

# Hosea #5 Ch. 7-8 Jesus Christ on Every Page

by Chuck Missler

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*Chuck Missler explores the profound messages of Hosea, highlighting the parallels between ancient Israel's moral decline and contemporary society's challenges.*

**Duration:** 1:01:19

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 28:49, Ezekiel 7:13-14, Ezekiel 38:16, Hosea 1:2, Hosea 8:14

**Topics:** "Faith And Action", "Gods Judgment"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the decline in biblical knowledge and understanding in society. He then focuses on Hosea chapter 8, specifically verses 13 and 14. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not just professing faith, but also living it out through actions. He highlights five grounds for God's judgment on Israel, including breaking up God's covenant and adopting relativistic moral standards. The sermon concludes with a reminder that God may use enemies as a means of judgment if His justice is not upheld.

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## Transcript

We are in the book of Hosea, and it's too bad they always call these last twelve the minor prophets. That was a label put on by librarians. They're minor in the sense they're not as large as the major prophets.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel are large books, so they're considered major. The twelve prophets that make up these little books near the end of the Old Testament are often overlooked because they're called minor prophets. See, they can't be that important.

Wrong. Some of the most profound, dramatic, colorful passages are in these prophets. Now, Hosea was a prophet to the northern kingdom.

It's kind of important to get a broad perspective here. I don't want to review too much, but for those that are visiting and just joining us. After Solomon died, Israel had a civil war they divided into two halves.

The northern kingdom, which is also by the name of Israel in a more denotative sense, and the southern kingdom called Judah. More or less, the northern kingdom was composed of ten tribal areas, but don't get confused because both nations were composed of a mixture of all tribes, but that's a whole other discussion, really. The northern kingdom immediately adopted idolatry.

Jeroboam took the northern kingdom into idolatry very early. They went from bad to worse, and Hosea was burdened with the sad task of calling them to account. The Lord, I should say, calling them to account through Hosea.

About a century later, the northern kingdom actually collapses. God uses their enemies to be this instrument of judgment, and the northern kingdom gets taken into captivity and thus obliterated from history by the Assyrians in 722 BC. It isn't until about almost a century, about 80 or 90 years later, that the southern kingdom also, which had a few redeeming kings but in general also declined, God finally uses the Babylonians to be their form of judgment.

And Jeremiah is in the same role, just as Hosea is in his role to the northern kingdom at the time we're going to be studying. Almost a century later, Jeremiah is in the same role to the southern kingdom. The difference being that by that time, the Babylonians had conquered the Assyrians, so the enemy that God used in the southern kingdom's case was the Babylon.

And they were also distinctive in that they were prophesied that they would have seven years captivity, which they did, after which they were returned to the land, and there's more history there. But we're studying Hosea for a lot of reasons. One is to understand that biblical period, but also we learn the ways of God by the words that Hosea has to say, or God has to say through Hosea, to the northern kingdom.

Now, it's very provocative to understand the situation the northern kingdom found themselves in. They were in a period of unbridled prosperity. Their armies had, their standing armies had conquered all the way to Damascus.

The population was enjoying incredible prosperity, luxury, luxurious homes in large measure, and just, you know, the stock indexes were pushing 11,000 and so forth. And you get my meaning. So it was the best of times, in one sense.

On the other hand, it was also the worst of times, that they were in the lowest ebb of morality, or I should say immorality, of their history. So we're always reminded by Charles Dickens' immortal opening to his Tale of Two Cities, where he says it was the best of times and it was the worst of times. A seeming contradiction, which indeed it was, that Hosea was having to deal with.

Now one reason, not the reason we took up the book particularly, but one of the observations that just hits us right between the eyes, is the incredible parallel between the burden that Hosea is burdened with and the situation America faces. Because we too are in a period, apparently, of unbridled prosperity. Dow is higher than it ever has been, as just one indicator, but in general people are prosperous.

And we say, well, yeah, but we don't worship, we're not idolatry. Wrong. We're also at the lowest ebb of our moral history in this country.

Not only revel in it, we celebrate it, and we export everything that God abhors. And so in America too, it's the best of times, and yet it's also the worst of times, morally speaking. And we can't help but wonder, okay, if the parents fits, and that's a big if, you have to decide for yourself, but if the parallel fits, what was the message that Hosea brought to the Northern Kingdom? Answer? Hey, it's over guys.

He goes through the case for the prosecution. We're going to continue some of that tonight. He declares to them that God is going to use your enemies as his means of judgment.

His justice has to be vindicated. Now, I wouldn't insist that the parallel pushes that far, but we should consider it seriously. Is it possible that God may use our enemies to be his means of judgment, which would seem, by some measures, way overdue.

In any case, we're going to jump in to Hosea, chapter 7, which basically continues the case for the prosecution, as we might label it. In chapter 7, God continues, verse 1, when I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria, for they commit falsehood, and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without. The tribe of Ephraim was the dominant tribe of the Northern Kingdom.

So Ephraim is often used as a synonym for the entire Northern Kingdom. In other words, it's used connotatively. Samaria was their capital.

Under Amri, the father of Ahab, they made Samaria the capital of the Northern Kingdom. So when you see Samaria, that's also idiomatic of the whole Northern Kingdom. And God says, I would have healed Israel.

In other words, he had a desire to heal, which is echoed from the first verse of chapter 6, you may recall. But in any case, God longed to restore Israel to a place of blessing. But his efforts were met with, of course, outbreaks of new sin and crimes and so forth.

And their widespread deceit and robbery epitomized their lack of regard of the covenant. He's dealing with a covenant, of course, of the Old Testament. This whole relationship of God with the Northern Kingdom has to be seen in terms of the covenant, the contract, the agreement that was between them.

Some of the agreements of God, covenants of God, are unconditional. Israel's right to the land tracks from a number of chapters, especially Genesis 15. Unconditional.

God goes out of his way to make it unconditional. But there are other relationships that were conditional. Their occupation of the land.

That God required obedience. And when they were disobedient, they were exiled. And that's what he's really saying here.

They're living a lie here. So verse 2, God, 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. See, one of the things the nation Israel, the Northern Kingdom, overlooked is that God sees and he remembers. That's a very uncomfortable feeling for all of us.

We may give intellectual nods that, well, that's fine, but in our heart of hearts, it makes us uncomfortable to realize that everything you do, God knows. He watches, he sees, and he remembers. There's a heavy accountability here.

It's that accountability, of course, that repulses the unbeliever or the ones that would deny God. We go through a lot of references, but that's pretty basic stuff. The other thing is Israel was in effect saying, it's okay, everybody's doing it.

It's so easy to begin to think that standards of right and wrong pertain, depending on our own particular accepted practice, wrong. See, this whole issue of absolutes, which is a big issue in our society. Well, everything's relative.

You have your truth, I have mine. That's Satan's lie. Right and wrong, truth and false, and so forth, are absolutes.

They're real, and God makes the rules. We don't. But this whole idea that they should be judged by their own accepted practice, which is going to come through this whole chapter, is very familiar to us in our society.

It's amazing how this idea, this permissiveness, this idea that everything's relative, it always leads to immorality. It says, their doings have beset them about. That means totally engulfed them.

They become in bondage to these things. Anyway, verse three, they make the king glad with their wickedness and princes with their lies. Now, here's a key point.

They weren't immoral as a population alone. That wasn't it. It was the leadership condoned it and encouraged it.

They make the king glad with their wickedness and princes with their lies. That's the scary part. It's often pointed out that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not homosexuality.

The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was the official condoning of homosexuality. See, Psalm 101 says a godly ruler is to oppose all forms of wickedness in his kingdom. But these leaders delighted in it.

Now, this gives us a good excuse just to pause here for a moment. And let's highlight a few. What are the qualifications of leadership from a biblical point of view? The bookstores are full of books about leadership and management.

What are the qualifications for leadership from God's own point of view? Well, Proverbs 16.12 gives us one clue. It says, it is an abomination for kings to commit wicked acts for a throne is established on righteousness. Wow.

The abandonment of righteousness weakens the seat of government and also weakens the stability and security of the nation. And incidentally, when you're in the position United States is, it also weakens the stability and the security of the free world. The immorality in our government has threatened not just our own nation, but the entire free world.

Proverbs 16.12 says it is an abomination for kings to commit wicked acts for a throne is established on righteousness. We should cling to that. Proverbs 29.4, the king gives stability to the land by justice, but a man who takes bribes overthrows it.

The issue of bribery is the root issue of private truthfulness and acting on principle, as opposed to being driven by expediency. When integrity is forsaken, justice is overthrown. Proverbs 29.12, eight verses later, says if a ruler pays attention to falsehood, all his ministers become wicked.

It's contagious. The minimizing of truthfulness corrupts others so that soon the entire government becomes corrupt. Do you see a parallel here? Does this sort of feel uncomfortably at home? We could go on and on.

There's actually some compilations of several dozen of these little excerpts from the scripture, which lay out pretty clear the requirement of the religion. But you can take this out of Galatians 5.9 or 1 Corinthians 5.6, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. And the word leaven in the scriptures always used of sin.

I don't mean literal leaven, of course, but I mean when it's used idiomatically, it's amazing how consistent it is. It's always negative. It's always sin.

Many people miss that point and sometimes misinterpret some places. And by the way, it's not only the Old Testament. Jesus used that expression several times.

Paul used that expression several times. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. In each context, it was bad news.

Why is leaven a type of sin? Because it corrupts by puffing up. That's exactly the root of all sin, our pride. Originally Satan's pride.

Verse four, they are all adulterers as an oven heated by the baker who seeth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough until it be leavened. Strange idiom here. They are all adulterers.

I want to emphasize the word adultery doesn't just refer to sexual sins, but it refers to worshipping a false God. God uses that term in a broader context, but just as concerned as any way we might use it. Now, by the way, he's not talking here about harmless acts between consenting adults that our society might try to make them out to be.

These things are passions inflamed by sin that eventually destroys the ones that are affected by them. Very key idea. Now, this idea of an oven and the baker thing may not strike us that clear, but Israel's passion for disobedience was like a fire burning low in the oven while the baker kneads the dough and waits for the leavening process.

So even though the flames are down, they are going to rise when it's time. That's the idiomatic use here, apparently. When the time is right, the fires will blaze forth when kindled.

And that's sort of what it's implying. It's smoldering under the surface. If you want to press this, you could probably make the same issue about pornography, the dangers of which are often not understood in the sense that it inflames a passion that at the time can rage out of control.

Anyway, verse five, in the day of our king, the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine. He stretched out his hand with scorners. Now, to begin to understand this, I should explain the day of our king is really the day of the festival.

Our king probably refers to a special celebration in which the ruler was the center of attention. And apparently the king was caroused with his princes who are called scorners here in the verse. And they were all under the influence of wine.

And while they partied with the naive king, they plotted his overthrow. To understand this phrase here, you need to know a little. I've tried to spare you a lot of the detailed history between 752 and 732 BC in the era that we're talking about.

But four of Israel's and other kingdoms' rulers were assassinated. Most of this is in 2 Kings 15. Not only the murders of Zechariah, not the prophet, another one, Shalom, Pecaiah, and Pechah, but also may refer to the disastrous reign of Menahem who allowed Israel to become a vassal to their enemies, the vassal of Assyria.

It might also appear prophetically yet future from this writing, but to Hosea who was to be imprisoned by Assyria later. So it's a very turbulent time. They go through ten dynasties.

And each one murdering and assassinating the predecessor and so forth. It's a bloody, bloody area. It went from bad to worse.

Won't go through the details. Don't need to. Verse 6. For they have made ready their heart like an oven.

While they lie and wait, their baker sleepeth all the night. In the morning it burneth as a flaming fire. Again, the same kind of idiom is being used here.

The Masoretic text reads, their baker sleeps. And that's sort of like the King James. The NIV says it a little differently.

Their passion smolders. That requires a little emulation of the Hebrew, but probably captures the idea maybe even a little clearer. It is similar to the thought that we had back in verse 4, which carries along the comparison of their hearts to an oven.

And one could paraphrase verse 6. When they approach the king, their hearts like an oven contain a fire. Just as the fire burns slowly while the baker is inactive, so their scheme remains a secret. But when the time for action comes, their destructive plot is realized.

Just as a fire in an oven blazes forth, when the time for baking arrives. That's sort of the thought that underlies this in the view of most commentators. Verse 7. They are all hot as an oven.

They have devoured their judges. All their kings are fallen. There is none among them that calleth unto me.

God speaking. And because the royal court was filled with all these murders and murderers, the kingship frequently changed hands. And throughout this period of palace revolt and regicide or murder of kings, no one bothered to look to the Lord, the true King of Israel, and our only source of national stability.

You say, well, gee, this is Old Testament stuff. Who cares? Wait a minute. Wait a minute, gang.

Stand back for a minute and ask yourself which modern government is more characterized by murder and unsolved crimes and cover-ups on the face of this earth? You could not hear, if I give you a written exam, list all the people that have been murdered during the current administration. There's over a hundred from very, very high ranks on down. Ron Brown, Secretary of Commerce, murdered.

Why? Because you can give evidence the next week. What about Vince Foster? Go through the list. Is there a parallel? Boy, the more I study Hosea here, the more disturbing it gets, the more parallel it would seem to be.

And if that's the case, we've got some ominous implications of this. But anyway, verse 8, God continues. Ephraim, again the northern king, he hath mixed himself among the people.

Ephraim is a cake not turned. Ephraim had launched a half-baked foreign policy. Now you'll laugh because I'm using, but that's exactly the vernacular he's using here.

Israel had formed alliances with foreign nations, and God is going to deal with that here in verse 11, and in chapter 8, verse 9, and elsewhere. When he says, Ephraim is a cake not turned, we laugh at that. You say, gee, Chuck, that's a missler translation.

No, we'd say it's half-baked. And that's exactly where this kind of a phrase comes from. And we'll talk more about that as it goes.

Verse 9, strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not. Yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not. These foreign adventures.

See, Israel was looking to foreign alliances rather than God for stability. Big mistake. Even George Washington warned the United States about that, to avoid foreign entanglements.

And look at us today. It's absurd. We're spending billions of dollars arming Russia to wipe us out with nuclear weapons.

We intrigue with China, giving her all our secrets. Not most of them, all of them, according to the Cox report recently. We get into Kosovo.

Who do you think is going to end up building, rebuilding all of that? You guys will be. Your pocketbooks. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not.

Yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not. These alliances depleted the resources. Yes, I have an elderly relative that made a wonderful remark.

It still echoes in my ears. She says, Chuck, you don't grow old. You wake up one day and discover you are.

And that's exactly what Hosea is saying here. It's like, yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not. You don't admit it to yourself.

Israel, the northern kingdom at this point, was paying tribute or taxes to Assyria. This is before the end of being taken captive. They were already a vassal, also paying tribute.

And that's draining its wealth. There was, of course, finally the costly Syro-Ephraimite war, Ephraim and Syria war, in which she allied with Syria. That was a big mistake.

And so, the northern kingdom is sort of like Samson. You may recall Samson. It said in Judges 16.20 that he did not know that the Lord had left him.

Samson discovered that much to his chagrin. Verse 10, And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face, and they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek him for all this. Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart.

They call to Egypt, and they go to Syria. The northern kingdom, in its desperation against security, went to its enemies. They called to Egypt.

Big mistake. Went to Syria. Even bigger mistake.

And he's to a dove. Doves are pretty, but not too bright. He was under Mannheim in about 743-738 B.C., right in that range that Israel submitted to Assyrian suzerainty, or paid him tribute and so forth.

And then Pekah, a little later, joined a coalition against Assyria. Tiglath-Pileser III violently crushed all that. And that led, of course, ultimately to the invasion, to the total downfall of the northern kingdom under Shalmaneser.

As an aside, this is just a little footnote. I won't derail the study to get into this. But that whole Pekah business and all of that was an intrigue that's described in Isaiah 7. But in Isaiah 7, there is a secret code that, if you unravel, reveals what the plot would have been had they succeeded.

Doesn't matter because it didn't succeed, but it's a classic case in the Midrash of encryption. I'm not talking equidistant letter sequences and all that stuff people call Bible codes. I'm talking about a form of letter substitution called Atbash or Albam.

One of those two. It was used in Isaiah 7. Small point. To students of cryptography, it's just an historical oddity that there's these encryptions.

In Isaiah 7 and Jeremiah 51 and Jeremiah 26, there's these encryptions. Well, to a student of cryptography, it's just an oddity. But to someone who recognizes the supernatural origin of the text, the fact that there are encryption there are gigantically significant signposts to look for other things.

Proverbs 25.2 says it's the glory of God to conceal a matter and the opportunity of kings to search them out. But anyway, that's just a footnote on the Pekah thing. But finally, the last king, Hosea.

Not Hosea the prophet, Hosea the final king. He actually acknowledged the rulership for a time, but then he sought an alliance for Egypt that backfired and this act of rebellion caused the northern kingdom to crash and burn, so to speak. Their foreign policy for 20 years had been characterized by expediency and so like a silly dove going to and fro and they eventually paid the piper.

Verse 12. When they shall go, I will, God speaking, I will spread my net upon them. I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven.

I will chastise them as their congregation hath heard. God has continued the analogy there as if they're a bird and he's the trapper. He's going to come equipped, if you will.

And he'd come like a wise and well-equipped trapper and trap them. Israel's foreign policy had no place for the Lord and so he would intervene in judgment. They sought out a lot of naive alliances and they're going to pay the piper.

Some interesting words here. The word chastise here is yesar in the Hebrew. It speaks of the loving instruction of a parent to his child.

Verse 13. Woe unto them, for they have fled from me. Destruction unto them, because they have transgressed against me, though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me.

So despite the Lord's... What you should be hearing through all of this is the Lord's reluctance, his longing, his caring, but his justice has to be vindicated. So he's forced, in effect, to take these actions. The word redeem here is pedah, which is used frequently to describe deliverance from Egypt.

That's often the illusion here. It's a term from commercial law, which refers to the reclaiming or the ransoming of an obligated person by means of payment. That's exactly the way the Lord is speaking of this here.

Now the God of the Exodus, the God that redeemed them out of Egypt, is unchanged in his will, but because of Israel's rejection of him, he has no choice. See, they were willing... In Egypt, he was able to do something for them. Here, they're not.

And it's interesting how prosperity is a greater risk than poverty. See, slavery and poverty in Egypt was a better benefit, in a sense of speaking, than their prosperity, which had caused them to be blind to the Lord's provision. They were ascribing their prosperity to everything else but the source.

And boy, that's our risk, too, isn't it? It's interesting to see how our nation is under more risk today, with the Dow at 11,000, than it was when, in a revolutionary time, we were hanging by our fingernails, and yet men were willing to pledge their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor for their children and grandchildren. It's a shock to go through the signers of the Declaration of Independence and realize most of them had their homes burned, families abused. Unbelievable.

They did that knowingly. For themselves, no. But for their posterity.

We got it the other way around. We make sure that our posterity is in debt. Okay, verse 14.

They have not cried unto me with their heart, yet when they have howled upon their beds, they assembled themselves... I'm going to come back to that word. It's probably a mistake. ...assembled themselves for corn and wine, and they rebelled against me.

So Israel's rejection of the Lord, again, is illustrated here. The nation desired a plentiful crop, you know, grain, wheat, and also new wine. In fact, that's why they worshiped Baal.

It was supposed to be a fertility god and all that business. But refused to exhibit the wholehearted devotion to God, without which agricultural prosperity would be impossible. Now, when it says they howled, the yalal in the Hebrew, in the pagan practice also was accompanied by cutting their bodies as they mourned over crop failure.

And then the second sentence here, it says, the NIV in the margin says they slashed themselves. And that follows the Septuagint and some of the Hebrew manuscripts. It's better than they assemble themselves.

There's a Hebrew ambiguity here. Cutting themselves was a sign of mourning among the Canaanites and others. It happened to be forbidden by law, Deuteronomy 14 and elsewhere, because of its pagan associations.

You may recall Elijah and Mount Carmel. When the priests of Baal were getting more and more apprehensive and anxious because nothing was happening, they started cutting themselves. And Elijah's over there is making, taunting them.

Well, you know, maybe he's deaf, or maybe he's going to the bathroom. That's really what he, he's relieving himself, is what it says. A little different than King James, a little, made a little more polite.

But that's, you know, Elijah's really letting them have, until they finally give up, and then he does his little thing. And you know the story. And how God lit up his fire.

And of course, Elijah didn't mess around. He slaughtered 450 before they reached the river. Anyway, that's all in 1 Kings 18, for those of you who want to read a great story.

The one great story that Cecil B. DeMille missed. Verse 15, Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me. And that's a very similar phrase that Joseph used of his brothers when he was sold to slavery back there in Genesis 50, you may recall.

Israel's rebellion is, essentially, reveals her ingratitude. Because the Lord had strengthened her. It says bound, but really means disciplined or trained their arms.

Elsewhere, the strength in the arms is typically a military kind of expression. The northern kingdom had a lot of military successes. That's why they're so prosperous.

But nevertheless, despite God's aid for them in battle, they treated God like an enemy. And so, verse 16, They return, but not to the most high. They are like a deceitful bow.

Their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue, and this shall be the derision in the land of Egypt. You see, Israel's hostility to the Lord, turning to Baal and all that, was an expression of unfaithfulness. And she was like a faulty bow.

One that's unreliable because it doesn't respond properly. So she's unreliable and disloyal. Because the leaders had rejected the true source of their strength.

And therefore, it would be destroyed in battle because of their pride. And this rage of the tongue phrase really refers to denunciation or curses. And here, Israel, by the way, is going to fall into derision among the enemies of God, even.

So you can almost, if you're really reading this carefully and devotionally, you can almost hear these words fall like tears from a broken heart. But that brings us to chapter 8. This is the indictment now fully stated. The phrases that we'll extract from chapter 8 is they've sown the wind and they're going to reap the whirlwind.

And the climactic phrase will be, but I will send fire upon their cities that will consume their fortresses. And I want to come to that phrase at the end because it may have some unusual implications for you and I. But God's justice had to be vindicated, and if you want a reference on that, Deuteronomy 28, from verse 15 to verse 68. In Deuteronomy 28, it really lays down.

It's easy, especially in the church, we speak of God as a God of grace, and indeed He is. But we have a tendency to dismiss or sweep under the carpet that He's also a holy God and a God of justice. And that justice needs to be vindicated.

And now because of that, Israel's going to reap the whirlwind. Let's go to verse 1. Set the trumpet to thy mouth, he shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant and trespassed against my law. Set the trumpet to thy mouth.

This is a sound of alarm. This is the kind of trumpet that sounds as a signal for an impending battle. We saw that back in chapter 5, you may recall.

The enemy, in this case the Assyrians, are ready to swoop down on Israel like a powerful eagle. He shall come as an eagle against what? The house of the Lord. Remember what Peter says in chapter 4, verse 17, judgment begins where? At the house of God.

But the context here really is the whole covenant curse of Deuteronomy 28 again, especially verse 49. That if they obey Him, they'll be blessed, but if they disobey Him, they will suffer the consequences. And of course, historically, this gets fulfilled when Tiglath-Balaser III invades and then the Shalmaneser finally takes them all to captivity.

722 B.C. is one of the key dates to remember of the fall of the Northern Kingdom. Anyway, verse 2, God says, Israel shall cry unto me, my God, we know thee. But that's a last-ditch pretense on the part of Israel.

That's what He says, they shall cry unto me, but it's a plea of someone that's guilty of the death penalty and just been caught, you know. And by the way, that pretense is still with us today. People claim to know God, but they don't because they forget that our God is a God to be obeyed, not just conned with lip service.

If you know God, it changes your life. You live differently. And remember what Jesus said, Luke 6, verse 46, Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say? It's very interesting, that phrase by the Lord, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say? He then follows immediately from that remark to the parable of the man that built a house on sand.

You all know the story, sand, rocks, so forth. He built his house on sand and lost everything because he didn't build the right foundation. Paul is right, it's an amplification of what Jesus said just prior to that parable.

To be a doer, not just a hearer only. Now what follows from here, in the rest of this chapter, are a list of the rejections of God that Israel was guilty of, and there's five of them. There are five grounds here for God's judgment.

We want to understand those, not just to understand the plight of Israel and what God was doing there, but to see if there's any application to ourselves. The first one is breaking of God's covenant. Verse 3, Israel hath cast off the thing that is good, the enemy shall pursue him.

See, Israel had made a pretense of devotion to the Lord, addressing Him as her own God, and claiming to acknowledge His authority over her, and yet, this was all just lip service. Her sinful actions spoke louder, you've all heard that expression, your actions speak so loudly I can't hear what you're saying. And that's in effect what God is saying here.

She rejected, that is cast off what's good, and that term is going to come up a little later again, another interesting way. But this idea of pretense of devotion, lip service only, does that describe us today? I don't need a show of hands. Next one is choice of ungodly kings is the next indictment that God lays on the northern kingdom.

Verse 4, they have set up kings but not by me, they have made princes, and I knew it not, of their silver and their gold have they made them idols that they may be cut off. So they appointed kings and so forth without consulting the Lord. And of course this alludes in effect, historically speaking, to all the palace revolts, the whole sequence of all these murders ever since His reign.

Now by the way, it's kind of interesting to see that their climax is going to come upon them after two centuries of independence. Think about it. You know, we've been at it, what, 223 years, something like that? And of course now we're not a theocracy, you know, we never pretend to be that, but we are a representative democracy of, by, and for the people.

Well, if that's the case, where's the outrage? Where are the American people screaming that they don't have the leaders that they want? You see, the real problem in this country is not the president or the administration. The real problem is the people. They're a reflection, they're a mirror.

It's our negligence, it's our ingratitude, our presumption on God that this all happens. And a couple of questions, a little pop quiz for you. Do you hold your elected representatives accountable to reflect your views? You'd have to agree with me, whatever views you have, do you hold your representatives, senators, congress, whatever, accountable to represent what you really want to happen in the areas of responsibility? You may disagree with me, that's fine.

Do you hold them, whoever they are, accountable? That's the question. And see, you have no right to bemoan the loss of that which you have declined to defend. That's not original with me.

I got that from somewhere, I don't remember where, but I am quoted in a statement in a book of quotations that it's described to me. That's not true. I was going to write them and tell them it's not original.

I picked it up somewhere. I don't remember where, so until I find it, I guess I'll just keep shut. Next one is idolatry.

See, bad leaders lead to bad religion and vice versa. Israel had made idols for themselves in direct violation of the second commandment. You've got the bad leaders, you've got the bad idols, the bad idols, you've got the worst leaders, and it's a circular thing, it's a mess.

And same thing with us. We worship the wrong idols. Well, we worship God.

No, you don't. We worship the Tao. If stock price is going up, we relax and applaud.

Stock prices are going down, off with their heads. That's the altar at which we worship. Verse 5. Thy calf, O Samaria, has cast thee off.

Mine anger is kindled against them. How long will it be ere they attain to innocency? These calf idols, these golden calves, were erected in Dan, up north, and in Bethel. These were expressly forbidden by God's law, in Exodus 20, 34, Leviticus 19, and a lot of other places.

And in 1 Kings 12, we have all this recorded. Thy calf, O Samaria. The calf wasn't erected in Samaria, technical detail.

It was in Dan and Bethel, but Samaria was the capital of the country. Idiomatically, the country was capital of Samaria. It's sort of like blaming Washington, D.C., for the morality of the country, in a sense.

It's used idiomatically here. And Jeroboam, by the way, is just repeating the sins of a prior generation. You can find that all in Exodus 32, but we'll keep moving.

Now, the words cast off here follow the Septuagint. But actually, the Hebrew literally says, He has rejected your calf, O Samaria. And this third person reference to God is also an ominous sign.

God does that. That happens in God's Word several places, where He's almost putting the third person. Now, this word cast off, it's zanakh in the Hebrew.

I mentioned before, I'm not going to catch all of these because it'll bore you to death, but Hosea especially plays on words all the time. The Holy Spirit deals in puns. He deals in all these.

Now, the word zanakh here echoes verse 3. Israel had cast off what is good and turned to idols, and the Lord is responding appropriately by casting them off. So, you cast me off, I'm cast. That's the linguistic tie together here.

So, just as Moses and Joshua had warned them, the Lord's anger is burning against the idolaters. And in despair, the Lord asks, How long will they be committed to impurity? He says innocence there. He means impurity.

Verse 6, For from Israel was it also the workmen made it. Therefore it is not God, but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. Now, these words, it is not God, may not ring in your ears, but in 1 Kings 12.28, when Jeroboam introduced the idols, he says, Here are your gods.

That was the way he announced it. This is a rebuttal to what was going on from the historical narrative. And it's made by a workman.

It's not of God. And the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. And indeed, the destruction of the golden calves would demonstrate to them the futility of them.

Declaring it doesn't make it so. Now, you say, Well, that was those quaint tribal conditions. Really? We have the same thing going on in our country every day.

The insanity of political correctness. We manufacture truth. We do it in our science, as well as our schools.

The myth of evolution, biogenesis, undergirds not just the biology courses in our schools, absurd though it is and disproven though it is, it undergirds our philosophy, it undergirds our psychology, it undergirds our laws. So it's just one example of the prostitution of truth is not just in our school textbooks, it's in our corridors of power, and it's in our courts. The whole insanity of hate crimes.

When the hate crimes hook up with the forfeiture laws, you've got the Weimar Republic returning. Our problem is not the year 2000 that's coming. Our problem is this 1930 Weimar time.

You've got tyranny on the horizon. The first casualty in any culture of war is truth. And truth is gone.

Then we get to verse 7, which is sort of a climactic verse in a sense. God says, For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. It hath no stock, the bud shall yield no meal, and if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

Reaping the whirlwind. After two centuries of rejection, Israel is going to have 2,000 years of reaping the whirlwind. And indeed so will we.

In Proverbs 11.29, you can put in your notes there's an undergirding there. He continues his agricultural metaphor. Israel's crop will be worthless.

It says that it hath no stock. In other words, the wheat, if you take off the top, what's left is worthless. It's good for burning.

Like stocks without grain. And if she should produce grain, the foreigners will take it away. They'll not benefit from their labor.

In this country too, both our domestic policies as well as our foreign policies will be our undoing also. Well, as we read the Hosea, I realize this is, you know, Old Testament history and the ranting and raving of Isaiah. And yet, God doesn't change.

The people have changed. The circumstances have changed. God doesn't change.

How is He dealing with this? With great grief. He's going to have to do something He didn't want to do. He didn't want to injure the apple of His eye.

But they're forcing Him to by their conduct. And take a look at ourselves. See, our administration is a mirror of ourselves.

Of our society, of our values. And in this society, injustices continue to multiply. One of the most frightening things on our horizon is not the fact that Russia and China are arming up for nuclear war and all those kinds of things.

The real most frightening thing in our society is our abandonment of the rule of law. The property can be forfeited without due process. Then on the international scene we can redefine NATO as an offensive force.

Violating the Helsinki Accords of 75, the Unconvention of 1980, the UN Charter itself, even our War Powers Act. Ignored! Making it up as we go along. No rule of law.

Boy, that should frighten us. Because that will lead to reaping the whirlwind. And of course, we get to the fourth indictment here.

The nuclear alliance with ungodly nations. We pick that up again. Verse 8, Israel is swallowed up, now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.

It already had been swallowed up by foreign intrigues. We saw that in chapter 7, which is swiftly robbing the nation of its strength and its identity as God's people. So she finally loses her reason for existence.

It's interesting that Itzhak Rabin in his speech before he was assassinated, 30 days before he was assassinated, he said that the Bible is not Israel's trustee or title deed. That government, Peres and Rabin, denied any biblical basis for their presence in the land. Well, if that's the case, what are you doing there? That's their whole point of being there.

And you talk about an offense to God. So it's going to be very, very interesting to see how this all plays out. The words here, a vessel wherein is no pleasure.

The words literally are a pot in which no one delights. And of course, God is speaking here of His attitude or response to Israel's conduct. But I might mention something.

You know, I don't think most of us as Americans have any concept of how much we're hated in most of the world. You guys say, well, they're illiterate, this, that. You call them what names you like.

There's a widespread hatred and envy among the have-not nations. But set that aside, where is God's pleasure in America? God is bemoaning His lack of pleasure in Israel because of their conduct. Where is God's pleasure? What gives Him some heartwarming encouragement of what's going on in America? Is it in our abortion clinics? Is it in our schools where He's outlawed? How about in our lives? Verse 9. For they are gone up to Assyria a wild ass alone by Himself.

Those are His words, not mine, by the way. I just thought I'd better emphasize that. For they are gone up to Assyria a wild ass alone by Himself.

Ephraim hath hired lovers. Prophet the only motive in other words. And while he's speaking of stubborn and whatever, I won't go you don't have to build on the metaphor.

Verse 10. Yea, though they have hired among the nations now will I gather them and they shall sorrow a while for the burden of the king of princes. See, despite their desperate attempts to preserve themselves God's judgment was certain.

When God decides to judge it's a done deal. His judgment would be a judgment of a king of princes that is the name of the king of Assyria in this case. Ironically the very one that they sought aid from incidentally.

Then we get to the false alders. Verse 11. Because Ephraim hath made many alders to sin alders shall be unto him to sin.

Alders to sin. Now he's talking about false alders here in a different sense. Yes, they're worshipping the wrong gods, yes, but there's also the worship itself was false.

Religion, I was very intrigued to lift this from J. Vernon McGee's commentary, religion has been the most damning thing this world has ever experienced. Religion has been the most damning thing this world has ever experienced. Now he's using religion here in the literal denotative sense.

In contrast to a relationship. When Adam and Eve were sinning they made themselves they tried to cover themselves cover themselves with aprons of fig leaves, right? And in Genesis 3 verse 21 is a little sentence which you miss until you've read the rest of the Bible and come back to it. It says that God made them coats of skins.

Well, your first reaction as you're reading the story is well, I'll say a naive sense, well, you know the fig leaves are sort of not very functional. He gave them, you know, leather goods, I mean, you know, something more substantial. No, there's a deeper issue there.

God is teaching them by the shedding of innocent blood they'd be covered. It's a Levitical statement. See, the whole idea of the scripture is that man's attempts to cover himself be they with fig leaves or whatever else are fruitless.

The only way man will be covered in reconciliation with God is by the shedding of innocent blood, namely the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. Genesis chapter 3 is of course an echo of the whole business of the Redeemer and even in verse 21 we have the hint of the cross if you will. And that makes no sense from that by looking at it denotatively you really have to embrace the Torah as a whole and of course it's all hidden strangely in the genealogy in Genesis 5 hidden behind the scenes but that's another story.

If your religion itself has been the most damning thing the world has ever experienced look at the bondage in India starving nation that can't eat the beef because the cow is sacred. What's wrong with this picture?

Look at China and the demonic dragons that you know pervade its entire history and mythology not all the way back they originally worshipped one god when they were the Sinaites coming from Tower of Babel to the Shang-Ti they worshipped along and see we think of the three major religions Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism but that's only since the 5th century B.C. they go back 4,500 years go back earlier they worshipped one god but that's a whole other thing look at the bloody history of Europe you will not understand the history of Europe unless you understand the bloody grasp of temporal power by the Vatican the shenanigans the intrigues all under the banner of Christ now of course in Israel the context here is these altars that they had that became altars for sinning because the religious

acts that were conducted were hypocritical see they weren't worshipping alone don't get the idea of worshipping Baal instead of God they were worshipping Baal alongside God that's why God's offended we brought that up last time in the earlier chapters that makes it clear Baal means Lord but no they were always refined you've got your truth I've got mine kind of thing see observances of any kind even to the God of the Bible are still an offense if they are not combined with wholehearted devotion to his commandments God is a God that requires obedience and so he would not accept even the sacrifices that were offered to him is the point and he was going to punish them by handing them to exile as we talk about these churches I finally laid my hands on a cartoon I was fumbling for the other

night New Yorker cartoon that shows a church with a sign outside the New Light Church you know we've got Bud Light you've got all these different kinds of everything is light these days well this is the light church 24% fewer commitments home of the 7.5% tithe 15 minute sermons 45 minute worship services we have only 8 commandments take your choice we have just 3 spiritual laws everything you wanted in the church and less and of course obviously very cynical but although it's humorous because it's a bit extreme and yet it's not far off the mark of church's market research to be user friendly now anyway this last verse Egypt stands as a symbol for the place of future exile and bondage and it was in deliverance from Egypt that Israel experienced God's grace but having spurned that grace

they're going to return to slavery not to Egypt Egypt used idiomatically here but to Assyria now I can be more literal even though they went to Assyria later Babylon conquers the Assyrians and when Babylon conquers Judah they get commingled in the book of Jeremiah some of them did get sent to Egypt but I think the real use here the real thrust of the verse is the idiomatic use of it Israel as symptomatic of a place of bondage verse 12 I have written to him the great things of my law but they were counted as a strange thing see the real root problem is that Israel here and certainly our nation as well is ignorant of the word of God the northern kingdom was so steeped in all this other stuff going on that they had lost their moorings they had lost their roots in the word of God and it's the

same thing here so much so that they counted the word of God as a strange thing same thing here in America you know a few decades ago you could talk to somebody about the Bible and they may not be a believer but they at least had some exposure some understanding of it not anymore anyway verse 13 down the end here they sacrificed flesh for sacrifices of mine offerings they eat it but the Lord accepted them not now will he remember their iniquity and visit their sins they shall return to Egypt and I think we've covered that pretty well and verse 14 for Israel now this is the summary of the whole enchilada last verse this chapter for Israel hath forgotten his maker and buildeth temples and Judah hath multiplied fence cities but I will send a fire upon his cities and it shall devour the

palaces thereof this is the whole tale Israel hath forgotten her maker her provider her redeemer and that's America we were founded by prayerful design and that beginning has given us more than two centuries of security and dominance blessings and what's our response are we grateful not even token we've outlawed the one that created this country and is defended we've outlawed them from our schools and so forth and so on you know it's disturbingly parallel in our inescapable knowledge of God coupled with our unreasonable rejection of that knowledge is what makes us guilty before the throne of the universe well at this point I want to remind you of a quote you'll hear it all the time and we mentioned it before Alexis de Tocqueville in 1815 did a tour of America of the United States trying

to you know from Europe trying to understand what made America great and he interviewed people and he traveled across the country and he came to he wrote quite a book called Democracy in America in 1815 but the key quote from that summarizes the whole book he says America is great because America is good if America ever ceases to be good she'll cease to be great a very very appropriate quote for a lot of reasons now the final exclamation point on the evening's passages of chapter 7 and 8 is this verse 14 what does he say? for Israel hath forgotten his maker and buildeth temples and doeth multiplied fenced cities but I will send a fire upon his cities and devour the palaces thereof there is a prophetic hint here that echoes another prophetic hint that bothers me in Ezekiel 38 and 39 there

is probably the best known passage of Bible prophecy among prophecy buffs Ezekiel 38 describes Magog, Russia and I won't go to prove that but there's no in my opinion no really competent debate on that Russia Magog clearly defines what we know today as Russia Magog and Iran and a group of other allies invade Israel and God thwarts the invasion dramatically now that passage is known for two reasons well known first of all it's the occasion that God intervenes once again on Israel's behalf after a long layoff and all that not because they deserve it Ezekiel 36 tells us but because God promised he would and his name is on the deal there's another reason it's so well known is because it appears to describe the use of nuclear weapons chapter 39 38 is the battle in effect 39 is sort of the

cleanup after the battle all the weapons left over from the engagement provide all the energy needs of Israel for seven years and they hire professionals to clear the battlefield they wait seven months before entering the field then they go in for seven months and everything they find the professionals deal with it by burying it downwind east of the Dead Sea in fact in verse 15 of chapter 39 Ezekiel goes even further he says if a tourist a traveler passes through the valley and sees something the professionals have missed he doesn't touch it he marks the location lets the professionals come and deal with it and they would bury it downwind so a lot of people say that sounds like nuclear weapons maybe it does there is a verse in chapter 39 that bothers a number of scholars it happens to use

a word that they are not quite sure what it means but you might turn with me to Ezekiel 39 to get the picture earlier in chapter 38 God says I will send hailstones of fire upon Magog and his allies great in chapter 39 he echoes that again in verse 6 God says I will send a fire on Magog and then there is a phrase that everybody worries about it says and among those who dwell carelessly in the isles or coastlands and they shall know that I am the Lord now the hailstones of fire are first mentioned in chapter 38 verse 22 but this seems to be an amplification I will send fire upon Magog and upon them who dwell carelessly in the isles now the word isles in the Hebrew is a little two letter word a jot and an aleph it's e the word appears 36 times in the Bible 30 times it is translated islands

five isles five times islands country once it is generally regarded by the Hebrew scholars as a term representing a remote coastland or island typically a pleasant place or a shore in other words a distant

shore is as close as we would get to it probably in the English you could even stretch it a little bit and say a remote continent who knows well see some people fear that maybe what this hint is here is that Magog and Iran and whoever else are invading Israel and God thwarts that invasion with hailstones of fire which may be it would seem thermonuclear warheads on intercontinental ballistic missiles could be could be a lot of other things but from this verse it sounds like there's an exchange those hailstones of fire fall upon Magog and his bands and on those who dwell carelessly or

securely the word is batash in the remote shores well that's a little scary now Hal Lindsay makes the point he believes that the the weapons that will be used in Armageddon are in inventory today the arms races of the past the inventory is there in his view for a lot of reasons I won't try to defend now he also believes that Ezekiel 38 is part of the Armageddon scenario Grant Jeffries, Chuck Smith myself and a number of others have a different view for a number of technical reasons we believe that the Ezekiel 38 battle is prior to the 73rd Daniel prior to Armageddon and all of that stuff let me give you the good news write this down well rather than write it down I'll show you where it is Ezekiel 38 verse 16 God has his tirade against God verse 15 says thou shalt come from thy place out

of the north parts actually it's the outermost parts of the north thou and many peoples with thee all other and so forth verse 16 and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel like a cloud to cover the land and on he goes he shall come in the latter days now those of us in the study of Hosea have learned from chapters 1 and 2 that God does not always call Israel my people the naive reader says well gee he always calls Israel my people Israel no Hosea the whole point of Hosea chapter 1 and 2 and several other passages is that there is a time when God has set them aside they are not my people Hosea has these three children Jezreel an alternative name for Armageddon by the way Ami and Larua and Lo-Ami not my people not mercy then he has them change the names he makes them through

Hosea's naming of his children he makes the points I won't try to review all chapter 1 and 2 the point is Israel is clearly set aside for the time being when was that declared by the Lord Jesus Christ when he rode the donkey into Jerusalem on the very day that Gabriel predicted to Daniel five centuries earlier when the donkey got over the breast of the hill from the Mount of Olives he saw the city he wept O Jerusalem Jerusalem if you'd only known this thy day what day 173,880th day from that mathematical prophecy that Gabriel gave Daniel five centuries earlier but he says but now these things are hidden from thine eyes forever no Paul tells us in Romans 11.25 these things are hidden until the fullness of the Gentiles become in the church and Israel are mutually exclusive the church wasn't

instituted until Israel had rejected the offer of the kingdom in Acts chapter 2 we have the church begun the church has a different origin different mission different destiny than Israel many Bible scholars are confused on that point the whole point of Ezekiel 38 is this is the triggering event where God once again is dealing with Israel which means it's post church it's post church that means the Rapture of 1 Thessalonians 4 has occurred now this gets very timely because indeed the intelligence digest and other reputable sources increasing number of reputable sources believe that there's a nuclear event on the horizon between Russia on the one hand or China on the other who knows but it's getting very very tense anyone that thinks the next 5, 10, 20 years are going to be smooth just

haven't done their homework what's going to happen who knows but Russia does seem to be positioning itself for an invasion of the Middle East for a number of reasons that sounds crazy until you've studied it and if they do go into Israel it may not be Ezekiel 38 we don't know that but the more you study the passage in Ezekiel 38 all its detail and the more you know what's going on in detail the more it fits so

there's an abundance of view among Bible scholars that Ezekiel 38 seems to be shaping up on the horizon well if that's the case praise God because we're out of here if you're in Christ now you say gee Chuck you hit a lot of nervous stuff here at the tail end here I'm kind of afraid of this listen if you are in Jesus Christ you've got nothing to worry about because you've got a

unique relationship to the creator of the universe now if you are not in Jesus Christ you've got bigger problems than some domestic turmoil or a nuclear hit or whatever else and so the issue is where do you stand not in what church you go to not what religion you claim allegiance to that isn't the issue the issue is your personal relationship with Jesus Christ the question then is what have you done with it are you doers or hearers only or are you going to be like Israel yes you give your token consent to God but you also worship this and that and the other thing what do you mean that and the other thing it can be a hobby it can be a career it can be your social position you can make a whole list of things that have a higher priority in life than the creator of the universe if you do

they're idols Colossians tells us that covetousness is idolatry and we are a nation that has refined covetousness to a national industry let's bow our hearts for a word of prayer well father we praise you for who you are we thank you father that in your kingdom there are no accidents that we're all here right now by your divine appointment we thank you father for each and everyone that could raise their hand this night and declare an allegiance a commitment to our king of kings but father we come before your throne admitting confessing acknowledging and owning our negligence our ingratitude our presumption our lack of diligence in preserving the the mandate you've given us that has come at such a high price the heritage of this country oh father we come before your throne acknowledging

our sin and asking your forgiveness pleading nothing else but the blood of Jesus Christ on our behalf but father we do pray before your throne that you would guide our thoughts that you would illuminate that path before us as to what you would have of us in response to these days yes father we acknowledge that America is ripe for judgment we are deserving of your judgment we're certainly undeserving of your grace and your mercy and your provision that has so characterized so blessed this country of the last several centuries and yet father we come before your throne knowing that that grieves you even more than it grieves us that you would much prefer for this country to continue as a beachhead for the gospel to a hurting world a world where we should be sending Bibles not bombs or bullets

where we should be sending missionaries not missiles so father we can do nothing else but flee to your infinite mercy just asking you to give us a revival father in this country have your spirit move in a mighty way that this country might fulfill that which you would have it fulfill and yet father let that revival begin with us for we acknowledge that it's the sins of the body of Christ that stand in the way of what you prefer to do and none other so father we just bring ourselves before your throne asking you to just receive us in the name of Yeshua our lord and savior Jesus Christ Amen

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