraim. Now, in verse 15 the Lord said that he was going to go and return to his place. They're not going to find me.

I'm just going to leave them. Until they acknowledge their offense. Until they actually acknowledge we are wrong.

We have turned our backs against God. We have broken the covenant of God. We've transgressed His law.

God said, I'm just going to return to my place until they come to this acknowledgement. And they begin to seek my face. In their affliction, they will seek me early.

Talking really of the great tribulation. The time of Jacob's trouble. When they will be afflicted, they will then seek the Lord.

In their affliction, they will seek me early. Now, it is extremely unfortunate that they placed the chapter break here. They should have placed the chapter break maybe at the end of verse 3. And chapter 6 probably should have started there.

Because we have in our minds that crazy tendency when we come to a chapter to say, Well, that's the end of that chapter. Now we've got a whole new thought or something. But it's carried right on through.

God has said, I'm going to go and return to my place until they acknowledge their offense. They seek my face. And in their affliction, they seek me early.

And they will say, come and let us return unto the Lord. For He hath torn and He will heal us. He hath smitten and He will bind us up.

This is the prayer that they will be offering unto God. Or this is the declaration that they'll be making to each other. Come and let us return unto the Lord.

He has torn us, but He will heal us. He has smitten us, but He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us.

In the third day, He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight. This is a fascinating prophecy. Because if you look at the nation Israel.

It has been almost two thousand years since they existed as a nation. Now we read in Peter that a thousand years is as a day unto the Lord. And a day is as a thousand years.

Using that formula, the two days would be two thousand years. That would completely coincide with the facts. For Israel has been smitten for about two thousand years.

And we are seeing the revival of the nation. In the third day, He will raise us up. In the third millennia.

And we see Israel being raised up. In the third year, or the third day, He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight. That is, the Messiah will be there and they will dwell with the Messiah.

In the millennium, the thousand year reign of Christ. Israel, the nation, will again have a very prominent place. And God will fulfill all of the unfulfilled promises of the Old Testament upon the nation.

First of all, the expansion of their borders to that area that God had promised them. Secondly, the King forever upon the throne of David. To order it and to establish it in righteousness and in judgment.

Henceforth, even forever, the Messiah and His reign. And this is an extremely fascinating prophecy. Because as we look at the situation as it exists today.

Using the thousand year day formula. And you say, well how do you know you can use that? Because it fits. Surely it is not two literal days.

And the fact that it has been 2,000 years. And now they are being raised up. We look forward to the beginning of that 3,000th year.

Which will be the 7,000th year in the history of man. And you have again all of the other interesting analogies of the Old Testament. Where a servant was to serve for six years.

But the seventh year he was to be set free. And so we look forward to that glorious seventh millennia. When Christ shall sit upon the throne of David.

And they, Israel, shall live in His sight. Then shall we know. If we follow on to know the Lord.

His going forth is prepared as the morning. He shall come unto us as the rain. As the latter and the former rain unto the earth.

So, this glorious promise as the latter rain. And as the former rain. Unto the earth.

So that the blessings of the last days. And that's what it is making a reference to. Of God's restoration on Israel.

The blessings of that day. Are going to be absolutely glorious. Paul the Apostle in writing of this day of restoration.

Said, if the cutting off of them. Brought the glory and salvation unto the Gentiles. What will the restoration be? But the glorious really restoration of the whole world.

The kingdom age. The millennial reign of Christ. Now God cries out to Ephraim.

The northern kingdom. Oh Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? And then unto Judah. Oh Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as a morning cloud.

And as the early dew it goes away. Of course, this is something that we can relate to here in Southern California. The morning clouds.

So often we hear on the news report. Early morning clouds along the coast, you know. And they burn off.

That's the thing about the early morning clouds. It doesn't last. They burn off.

Soon as the sun raises in the sky. The early morning clouds burn off. And so the goodness.

Of Ephraim and Judah. Didn't last. It would burn off.

Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets. I have slain them by the words of my mouth. And thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.

For the Lord said, I desired mercy and not sacrifice. And the knowledge of God more than the burnt offerings. The people were still going on with the form of religion.

The form of worship. But they lacked. The real essence.

God was looking for them to have the attitudes of mercy. God was desiring that they should have a knowledge of him. But all they had was a form of religion.

They still had the burnt offerings. They still had the sacrifices. But they really didn't have a vital relationship with God.

You remember when Jesus addressed himself to the church of Ephesus. In Revelation chapter 2. He said, I have this against you. He said, I know thy works.

Ah, working church. And he remarks. He makes special comment on their works.

But he said, I have this against you. You've left your first love. We see so many churches like that today.

They are working churches. I mean, they've got so many committees. And everybody, you know, is being bugged by somebody else to do their job.

And if you don't do your job, there's someone who's going to be giving you a call or writing you a note or whatever. I mean, they've got the whole thing so smoothly organized. And they're a working church.

They've got all the motions. But Jesus said, you don't have the emotion. You don't have the love.

Here it was with Ephraim, with Judah. You've got the sacrifices. You've got the burnt offerings.

But there's no mercy. There's no real knowledge of God. I would rather that you be merciful.

I'd rather that you really know me. This would be preferable to just the formal works. But they, like men, have transgressed the covenant.

They have dealt treacherously against me. Gilead is a city of those who work iniquity. It's polluted with blood.

And as troops of robbers, they wait for a man. So the company of priests murder in the way by consent, for they commit lewdness. So the priesthood was guilty.

And as a troop of robbers, now according to the original Hebrew, they were actually lying in wait for those who were fleeing to the cities of refuge and were killing them. I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel. There is whoredom of Ephraim, and Israel is defiled.

Also, O Judah, he has set a harvest for thee when I return the captivity of my people. The Lord continues his response to them. When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria.

For they commit falsehood, and the thief comes in, and the troop of robbers spoils without. And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness. Now their own doings have beset them about.

They are before my face. People forget that God remembers. You don't hide anything from God.

You think you're getting by with it. They don't consider in their hearts that I remember. And they make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.

They are all adulterers. As a oven that is heated by the baker, that is, the heat of passion, like an oven heated by the baker, who ceases from rising after he has kneaded the dough until it be leavened. The bakers would usually set the fire in the ovens at night.

And after building the fire in the oven at night, they would go to bed. They would knead the dough, set it aside, and then they'd go to bed. And they wouldn't rise until the dough had been leavened.

And, of course, when they rose, then the oven was all heated and ready for the bread. And so he uses that as a figure of speech, actually, the heated oven to the heated passions of these people in their adulterous relationships. In the day of our king, the princes have made him sick with the bottles of wine, that is, drinking until they were so drunk they were vomiting all over the place.

He stretched out his hand with the scorners, for they have made ready their heart like an oven, while they lie in wait, that is, lying in wait for their neighbor's wife or whatever. The baker sleeps all the night, and in the morning it burns as with a flaming fire. They are all as hot as an oven.

They've devoured their judges, and their kings are fallen. There is none among them that calls unto me. And so God is giving his indictment against Israel, and why his judgment must fall.

Ephraim hath mixed himself among the people. Ephraim is a cake not turned. Like a pancake, it's burning on the bottom, but the top is still raw.

It's really good for nothing. You know, you can't eat it. You just throw it out.

Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he doesn't know it. You remember Samson, when he said, I will rise up as I did before.

And he knew not that the Spirit of God had departed from him. Tragic. When people are still going on with motions, but God is left, and they're not even aware that God is gone, because the motions are still there.

We're still doing the right thing. We're still doing the religious thing. But what's in your heart? They knew not that their strength were gone.

The gray hairs are here, and are upon them, yet they don't know it. Again, not really knowing the things that have come upon them. The pride of Israel testifies to his face, and they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek him for all of this.

Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart. They call to Egypt, they go to Assyria. Now, doves are silly.

They make their nest in the most stupid places. A dove is really stupid. Watch them in their nest building.

They don't really make a neat nest at all, and they're not really careful where they make their nest. They oftentimes will make their nest even within an easy reach. And you can remove the eggs out of a dove's nest, and he'll continue to sit on the thing.

They're just silly. I remember as a kid, we used to go out with slingshots, and you'd just miss the dove. You know, the rocket just goes shooting past him, and just barely miss him.

And he wouldn't fly, he wouldn't move. He'd just, you know, look around. And I used to think, you dumb thing, I'm not going to miss you the next shot.

But they just don't seem to have much sense. They surely don't show very good judgment. And so God likens Ephraim to a silly dove.

Flying off to Assyria, then flying down to Egypt. Looking again to the help of man, rather than turning to God. God said, when they go, I'm going to spread my net upon them.

I will bring them down as the fowls of heaven. I will chastise them as their congregation hath heard. Woe unto them, for they have fled from me.

Destruction unto them, because they have transgressed against me. And though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me. They have not cried unto me with their heart.

When they howled upon their beds, they assembled themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me. And though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me. They return, but not to the Most High.

They are like a deceitful bow. Their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue. This shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

So God's response to Ephraim and to Judah. Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant and trespassed against my law.

So God again is giving his indictment against them. Number one, they have trespassed his covenant. Number two, they have transgressed his law.

God had established a covenant with the nation Israel. The covenant was the basis whereby God would be their God and would bless them. Now if you do these things, I will be your God, and I will bless thee.

I will multiply thy crops, and I will multiply thee upon the face of the earth. And God tells of all of the blessings if he is their God, and they will only worship and serve him. I will grant you all of these blessings, but this is the basis for them.

This is the covenant. And so they had a covenant relationship with God. But they had transgressed against the covenant.

They had broken the covenant that God had made. Now it is interesting that God made many covenants in the Old Testament. God made a covenant with Adam.

Adam broke it. God made a covenant with Abraham and Abraham's seed. They broke it.

God made a covenant with Israel. They broke it. Now God has made a new covenant with the church.

In Hebrews, we are told it is a better covenant. God has established a basis whereby he will be your God and you can be his people. Again, a covenant relationship.

But if Adam broke the covenant and Abraham's seed broke the covenant and Israel broke the covenant, what hope is there for us? Why do we think we are any better than they are? In reality, we're not. But we have a better covenant. God's covenant with Adam, Abraham, and through Moses with the children of Israel was all predicated upon their obedience.

And if you do these things, you shall live by them. God's covenant with us through Jesus Christ is predicated upon his faithfulness and my just believing in him and in his faithfulness. Now man failed, but God can't fail.

The covenant with Israel was broken because Israel transgressed the covenant. God's covenant with me will never be broken because it's based upon the faithfulness of God to keep his word. And God has promised that if I believe in his son, I'll have eternal life.

Glorious covenant that God has made with me. And I have no intention of ever doing anything other than believing on his son. So, I am trusting God and the faithfulness of God.

Not my righteousness. Not my obedience to a set of rules or regulations. But my love for Jesus Christ and my faithfulness.

Or actually my faith in him, his faithfulness, and in his work for me. So, Israel had transgressed. They had trespassed against God's law.

The law of the Lord is good. Paul says the law is good. Problem wasn't the law.

God's law was holy. It was just. It was good.

Nothing wrong with God's law at all. Unfortunately, many times God's law comes into a bad light because we often times like to say, Oh, we're not under law like it was a bad thing. We're under grace.

And we have a tendency to sometimes sort of look at the law as something that was evil. Something that was not good. But no, the law was holy.

It was just and it is good. Micah said, He hath shown thee, O man, what is good. And what the Lord requires of thee.

Here in verse 3, Israel's cast off that which is good. They cast off the covenant of God. They cast off the law of God.

They cast off that which was good. There's nothing wrong with the law of God. Paul said, The problem is with us.

The law is spiritual and we are carnal. The problem isn't with God's law. It's good.

David said, Happy is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way with sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord. And in this law does he meditate both day and night. It's good because he'll be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither.

Whatsoever he does will prosper. The law is good. God has given him the law, the basis for a society, the basis for man living together, the basis for you to have a happy, fulfilling, rich life.

Nothing wrong with the law. But they transgressed or they trespassed against the law of God. They cast out the law of God, trespassed against it.

Now Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee. God declares he doesn't know them. For they have cast off the thing that is good, God, their relationship with him, the covenant.

And thus the enemy is going to pursue them. They have set up kings, but not by me. Now in the Northern Kingdom, they set up their kings.

The people called for Jeroboam. It wasn't by God. God's promise was to David and to his seed.

And then in the Northern Kingdom, it came that there went from one dynasty to another, as there were the murders of the assassination of the kings. And it really became chaotic. They have set up kings, but not by me.

They have made princes, and I knew it not. That is, it was not by my approval. And of their silver and of their gold, have they made them idols that they might be cut off.

So they had begun to worship and serve other gods. This is God's indictment. Thy calf, the God that they set up in Samaria and said, this is the God that brought you out of Egypt.

Thy calf, O Samaria, has cast thee off. My anger is kindled against thee. How long will it be ere they attain to innocency? For from Israel was it also that the workmen made it.

Therefore it is not God, but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. So God pronounces the judgment upon their gods. For they have sown the wind by their turning away from God, by their establishing the idol worship, by their transgressing against the covenant and trespassing against the law.

They had sown the wind and they shall reap the whirlwind. Oh, what a lesson this ought to be to our nation today. We have been guilty now for several years of sowing the wind.

Gradually, the courts have been ruling God out of the public life of the nation. The courts recently ruled in Arkansas that scientific creationism is nothing more than religion in disguise. It cannot be taught in the school and thus the children cannot be taught any alternative to the evolutionary theory.

I think this is a very sad and tragic judgment and I think that it will have great repercussions for the teaching of the evolutionary theory has already had great repercussions in our society. It would seem that the schools would wake up pretty soon. The public school system to realize that it is bankrupt.

Their educational processes are bankrupt. We teach the children that they are animals and then we wail and cry because they act like animals. And in many of our public schools they have to hire police protection for the teachers to keep them from being assaulted by the little animals in their classrooms.

It's sad. The public education system has become a zoo. Califano who used to be in charge of the health education and welfare department as he was leaving office said the worst place you could place a teenage child is in a public high school.

Quite an admission. But why? Because we've sown the wind. We have tried to take away any real base.

It has no stock. That's what the Lord says. By allowing the influence of Dewey and Watson and Huxleys we have allowed the existential philosophy with its humanistic base to prevail and to prevail in our public education system.

And thus the challenge of what is good and what is evil. And the rejection of any universal base of good, the rejection of any absolutes reflected in our art, modern art, which if you can understand it you're weirder than I am. It doesn't have any true form.

Now there are pictures that I can understand. That's a farm and that's a fence around a farm and that's a cow out in the pasture. And I can see that and anybody can see that.

But some of these modern forms of art where they stand back and throw the paints at the canvas and they put cow in the pasture next to the barn and look as I may I can't find the cow in the pasture. It's like when I was a kid and I used to study the plaster on the ceiling and look for the pictures in the plaster on the ceiling or looking for the forms in the clouds. And you can you know your mind can see things you know and as a child your imagination is very vivid and I used to see all kinds of things on the ceiling.

You know the irregularities in the plaster there. Of course these poor kids today with acoustical ceilings what can you see in an acoustical ceiling? But you know lying in bed and you're sick and all and you have nothing to do but look up at the ceiling and it used to be with this textured plaster you could make out different things in the ceiling. And sometimes I'd say to my brother look you know it looks like a horse up there I don't see any horse.

Yeah look at that. Yeah I don't see any horse you know. Well I could.

I could. You know by it's like seeing Orion chasing the bull you know it takes a little imagination but you can make it out. But modern art you see what does it do? It testifies that there isn't an absolute it's what you see in it that's what counts.

And every man sees what he wants. But the effect of existentialism is that of separating us. It takes away a unified base.

It makes me an island. It makes me all alone in this big vast universe because no one else is just quite like I am. No one else sees the same things I see and suddenly I feel all alone and very lonely in a big vast universe because existentialism has isolated me and made me an individual and I've got to now start from my own human base humanism and I've got to now interpret all of the things the world around me as best I can and relate to them as I can without any base of where to start.

Not having any rights or wrongs it's all how I relate to it how I feel about it how it affects me. There's no stock. There's no base.

And it leads to despair. It leads to hopelessness. But not only is it without stock the bud shall yield no meal.

A life lived after the flesh will bring a person to emptiness. Pursuing your own fleshly ambitions will not bring you satisfaction but only a deeper hunger that cannot be fulfilled. It'll yield no meal.

It's all chaff. You go to eat it and there's no nourishment there's nothing there. Life becomes empty like chaff.

And if it does yield any flower, any meal the strangers will come and swallow it up. For Israel is swallowed up. Now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein there is no pleasure.

Cast off by God. Dwelling among the Gentiles for two days. But in the third day they're going to live and be raised up.

For they are gone up to Assyria a wild ass alone by himself. Ephraim has hired lovers. And yea, though they have hired among the nations now will I gather them and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes.

Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin the altar shall be unto him to sin. I have written to him the great things of my law but they were counted as strange things. Whenever a man begins to count the law as strange things he's in trouble.

They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of my offerings. They eat it but the Lord does not accept them. Now will he remember their iniquity and visit their sins.

They shall return to Egypt for Israel has forgotten his maker. What a sad and tragic indictment. The people have forgotten their maker.

And they're building temples and Judah has multiplied his fenced cities but I'll send a fire upon his cities and shall devour the palaces. Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy as other people for you have gone a whoring from your God. You have loved a reward upon every corn floor.

The floor and the winepress shall not feed them and the new wine shall fail in her. They shall not dwell in the Lord's land but Ephraim shall return to Egypt and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria. And so he prophesies and predicts the captivity being carried away to Assyria, others fleeing to Egypt.

They shall not offer the wine offerings to the Lord, neither shall they be pleasing unto him. Their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners. All that eat thereof shall be polluted for their bread and for their souls shall not come into the house of the Lord.

What will you do in the solemn day and in the day of the feast of the Lord? For lo, they are gone because of destruction. Egypt shall gather them up. Memphis shall bury them.

They'll be buried in Memphis. The pleasant places for their silver, that is, their places were once so beautiful, their treasures were kept, will be covered with nettles and thorns will fill their houses, their tents. The days of visitation are come.

The days of recompense. Israel shall know it. The prophet is a fool.

The spiritual man is mad for the multitude of thine iniquity and the great hatred. The watchman of Ephraim was with my God, but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all of his ways and hatred in the house of his God. They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah.

Therefore, I will remember their iniquity and will visit their sins. And so God is pronouncing His judgment and His indictments against these people. He said, I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness.

I saw your fathers as the first ripe in the fig tree at her first time. Now here, the nation of Israel is likened unto a fig tree. This also is true in Joel 1.7 and in Jeremiah 23, I believe it is, or 26, 24, between them.

Your fathers were as the first ripe fig trees at her first time. I do believe that Jesus in Matthew 24, here is a reference to Israel as a fig tree, as in Joel and as in Jeremiah. Now you say, but if Israel is the fig tree and it began to bud forth in 1948 and the generation that saw it bud forth wasn't to pass until all of the things be fulfilled, how come they were getting out close to the end of that generation, 1988, 40 years, and we the church are still here if we're going to be gone seven years before.

A lot of suppositions in that. Number one, the supposition is that the rebirth of the nation in May of 48 constitutes the beginning of that generation. Second supposition, that the generation is exactly 40 years.

And the third supposition, of course, is that the church will be taken away seven years before the second coming of Jesus Christ. But don't write it off yet. We still have a ways to go till May 14.

And that the Lord didn't come in the year 1981 doesn't yet totally wipe out that whole premise. If he hasn't come by May 14, then those who hold to that can go back to their calculations and begin to work again. I personally cannot see how this earth can continue much longer.

There are some remarkable things that are happening in the world today. The Schmitt from Germany has called for a summit conference between Brezhnev and President Reagan. And the purpose of his calling for this summit is that Brezhnev will know that those people in the West aren't kidding.

They're really serious in their endeavor to stop the Soviet Union from its further aggression. I'm afraid that we've gotten serious a little bit too late. General Jones, General Keegan, General Walt, and you can go right on down and name a lot of generals who feel that 1982 is definitely the crisis year with Russia.

That this is the last year that Russia will have a decided military advantage over us. That beginning with 1983, it will be declining as we are in our crash programs to begin to catch up. As we start the deployment of the MX missile systems, as we're speeding up the development of our cruise missiles, as we're starting the development of the B-1 and so forth.

In 1985, 1986, hopefully we will be again in a position of some kind of strength against Russia. But what Helmut Schmidt is saying to Brezhnev is, hey, those guys are crazy. They are serious.

And you better take them seriously. There's little we can do right now. There was really nothing we could do to stop Russia's move into Afghanistan.

There was really nothing that we could do with that hostage fiasco in Iran. We're too close to Russia. We had that aborted attempt to rescue, but it was too little too late.

The United States is operating at the present time from a base of weakness, but that's no position to be in in this world in which we live. Weakness is not respected. Russia definitely has the cards, and she can play them anytime she wants.

And there's really nothing we can do about it. And I don't see how things can go on much longer. As I said this morning, if I didn't really believe in the Lord and in trusting in Him, I would be looking for some place to just crawl into a cave and wait until it was all over.

I'd be looking for some little atoll or island out in the Pacific, and I'd just get me a pile of coconuts and a fishnet and hope to tough it out until it all went up in a puff of smoke. But my trust is not in man nor in the armament nor in the powers of man nor in the leagues of men, but my trust is in the Lord and in God's Word. And I do not see the whole thing going up in God's Word as long as the church is here, so I'm just committing my ways to the Lord as far as that goes.

But we are getting close to the end of that generation that saw the fig tree bud forth, and I do think that there is a correlation between verse 10 where God said, I saw your fathers as the first ripe in the fig tree and the parable of the fig tree in Matthew 24 in that the identity of the fig tree is indeed Israel. God saw them as the grapes in the wilderness. When they first came into the wilderness, found grapes that were there.

Oh, thirsty people, how great juicy grapes taste to a guy who is dying of thirst. And though God found them very refreshing, exciting, yet they went after Belpior, one of the most licentious of all the pagan gods as far as the worship is concerned. They separated themselves unto that shame and their abominations were according as they loved.

As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird from the birth and from the womb and from the conception. Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them that there shall not be a man left. Yea, woe also unto them when I depart from them.

Woe unto any man when God has departed from his life. Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, is planted in a pleasant place, but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer. Give them, O Lord, what you will give.

Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them for the wickedness of their doings. I will drive them out of my house.

I will love them no more. All their princes are revolvers. Ephraim is smitten.

Their root is dried up. They shall bear no fruit. Yea, they shall bring forth, yet I will slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.

My God will cast them away because they did not hearken unto Him and they shall be wonderers among the nations. And that prophecy has been fulfilled and is being fulfilled at the present time, for they still remain wonderers among the nations. The testimony of God's Word confirmed by history and confirmed by the world around us.

Surely, we would be wise to give heed to the Word of God. Shall we pray? God, help us that we might hearken unto you. Help us, Lord, that we would not follow after the sin of Ephraim and of Judah in turning away after idols, of misplacing priority.

Help us, O Lord, that we would not allow the cares of this world or the deceitfulness of riches or the desire of other things to choke out our fruitfulness. But, O Lord, may we truly bring forth fruit for thy praise. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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