

Hosea #7 Ch. 11-12 Hosea

by Chuck Missler

This sermon explores the themes of God's love and Israel's ingratitude as depicted in Hosea chapters 11-12, emphasizing the emotional depth of God's relationship with His people.

Duration: 1:08:27

Scripture: Exodus 29:45, Hosea 9:10, Hosea 11:1, Matthew 6:33, John 20:17, Revelation 3:17

Topics: "Hosea"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the book of Hosea and its message about God's love and Israel's disloyalty. The speaker highlights how God drew Israel with cords of love and provided for them, but now they face punishment for their ingratitude. Despite their deserving of annihilation, God expresses his deep love and unwillingness to give up on them. The sermon also emphasizes the hope beyond the darkness and judgment, based on the unique nature of God, which will be further explored in the coming chapters.

Transcript

We're going to continue our study in Hosea. You may remember when Moses went to Pharaoh and he said, let my people go, Pharaoh responded, who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? It's interesting, if Pharaoh could have read the book of Hosea, he would have known, first of all, that the Lord was a sovereign God. That's what chapters 1 through 3 were all about.

He would have known that our God is a holy God. That's what chapters 4 through 7 were all about. We would also discover that he is a just God, chapters 8 through 10.

And for the remainder of the book, chapter 11 to the end, chapter 14, we discover the paradox or the predicament, in a sense, that God was in. Because he was a sovereign God, a holy God, and a just God, but he also is a loving God. And what we're going to uncover as we get into, especially chapter 11 and 12, is the pain that he felt because he was a loving God.

If we just had the first three attributes, the disposition of not only them, but ourselves, would have been quickly taken care of. Now, it's interesting, obviously, Pharaoh never had the benefit of this information that you and I have, or the fact that Israel had, from the pen and from the mouth of Hosea. And yet, Israel at the time, Hosea's readers and listeners, were just as stony-hearted as Pharaoh was back in the Exodus.

You all remember that. His heart was hardened. And here's Israel, which had the benefit of not only all that history, but of the book of Hosea, who was just as stony-hearted as Pharaoh was.

Now, chapters 11 through 14 are going to bring us to the climax of God's plan of redemption for His chosen people. And everything that had happened to Israel for the previous two centuries and more were intended to instruct her and bring her back to God. So what Hosea is going to now do in chapter 11, he's going to delve into the past, the present, and the future history of His redemption of His people.

And the Lord's self-disclosure of Himself in these illustrations that we're going to encounter is so intense that many rank the following chapter as one of the greatest in the Bible. Now that may be a rather extreme praise, but it's interesting that some at least have that view because of what we're about to encounter in chapter 11. And you could call it, if you want a title or if you want a note for the chapter, the troubled heart of God.

That's a strange phrase, just to start right there. We speak of God, most of us think of an impersonal, you know, super thing somehow. The idea that He has a heart and that His heart is troubled, that He can grieve.

It's a strange idea for this super being that was the creator of the universe. We use God so casually, you know, from our New Testament vocabulary. But the whole idea of the creator of the entire universe grieving, having a troubled heart, strange idea.

Well, let's just jump in. We'll first talk about the past, and you could call this where love encounters ingratitude. I don't know, that's one of the strangest emotions.

I think you probably have to be a father to really experience the pain of ingratitude. When your children or some beneficiary of your actions shows you absolutely no gratitude, or worse, actions of ingratitude, it's a strange feeling. It's not anger.

When someone disobeys, when a child disobeys you, you can deal with that. But ingratitude, there's nothing you can do except feel pain. I won't recount the anecdotes from the past.

I may have already done that several times with this gang who've been together so long, but I remember vividly a number of occasions where I experienced this strange pain, where I planned to do something very special for one of our children, only to come home and find out that circumstances required me to be the, you know, the disciplinarian, and all the little surprises I planned had to be deferred, put away, was inappropriate. I remember the frustration and the pain. I had all these good things I wanted to do.

I had a neat thing planned, and I couldn't. I had to deal with this situation a different way. And I remember sitting and thinking about that and realizing how frustrating that was.

And then I realized what God was trying to tell me, how frustrated He must be with us. But anyway, let's just jump in. Hosea chapter 11 verse 1 is a very strange verse.

It says, When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt. Now, when we read that verse, obviously it's talking about, you know, Israel when it was in Egypt in bondage. And God, of course, redeems them.

We all know how Charlton Heston confronted Yul Brynner. You know the whole story. But it's interesting how God, speaking here through Hosea, speaks of Israel as His child, as a son.

And there's several things. We know that love was the basis of election and the subsequent redemption from Egypt. Why did God choose Israel as His chosen people? No real reason.

He goes into that at some length, by the way. I didn't choose you because you were numerous or this and that. He just did.

He just loved them. Love was the basis of election. He has then encountered this strange phrase, And I called my son out of Egypt.

This is one of those phrases that I believe is very instructive for you and I methodologically. As we have these classes or gatherings or whatever you want to call them, we learn facts and things about the Bible. But even more important, we learn things about how the Bible communicates.

Tools that you will use later. And here we have Hosea saying, or God saying through Hosea, I called my son out of Egypt. You say that, gee, one of the things that you get taught if you go to seminary or classical studies, is the important thing in understanding a Bible verse is context.

The big unpardonable sin is to take a verse out of context. Boy, that sounds good. I've heard that for more than 40 years.

And one of the first things I have had to outgrow are the blinders that it produces. Context in what sense? Context of the verse before and after? Or context in the chapter before and after? And the more you start expanding it, the more you find all kinds of exceptions. What's the context? The whole Word of God.

Now, what makes this, the reason I'm in love with this particular example, is Matthew in chapter 2, verse 15, quotes this verse as a prophecy when Mary and Joseph brought the babe back to Israel out of Egypt. You remember your Christmas story? Herod killed all the babes in Bethlehem. But through a dream, Joseph was warned to take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt.

And they stayed there until what? Till Herod died. When Herod died, he was told, okay, it's okay to come back. And if you read chapter 2, verse 15 of Matthew, because Matthew not only recounts that, but quotes this verse as being fulfilled prophetically there.

When we read Matthew, boy, that sounds great. It's certainly true, it's in this Word of God. Out of Egypt, I have called... In fact, turn with me, because sometimes you have to see this to believe.

Turn to Matthew chapter 2. Joseph, you know, and when he arose, he took, that's Joseph, took the young child, his mother, by night and departed into Egypt. Verse 15. And he was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophets, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Boy, that sounds great. Wow, isn't that neat? And you go on and read. Wait a minute, wait a minute, time out.

Let's go back and see, where is that? Well, it's in Hosea chapter 11, verse 1. When Israel was a child, I loved him and called my son out of Egypt. Please explain to me how that applies in the context it's written. In the context it's written, it's all about the nation Israel and how they were called out of Egypt.

I hope you're confused. Because it's important. Because out of that confusion, you want to begin to draw some inferences.

The first thing you really learn, of course, is that phrase has more than one implication. It's used in a primary sense because obviously in the context here, God is talking about Israel as a child and he's using the idiom of son, and you're going to see in the subsequent verses how he cared for that son. And here the son is the nation Israel.

And I called my son out of Egypt. And indeed God did. But the first insight here, of course, is that it also has a larger meaning.

And let me tell you something fascinating. When you start searching these things down, and there are hundreds of them, every time that larger meaning points to whom? Jesus Christ. And I love that.

Not because this is that big an example, but I want you, you're going to find all kinds of good advice in books about how to study the Bible. And I'm not knocking it, don't misunderstand me. But take all of those things cautiously and understand that every rule has its exceptions.

The rules are helpful. And indeed the primary concern, especially as you read epistles and things, is to understand the context for sure. But be alert to the Holy Spirit illuminating to you some larger meanings.

About our Messiah. About the one whom we have to... About your personal life. I urge you to have a daily Bible reading program.

Don't play Bible roulette. Gee, I've got a problem. Open up and do what the first word said.

People like to play what some people... That's a roulette wheel in the very true sense of the term. No, have a Bible reading. But what you do then is have a pad.

If you've got something on your heart, write down on your pad. And then continue your Bible reading. Your regular Bible reading.

And watch the Lord speak to you. Very, very exciting. Anyway, Kyle, who's one of the main Old Testament commentators, points out, quote, Just as Israel grew into a nation in Egypt where it was out of reach of the Canaanite-ish ways, so the child Jesus was hidden in Egypt from the hostility of Herod.

There's a parallel there too. And again, to start this thing is, Why did God choose to set His affection on Israel? Turn with me to Deuteronomy 7. Deuteronomy 7. This is going to be, I think, important for us. Deuteronomy 7, 7 and 8. Easy to remember.

The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you because you were more in number than any people. For ye are the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh the king of Egypt.

God just chose them. Love is the basis. That's the basis that you're here right now.

God loves you. Don't ever ask why. You know.

Because that's a mystery. And the more you study that, the bigger mystery it is. Don't ask.

Just receive. He loves you. Let me tell you something else about God that you need to understand and embrace and learn.

He keeps His promises. He takes pride in keeping His promises. He makes covenants and He keeps them.

And He's given you promises in the Scripture. And one of the most biggest treasures you can accumulate is to get a card file and start writing down the promises in the Scripture. Some churches do that in their bulletins.

They have a promise every Sunday that you write down and take home. Collect promises. And understand those are not just little Bible verses to memorize.

No, no, no. Those are commitments by the God of the universe that He will not break. To you personally.

Exciting collection. It's the best bargain. It costs you nothing.

Take your Bible and every time you come across it, make a special little card, three by five or whatever. Put it in a little card file. Make a collection of His promises.

Now, this passage that we get into must have been the most stirring concept that Hosea would ever encounter in his listeners. Because the idea that God is a Father was not that widely understood in the Old Testament days. We take it... See, we read this, we sort of take it for granted because we've been taught from a New Testament background.

But stop and think. Now, this is ancient Israel. And God, as a Father, was a different idea.

Most of it is associated with the New Testament. And indeed, Jesus did, all but one occasion, always refer to God as My Father. My Father.

Perhaps the best example is John 20, verse 17. We might turn to John, chapter 20. Mary's in the garden, sees Him there.

And Jesus says, Touch Me not, or literally, don't cling to Me, for I'm not ascended to My Father. But go to My brethren and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father and to My God and your God. One of those places that Jesus makes it very clear that His relationship to the Father was like a father and a son.

Do you know there's only one place that I know of where Jesus didn't call Him Father? And that's when He hung on the cross, in your place and Mine, and He said, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? He was wearing our shoes. And in that context, it wouldn't have been appropriate. Interesting.

If you want to learn more about that, read Psalm 22. It opens and closes with the first and last declarations from the cross. It reads as if it was dictated first person singular as He hung there on the cross.

And it opens with those very words. Now in the Old Testament, God is called Father, but of Israel, never of an individual. Obviously, except, of course, the Son of God.

Jesus, that's different. But He's always called the Father of the nation. And it's interesting to me, how many times did that happen? Fourteen.

Seven times two, interesting enough. And I won't go through those examples. You can chase them down yourself.

They'll be in the notes. So let's keep going. Verse 2. And as they called Him so, they went from them, and they sacrificed to Balaam, and burned incense to graven images.

In other words, God called them out of Egypt. And did He worship them? No. They sacrificed to Balaam, and so forth.

In other words, Israel is like the prodigal son, in a sense. In response to the love of God, as seen in the redemption from Egypt, Israel turned a deaf ear to God's prophets, choosing Baal and idols instead. Now, we're plunging right into the more contemporary situation Hosea is facing.

It's interesting how, after Egypt, they spent 40 years, as you know, wandering the wilderness, going into the land of Canaan. It took only three days to get Israel out of Egypt, but it took 40 years to get Egypt out of Israel. But yet, as soon as they get into Canaan, what do they do? They start whoring after false gods.

And you say, gee, those guys are... that's terrible. That's awful. I've had friends say, when they watch the movie, The Ten Commandments, they can't get over.

They get sort of into the whole thing, and here's the parting of the sea, and they're doing all this, and just, it's not long after, they're building a golden calf, and all this stuff. Can't get over the fickleness of these people. Then you stop and say, wait a minute, what about us? The miracles we've seen that God has done include those plus lots of others.

And what do we do? Shrug it off. Sort of find excuses to duck it, whatever. And I won't ask for a show of hands, but in your own mind, how many times do we rely upon God in our distress, and then neglect Him after we get blessed? When they were in bondage in Egypt, they cried out to God, and God delivered them.

But as soon as they're free of bondage, and they're on their way, they, you know, can you imagine how God feels about all that? Let's go to verse 3. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms, but they knew not that I healed them. Ephraim, of course, is used connotatively. It's an idiom for the whole northern kingdom.

See, the point that God is making here, He didn't just adopt them, He cared for them. One of the things we're going to get a sense here as the passage continues is how tenderly and how compassionately God cared for them, for His son Israel. And it's interesting that the words, as you read here, almost parallel Moses' description of Israel being carried through the wilderness as a father would carry his son, teaching his first steps and carrying him through.

You'll find that in Deuteronomy, in the early chapters, like chapter 1 and also in 32 and so forth. Now, something that's also interesting to me is that if you remember the early chapters of Hosea and all that he went through with Gomer, his unfaithful wife and these children and all that, they must, Hosea's own pain from his own unfaithful wife must have amplified his understanding of God's pain. As God is faced with, in effect, the equivalent of an unfaithful wife in the form of the nation.

I have to depart here and tell you a little bit about the Hebrew alphabet. The Hebrew alphabet is unique because the letters are not only phonetic, they're conceptual. If you understand the way the letters were

originally written in the pre-Babylonian Hebrew, you understand the concepts.

The first letters, Aleph, in the current Hebrew, but in the old Hebrew it was like a longhorn cattle. It was sort of like the antlers. It was like a cow's head.

And it meant ox or strength. So Aleph means first or strength. The second letter in the Hebrew alphabet was a little line with like a teepee on it.

It's our bet. You can see how that, through the years, the Phoenicians took it and turned it. It became a B, our B. But it was their bet.

It meant house. So an Aleph and a bet together was the leader of the house. See, the first letter meant first or leader or strength.

So an Aleph and a bet means the leader of the house. That's the word for father, Ab or Abba. Okay? The Hech is a letter that's like a breath.

It's used to represent the spirit of something. The Ruach Elohim, the spirit of God. Or it also can mean the essence of whatever the word.

If you take a word and put the Hech in the middle of it, then it means the essence of whatever it meant before. So if you put a Hech between the Aleph and the bet, you have the essence of the father. Right? It's the word for love.

Love is the essence of the father. Now, I find that breathtaking. Because in linguistics, all languages on the planet, they're either pictorial, like Chinese and whatever, or they're phonetic.

Hebrew is unique. It was the original language. Up until Genesis 11, they all spoke of one language, remember? And it's designed to communicate all kinds of things that go beyond most scholastic understanding even to this day.

But scientists are beginning to discover the incredible things that are tucked away in the design of Hebrew. But here's an example. Here we have the... Hosea is learning the essence of the father is what? Love.

The very word says that. The Acha means that. And so... And I can't talk about this without plugging our book.

Cosmic Codes goes into all of this stuff. What intrigues me, though, as you know Hosea and his pain personally, and here he is writing all these incredible disclosures about God, you don't find any remarks about his personal life. He doesn't tie this together particularly.

You have to infer it by just knowing the background. And the reason is the book is not about Hosea. It's about God.

And it's not about Gomer's disloyalty to Hosea. It's about Israel's disloyalty. And it's about our disloyalty.

And a warning about ours. Verse 4. I drew them with cords of a man with bands of love. And I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws and laid meat unto them.

This is an agricultural term where you release the animal so it can feed more freely. He's using that analogously, of course, and so forth. Well, now we're going to shift to the present.

We talked about the past. The past was when love met ingratitude. Now the present is when ingratitude is going to be met with punishment.

The fatherly care that was exhibited in the past can't be counted on in the present because of their obstinate disobedience and lack of repentance. Verse 5. He shall not return to the land of Egypt. But the Assyrians shall be his king because they refuse to return.

See, the rejection of the divine king is going to lead them. They've been out of bondage. They didn't acknowledge the guy that brought them out of bondage.

So they're going into even worse bondage with the Assyrians. In Egypt they were in bondage, but they came out as a nation. They will go into Assyria and disappear from history as a nation.

Never come back. Judah, a century later, will go into slavery, into Babylon, but they will come out as a nation. But we'll go on here.

Verse 6. A sword shall abide on his cities and shall consume his branches and devour them because of their own counsels. The Hebrew really implies a whirling sword. And it represents this exchange of kings.

The king they rejected, okay, they're going to get the king of Syria instead. The word branches here, badim, is actually cross beams or gate bars. What it's really saying is the security, the bars of the gates will fall.

In other words, they will fail. They will fall. The bars will fall.

Their security will not be effective. Verse 7. And my people are bent to backsliding from me. Though they be called, though they call them to the Most High, none at all would exalt Him.

The word bent here is talah in the Hebrew. It means addicted to, impaled. They're impaled on the hook of sin is really what it's carrying the thought here.

Well, from verses 8 through 11, we're talking about the fusion. We've seen that the love is encouraging gratitude. The lack of repentance is going to result in the punishment.

But the future, here's the bright spot, the future will bring ultimate restoration. I was looking way further ahead. In verse 8 through 11, we'll deal with that.

They'll sum up the central message of the entire book. It isn't just judgment on them. It's also going to, God is going to declare that He has unmerited love for His covenant people and they will ultimately be restored.

Verse 8. How shall I give thee up Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee Israel? How shall I make thee as Adma? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me. My repentings are kindled together. This is the God of the universe expressing frustration.

How can I give you up Ephraim? Now, He says, how can I make you like Adma and Zeboim? You may not recognize those names, but you all recognize Sodom and Gomorrah, don't you? Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, as you know. There were five cities on the plain. Sodom and Gomorrah are just the two best known.

These other two were among them. So you and I may not, we don't hear that that much, but Adma and Zeboim were like Sodom and Gomorrah. There were five cities on the plain that were zapped, right? So, what He's saying, here's a nation that's deserving of annihilation in Sodom and Gomorrah as a result of God's righteous anger.

And yet God's saying to Israel, how can I give you up? See, they're special. And by the way, so are you. That's God's thing.

And so what you're hearing here is the voice of a loving Father that cannot surrender the Son that He's loved and cared for and nurtured. So this divine complaint, in effect, is expressed in self-directed questions which lays bare the intensity of the covenant love in terms that are unsurpassed in the Old Testament. You won't find this expressed any more strongly than you find it here in Hosea.

This love is going to transcend the strict regulations of the law because they would have dictated that a son guilty of this was subject to death. If he followed the law, they would be wiped out. And he's frustrated because he doesn't want to wipe them out, he loves them.

And how's he going to deal with that? That's the real problem. He's got holiness, he's got justice to deal with. He loves them so much that he doesn't want to inflict upon them that which they have clearly earned.

Now you're beginning to see how the Son in verse 1 ties to the Son that He's talking about in Israel. Because His basis to deal with them will be resolved by the Creator of the universe becoming a man and going to the cross. And the Son that He calls out of Egypt in Matthew 2 is the basis by which He's going to be able to resolve His love for the Son that He called out of Egypt in Exodus.

Are you with me? Do you see the conceptual tie together? And by the way, if you see that conceptual tie together, you are having an insight that a surprising number of commentators miss. But that's really what the book is all about. Verse 9, I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger.

I will not return to destroy Ephraim. Why? Why not? For I am God and not man. Wow.

The Holy One in the midst of thee. And I will not enter into the city. See, the key issue is that He's God and not man.

He's got resources. And what we also should learn here is that God is not some kind of distant clockmaker that created the universe and then stepped back in some sense of detachment. This is the same God that created the universe that would in His redeeming love enter His creation, become a man, and go to that cross so that He could reconcile that which He loved to Himself despite the obstinate rebellion and lack of repentance.

Verse 10, They shall walk after the Lord. He shall roar like a lion. When He shall roar, the children shall tremble from the west.

And see, with this penalty of sin satisfied in Christ, the Lord can now create in His people a new heart. Jeremiah talks about it in Jeremiah 31, 33. And also Ezekiel, Ezekiel 36, deals with that.

That's not just confined to John 3, be He born again. No, that's introduced in the Old Testament. Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 deals with that issue.

And with the new heart implanted, Israel will then, this is future, again walk with the Lord. That's what He's declaring here. Now this lion's roar is a strange phrase.

We find that in Amos 3 and other places. It's like a lion in summons back of a pride of skittish cubs, calling them back. But there's a strange phrase here, by the way, that I haven't found any of the commentators pick up on.

Where are they going to come, where shall they tremble from? Verse 10, from the west. That makes no sense in the Old Testament. Their enemies were either Assyria or Babylon or you name it, Persia.

They were always to the east. They would tremble, what? From the east. What's this business of coming trembling from the west? It speaks of the diaspora after 70 AD.

The Romans, the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world for the better part of 1900 years. And as they're recalled from where? From all over, but certainly from the west, back into the land. I get goosebumps.

As you read this, we take it so for granted because we're living it. I have no idea how Hosea dealt with that phrase. From the west? What's that mean? Verse 11, they shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt and as a dove out of the land of Assyria, and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord.

That's a future thing. And by the way, that verse ends chapter 11 in the Hebrew Bible. This is one of the strange places where there's a slight difference between the Hebrew reckoning and the way we're used to it.

But Hosea now is going to leave the glory of a future day, which of course is what he embraced in the last few verses, to return back to contemporary realities, coming back to their people. During about 200 years since Solomon's death, of course, the northern and southern kingdoms went their own ways. And although they were separated in many ways, they were connected.

And even though they declined at different rates, they both had forgotten God. And so you'll find Judah increasingly mentioned as we go here. Verse 12, Ephraim compassed me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit.

But Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints. At this time, Judah was still modestly faithful. There was not a good king in the northern kingdom.

It went from bad to worse. The southern kingdom had its moments. Then it finally declines, and finally God uses Babylon to deal with them.

But Hosea chapter 12 is a re-reckoning. Verse 1, Ephraim feedeth on wind, and fouleth after the east wind. He daily increases lies and desolation.

And they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried unto Egypt. Now this alludes to this very futile and insecure foreign policy. Because on the one hand, they should be trusting God.

No, they're making alliances with their major enemy, Assyria. That's stupid. You know what's even more stupid? To break the alliance.

They covenant with Assyria, which is dumb. But having covenant, you better stick with it. No, no, no, no.

Now they're dealing with Egypt. How do you think that went over with Assyria? They didn't go for that. So it's Assyria that turns on them, ends up being God's instrument.

Now you find the phrase east wind here. That's a dry, searing Sirocco that blows from the eastern deserts. In that part of the country, an east wind is hot off the desert.

That's like the fury that's going to come from Assyria and the rest. And verse 2, The Lord hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways. According to his doings, he will recompense him.

Now, the allusion here to Jacob is kind of interesting because we need to understand the whole history here. Now obviously, Hosea's readers were Jews that were well taught in the synagogue. They all knew the story of the patriarchs in Genesis and so forth.

And from roughly 25 through 35, you find the whole story of Jacob. And this conniving character, Jacob, the ancient deceiver. And yet, how did he finally turn to repentance? And through, finally, that repentance, he gets the power of God.

Verse 3, speaking of Jacob, He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God. Now, you all may remember the story that when the two twins were in the womb, Esau was born first. He was the first born.

But the hand came out and grabbed the heel. And so they named him Heel Catcher. And the term there really refers to trying to supplant.

Even in the womb, Jacob was frustrated by being number two. You see? And he spends the rest of his life, pretty much, trying to overcome being number two. Even in the womb.

You can call that prophetic if you like, however. But all the way until a very key event occurs. You all know the story about how he, as he grew, he was not favored.

Esau, first born, was favored by his dad. Can you imagine? Here he's frustrated. He's always number two.

Mama's boy. Stay in the tents. Esau was out there, hunter, you know.

And you know the story how Jacob, it manifests that Esau didn't reckon his birthright as first born seriously. Being first born was a very big thing in their culture. And Jacob wanted that.

And he negotiated it for a mess of porridge. Very famous, that goes down through history. Then he goes further, and coached by his mother of all things, steals the blessing.

Now, you know I don't relate to that because we don't understand what the blessing was all about. It was a deathbed blessing. It was very, very key.

It gave the firstborn the double portion. There's all kinds of issues that go with that blessing. And you all know the story how Jacob contrives.

His mother helps him get the venison the way Esau always did it. So his father liked that. And he even put hair on his hands so he could feel the apparent, you know, obviously Esau was very hairy.

And so they deceived the father. And he gives Jacob the blessing. Later on, Esau comes home, and the father realized he's been tricked.

And he says, Can't you give me the blessing? We're not talking about just to bless you, my son. He could do that. No, that's not the point.

It was a formal procedure in the situation that now is denied to Esau. And, of course, Esau is really upset. He's so upset that he swears to kill Jacob.

So mother says, Get out of town. And Jacob does for like 20 years. As you know, they go to Haran.

And there he meets his uncle Laban who cheats him and cheats him and cheats him. Kind of interesting to see the cheater cheated, you know. Do you see a little retribution there? And you know the story.

He was in love with Rachel. He loved Rachel more than life itself. Worked seven years to earn her.

And Laban switches. Apparently they did it, you know, the wedding night was veiled. So he didn't realize until morning that he'd been tricked.

He had the wrong sister. God was teaching him about the rights of the firstborn. See the irony? I'm not being flippant.

And he says, Okay, if you want the one you really want, it's another seven years. So he does it. Fourteen years.

And apparently a lot more. In fact, there's one place there where he apparently changed. Laban switched his deal.

He out connived the conniver. And finally God tells him to, It's time to go home. By the time God says that, Jacob is in such trouble with his uncle Laban.

The tension had really built. For lots of reasons I'm sparing you. So he wanted to get out of town.

So it's God calling him to come back to home. He was glad to accept the call. He wanted to get out of town.

You know, they were after him. But as he heads home, he starts thinking about this. He's going to encounter Esau.

Who twenty years ago swore he was going to kill Jacob. And you can understand why. So the more he gets there, the more upset he gets.

He finally gets to the river Jabbok. And at that river, he's on the eastern bank of that. And he starts thinking about Esau.

And he finds out from his advanced guard that Esau is coming with four hundred men. What do you think Jacob's assuming? That he's toast. So, first thing he does, he figures he's going to try to soften this and see what the test thinks.

So he takes a couple of his servants and sends them with two hundred female goats ahead. Ahead of him. We encounter Esau.

What is this? Well, this is from your servant Jacob. See, he's starting to grovel here a little bit. And these are a gift.

And he does that. And he thinks about it. You know, that might not be enough.

So he takes twenty male goats. Same deal. Sends them on ahead.

So Esau's going to encounter these waves of gifts. There's twenty male goats. Then two hundred ewes.

And then twenty rams. And each one each time. And he's thinking, is that enough? Then thirty female camels.

Then forty cows. Then ten bulls. Then twenty female donkeys.

Then ten male donkeys. And by now he's run out of livestock. And he's sweating it.

So then he sends his two wives, children, and servants. Leah first, Rachel next. He's sweating it.

The next morning he's going to meet Esau. He's sweating it. What happens that night? God sends an angel.

And it is one of the strangest passages in the scripture. Because he wrestles with the angel. Jacob won't let the angel go until he gets blessed.

All his life, Jacob has been trying to manipulate God. With maneuvers, conniving to try to help God accomplish what he thought God should be doing. Whether it's the birthrights, or the blessing, or you name it.

And here he is again. Here's an angel. I won't let you go until you bless me.

Really. They wrestled. And I apparently was a really serious, what shall I call it, martial arts.

The angel finally has to dislocate his hip or whatever he did. So he was finally powerless. And that's when God could bless him.

If we could learn the message of Jacob. If we would stop trying to manipulate God by going to church regularly. By putting tithes in the offering plate.

There are all kinds of things you can do. They're worthwhile doing, don't misunderstand me. But we do that with the idea that God owes us.

We're trying to help Him. Why can't we learn what Jacob learned? He limped for the rest of his life. But it was from that point on that Jacob got the message.

And because he did, God gave him a new name. Israel. It comes from the verb tzara, which means struggle or strife.

And El, the name of God. Struggled with God. And he did.

And many people read that and don't redraw the inference that I believe that God would have us there. And we need to do the same thing. God does not want our tithes, our services, all that.

He wants what? Ourselves. The gift you want to give God is yourself. Now, God is upset with Israel because they're worshipping Balaam.

They're also worshipping him. But he rejects that. He won't be worshipped on equal basis with Balaam.

No way. God does not want to be number one on your list of ten. He wants to be number one on your list of one.

That's what it's all about. Now, under his new name, he sought the Lord at Bethel. That would be the very site that his descendants would worship golden calves.

See, this illusion, this whole thing is a departure of this illusion. Oh, let me pick up verse four. Yea, he had the power over the angel, he prevailed, he wept, he made supplication with him, and he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us.

This is Hosea reminding them about this background which they, of course, knew from their other studies. But you see the irony? It was at Bethel. Beth-el.

Beth-house. El-God. The house of God.

Beth-el. Beth-lehem. Lehem is bread.

Beth-lehem. House of bread. This is Beth-el.

House of God. This is where all this incredible resolution was taking place, and Jacob, who became Israel, their namesake, and now his descendants are worshipping golden calves. Where? In Bethel.

You've got to be kidding. You know, there is... God calls it an abomination of worship and idol, but the abomination of desolation is worshipping in the worst possible way in the worst possible place. And that's a technical term for putting an idol in the holy of holies of the temple.

That did occur in history. There's a whole background. And it's important because Jesus declares it's going to happen again.

It is the major milestone in the middle of the seven-year period that is called by... often called the seventh week of Daniel. But again, the offense is not just worshipping an idol, but putting it in the holiest spot on the planet Earth. In Israel, in Jerusalem, in the temple area, Oh, in the holy place? No, in the holy of holies.

If you're out to offend God, that'll do it. Oh, a couple of other things before I go, I want to mention. Hosea is reminding his own contemporaries that when God spoke to Jacob, He also spoke to all the generations that were in his loins.

Interesting idea here. You see this developed in Hebrews chapter 7. There, the writer of Hebrews is talking about that Levi gave tithes to Melchizedek because Abraham did and Levi was in his loins. Therefore, the Levitical priesthood is subordinate to the Melchizedek priesthood.

That's the point. But the point... understand the rabbinical argument that is advanced in the book of Hebrews is that what Abraham did and what was said to him involved his offspring because they were, the way the Bible said, they were in his loins. The same logic is inferred here, or I should say implied here by Hosea, is that what God said to Jacob, He's saying to Jacob's descendants today.

But anyway, let's move on to verse 5. Even the Lord of hosts, the Lord is his memorial. The word here, by the way, is Yehovah or Yahweh, however you care to say it. Some people say Jehovah, that's a misunderstanding of the original German, but it was called Yehovah or whatever.

It's from the verb hayah, which is to be. I am that I am, if you may recall, that when Moses asked, it was before the burning bush, Who shall I say sent me? The Iyach Asher Iyach, the I am that I am, sends you. And that, of course, becomes then the name of God.

You know, it's funny, people are funny. The name becomes so holy that we don't dare pronounce it. And as generations go by now, they're not sure how to pronounce it anymore.

But it would seem. There's some debates about that, but I won't get into all that here. This is his memorial name.

When it says Yehovah in the scripture, you'll discover that it's usually alluding to the loving, the covenant relationship. When it's Elohim, it's the creator God. When it's Jehovah or Yehovah, it's the covenant keeping God.

There are lots of names of God used, but they each amplify a particular aspect. And by the way, something else I'll mention. When Abram became Abraham, all they did was put a hey in the middle of it, the breath, the spirit of God.

From that point on, he's always called Abraham, because he was faithful. When Jesus named Peter Cephas, right? Or, excuse me, when he named, I've got that screwed up. When Simon was named Peter, sometimes he's called Simon, and sometimes Peter, depending on whether he's in the flesh or in the spirit.

Jacob's name was changed to Israel. But, you know, we don't speak of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, except in one place in the scripture. It's always Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Abram, Itzhak, and Yaakov, for those that want to be precise. But the point is, why? You'll notice that the Holy Spirit uses the name, as you go through the book of Genesis, he'll use the name, not if he's talking about the nation, but he's talking about the person. If he's walking in the flesh, it's Jacob.

And if he's walking in the spirit, it's Israel. And so, be sensitive to that. I'm always amused by these pseudo-scholars that say, well, gee, there's different styles, and there's different words used.

They try to draw inferences. They do all the inferences, except maybe just listening to what the Holy Spirit is trying to say. And, anyway, let's keep moving.

Verse 6, Therefore, turn thou to thy God, keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually. That's, in effect, the lesson that the patriarch had learned at Bethel. That somehow the plea is that Ephraim, too, would emulate his ancestor.

Verse 7, He is a merchant. The balances of deceit are in his hand. He loveth to oppress.

Now, you may miss the meaning here, because the word merchant is Canaan. A Canaanite. A Canaanite was an inhabitant of the land of Canaan, but the term also was used as a synonym for merchant.

Why? Because the Canaanites were sharp traders. They were mercantile. They were tough, street-smart businessmen.

And so it's used here as a derogatory term. And it's a synonym, in effect. Yeah, a synonym.

Or a homonym, if you want to be precise. And so they were, upon entering the land, they were supposed to separate themselves, keep themselves separate from the tribes in the land, the Canaanites, the seven tribes that were there. They were supposed to destroy the Canaanites.

Now here, they are, in effect, have embraced them, so that he's using here, Ephraim is a merchant. He's become a Canaanite, in effect. If you want more background on some of that, about the tribes and certain sources, you should get our book, *Alien Encounters*, because there's actually even some very spooky background, genetic background to some of these people.

But let's go to verse 8. And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, and I have found me out substance. In all my labors they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin. You see, this description of their sense of well-being, power and prestige, under Jeroboam II, was bad news.

And so when the prosperity did arrive, they took it as indication that there was nothing wrong. Monetary success has never been a very accurate measure of spiritual condition. I think we all understand that.

We might find it interesting to just take a quick look. Hold your place here, because we'll come right back. But go to Revelation chapter 3. I want to show you something.

I think you'll sense a parallel. Revelation chapter 3. Speaking of the church at Laodicea. Speaking about verse 15.

Jesus Christ writing a letter, an epistle, to the Laodiceans and also the Colossians, because they were subordinates of one another. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou were cold or hot.

So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Wow. Verse 17.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. And he goes on.

There are many observers that have really studied the seven letters, seven churches, that suggest that we're in the days of the Laodicean church. Denominational churches. Wealthy.

Prosperous. But try to have one of them preach the gospel of Christ. That Christ really was who he said he was.

That he went to the cross and spilt his blood so that we might live. Go there and try to hear the real gospel. That Jesus Christ redeemed us by shedding his blood.

That he died for our sins according to the scriptures. And you'll find it very, very hard to discern. Now, we've got a great tragedy here.

J. Vernon McGee made the very interesting crack that when the church finally has to go, the real bleeding curse has to go underground, the liberal church won't even notice. They won't even notice. People who are even more cynical say that the main attack will come from the liberal church.

And we see some of that today, too. But let's move on. Verse 9. I that am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in the tabernacles as in the days of the solemn feast.

In other words, having forgotten their source of blessings, it's back to the tents. Full circle. They're delivered out of Egypt, out of bondage, but now, because of their ingratitude, back in.

The word tents there, by the way, oh hell, stresses the inconvenience, the unsettledness, the anxiety of living in a land not their own. It's very interesting, the feast alluded to here is probably the Feast of Tabernacles in which they, every year, go through the remembrance of their wandering in the wilderness by building booths that you have to be able to see the stars through the ceiling and the wind should blow through the sides. They actually camp in their backyards building these things to celebrate the Feast of Ashukot.

What does it celebrate? The wilderness wanderings. They're celebrating that feast that they'd forgotten the lessons that they're supposed to learn who took care of them in the wilderness. And anyway, verse 10, I have also... Now, this is a great verse, by the way, verse 10.

You might mark it in your Bibles. I think it's a very key verse in terms of teaching you methodology about the Scripture. Here's an anchor point for you.

God says, I have also spoken by the prophets and I have multiplied visions. So far, so good. There's nothing new, but notice this.

And used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets. Now, you see, their destiny... The main point of this verse is their destiny now should not come as a surprise. He's been telling this all along through his prophets.

And God has done his part, is his point. But there's some subtleties of this verse that I think are very instructive because this verse, it's a key verse, it highlights the use of figures of speech and rhetorical devices. And we'll find if you study Scripture, there are things like similes, metaphors, analogies, allegories, parables, and types.

There's a small handful. These are all different. A metaphor and a simile and an allegory and an analogy are all technically... They're not the same thing.

They're all slightly different. Let me ask you to make a guess. How many different kinds of rhetorical devices are there in the Bible? Different categories, different kinds of rhetorical devices.

Somebody quickly will say seven. That's a good guess. Wrong.

In our book, Cosmic Codes, our first appendix, lists, catalogs with examples over 200 different kinds of figures of speech contrived or engineered or put together by the Holy Spirit. It's interesting that in the book of Hosea is full of these things. I could have blown most of our time together going through the puns in Hosea.

There are dozens of them. But let me just refresh your memory on a couple of them. Remember Gomer and the sons, right? Jezreel, Lo-Ami and Ami, and remember that whole business? Those are, in a sense, like puns.

And there are many, many other examples in the Bible. The classic example of a type in Genesis 22, the Akedah, Abram's offering of Isaac. Incredible study to study how Abram knew he was acting out a drama that would actually be the climactic event of the entire universe 2,000 years later on that very spot.

Interesting study in Genesis 22. The book of Ruth, a little fourth chapter book, just full of little cryptic, dramatic allusions and ellipses of all kinds. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10, verse 4, speaks of the rock during the wilderness, the rock that gave them water.

Remember how that occurred? That rock was Christ. Was it? What do you mean it was Christ? Well, Paul explained that. And he describes it as if it followed him, and there were lessons all through that.

And some of them are surprising lessons of an eschatology, by the way, but we'll keep moving here. I encourage you to take a look at some of that. Verse 11, God continues, Is there iniquity in Gilead? Surely they are vanity.

They sacrifice bullets in Galilee. Their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields. And verse 12, Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.

See, again, he's contrasting them with the Jacob. Because of his deception, he had to flee his father Isaac, and he had to flee to Padan and Ram, excuse me, for safety in Genesis 27. And even though he's fleeing, and even if though he's back there as a slave, feeding, tending sheep during those years, he didn't forsake the Lord.

I mean, he'd be guilty of not handling right, manipulating, whatever, but he didn't, with all that conniving, he never really forsake the Lord. He was just clumsy and stupid in the way he was dealing with it all. He did that, he was a slave there for more than 14 years, probably better part of 20 years.

Verse 13, And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet he was preserved. And of course, he's talking about Moses. Moses was the instrument God used to bring them out of bondage.

He's speaking Jacob here as a son, but he's referring to the nation, of course. And by a prophet he was preserved. And so, see the point here, what he's, what Hosea is implying is, when they were in Egypt, they didn't earn their freedom.

They didn't do something to merit God pulling them out of there, and going through all of that, no. It was a gift. And getting into the Promised Land was his gift.

What the thrust of the message is, despite giving him every conceivable gift, they still reject God in gratitude. You say, gee, those terrible people. Be careful.

Look in the mirror and ask yourself the same question. What has God done for you and I? He's given us a heritage that's absolutely unparalleled anywhere in human history. And we too have enjoyed it for two centuries like they have.

Do we care? Do we bother to even reread the Declaration of Independence that speaks of our creator and inalienable rights and all that? Our Constitution? Do we take the trouble to find out what our elected

representatives are doing to us in Washington? Do we hold them accountable? Do we even know their names? Do we send them a note or a fax or a phone call? I won't ask you how many of you know the name of your senator, either one of them, or your congressman, person. So we look at them as being ungrateful. Boy, look at ourselves.

Our lack of diligence, our poor stewardship has put the pagan left in charge of this government which was designed by prayer and was committed by people who lost their lives, their fortunes, but not their sacred honor. And the people that founded this country did it not because they were going to benefit. It cost them everything.

Most of them died penniless. The British were after them or whatever. And the point is they did it for whom? For the kids and their grandkids and their posterity.

Find someone today that even cares enough about their kids or grandchildren to find out what's going on in their school system, what's going on in their country. It's tragic. It's tragic.

So the parallel, the more you get, is to me really disturbing. Especially since in this case God used their enemies to be his instrument of judgment. There was a point where finally he said enough's enough.

Verse 14. Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly. Therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

And see, it was two centuries of upset here. And so they're going to be held responsible for their danim, which is blood guilt, if you will, which was incurred through their robbery, their bloodshed, adultery, oppression of the poor, disloyalty. You make the list.

It was all earlier. See, Deuteronomy 21 verses 7 to 9 says, Unless there's proper atonement for sin, justice against the person had to be executed, or else God would step in and avenge the wrong party. That was the concept before in the Torah, Deuteronomy 21.

And there's all kinds of examples in the scripture that will be in your notes. I might mention something. Throughout the book of Hosea, when you see the word Lord, it's a translation of Yehovah.

That's the covenant-keeping God of redemption. It derives from Exodus chapter 3 verse 14. There's one exception here in Hosea, and that's in this last verse, where the word Lord there is actually Adonai, a different Hebrew word.

Yehovah is the covenant-keeping God. Adonai technically means my master. And the overtone here is the avenger, rather than the redeemer.

And this word is frequently used by Amos in his book, because his message is far harsher than the one we're seeing here. This is not just Israel's history that we've been wrestling with tonight. It's the story of the human race in general, and frankly, ourselves in particular.

There is not one of us in this room that has not run from God in spite of His abundant grace. And there are many believers that have turned from Him, even though they were adopted into His forever family. You wonder, how can that happen? How can we be so despicable? It's just a description of the horrors of sin, that we can scorn such love.

As we understand the love of God, and we choose to ignore it, or go on with our affairs without yielding to it, is absolutely unbelievable. Now, the good news is that the Bible does not end with Hosea. The name Hosea means salvation.

And in the fullness of time, of course, one came whose name was Yehovah, or Yeshua, or Jesus. Yehovah is salvation. John 1, verse 11 and 12, summarizes the situation.

Most of you probably have memorized John 1, 11 and 12. He came unto His own, but His own received Him not. But as to many that received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

When we read that in the New Testament, we probably fail to understand that term, sons of God, because we use it so sloppily. In the Hebrew, it's Benaiah Elohim. A son of God means the direct creation of God.

Adam was a son of God. He was directly created by God. You and I were not.

We are sons of Adam. We're subject to his genetic defects. The angels were direct creation of God.

They're called Benaiah Elohim, and some of them fell in Genesis 6. And it's out of that that we begin to understand what that term means. It's interesting that you and I are sons of Adam, or sons or daughters of Adam, if you will, unless we avail ourselves of verse 12 of John chapter 1. He came unto His own, but His own received Him not. But to as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become what? The sons of God.

The issue of born again is in John 1, not in John 3 alone. Born again. Even to them that believe on His name.

And if you want to get into the real background here, when we first did the book Alien Encounters, of course, we were oriented around the Genesis 6 business for lots of strange reasons. But as we get into that, I was startled to discover, unless you understand the issues in Genesis 6, you won't understand most of the Old Testament. And you won't fully appreciate the new.

The incredible creation that takes, recreation if you want to put it that way, but creation takes place when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. You won't feel it physically. Some do, but I mean, normally it's just, it's something that is cosmic and supernatural and important and you'll experience it as it goes on.

But a new creation, a new heart. And you're changed. And it's the whole issue.

And the exciting news is that God is not only just, He's the justifier. This whole dilemma that's been presented in Hosea, this apparent tension between His holiness and His justice and His righteousness with His love, on the one hand, and yet His frustration with the rebellious and unrepentant and ungrateful people. And yet through His Son, obviously later in time, the requirements of justice are met and the glory of His holiness is maintained and His redemption thus is not from pity that chooses to ignore sin, that would violate His justice and righteousness, but rather a power that cancels it and sets the soul free from its dominion of sin.

And so it's through Him, the Son, that the loved one, namely you and I, can be regained, restored, and renewed. And so we have the gospel gleaming through the words of Hosea here in the Old Testament. And now the other hope that's here, and it's going to be amplified in the coming two chapters, we have a

whole review of Israel's history, but we're going to go now, the next two chapters, with the hope that's beyond this darkness and a hope beyond this judgment that's coming, a hope based on nothing less than the unique nature of God.

And so we're going to, the next time we'll take the last two chapters, talk about the wrap-up of the death of the nation and yet the death of death, the final triumph of God's grace. Let's stand for a closing word of prayer. Book of Hosea, a very key Old Testament book with many, many lessons, but absolutely integral with all the other books of the Bible and absolutely entangled in more ways than one can imagine with the New Testament message.

A very, very key book. Sixty-six books penned by forty different guys over thousands of years, but it's an integrated message and it's yours and mine, our strength, our redemption, our future, most exciting treasure and adventure conceivable. Let's bow our hearts.

Father, we praise You for who You are and we thank You, Father, for Your Word. We thank You for Hosea. We thank You, Father, that You are such a caring, loving God, that You, just as You have cared so delicately, yet so thoroughly, so carefully, of Your son Israel throughout, for delivering them from bondage and watching them through the wilderness and as we just immerse in the lessons of their history.

We thank You that You are a God that keeps His promises, His covenants, His commitments, and that You are a God that loves so dearly, so completely, so thoroughly, so extensively. And we thank You, Father, that You have chosen in Your sovereignty to love us for no good reason, but that You are God. And we thank You, Father, that You have loved us.

We thank You, Father, that You have given us Your Word. Oh, that we might treasure it more. And we thank You, above all, that that Word became incarnate and dwelt among us, and we beheld Your glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

We thank You, Father, that You have gone to such extremes to provide for our redemption, not because we deserve it, not because there's anything that we could even dream of doing to merit it, but just to manifest Your love toward us. Oh, Father, we come before Your throne confessing our ingratitude, our indifference, and our presumption, and our selfishness, our self-conceits as we go about our petty ways and just ignore the priorities that You would have in our lives. We ask Your forgiveness.

We confess it, Father, as sin. We own it. It's ours.

We're responsible. We did it deliberately. We confess it as transgressions and iniquities before Your throne.

And we thank You, Father, that if we do confess our sins, that You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness because of the shed blood on that wooden cross so long ago. Oh, Father, we thank You, too, that You brought us here together this night. We thank You, Father, that Your Spirit has moved among us.

We pray, Father, that the lessons not be wasted. We pray, Father, that You would touch our hearts, that the seeds that You planted here tonight would sprout and grow forth and bring forth fruit for Your kingdom. We pray, Father, that we might go forth this night with a renewed commitment into Your hands to be more faithful to You, more sensitive to Your heart, more responsive to Your love as we commit ourselves once again into Your hands, indeed, in the name of Yeshua, our Lord, our Savior, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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