

# (Hosea) Reaping the Whirlwind

by David Guzik

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*David Guzik's sermon on Hosea emphasizes God's awareness of sin, the need for repentance, and the promise of forgiveness through the new covenant.*

**Duration:** 49:55

**Scripture:** Isaiah 28:10-29, Jeremiah 31:33, Luke 12:48

**Topics:** "Honest Heart", "Angry Prayer"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a story about the value of honesty, using the example of a man who planned to steal watermelons with his daughter's help. However, each time the daughter warns him that someone is watching, he can't see anyone. The preacher then focuses on a verse from the book of Hosea, where the prophet prays to God, asking what he should give to his people. The sermon emphasizes the importance of checking our hearts before praying angry prayers against others. The preacher also highlights the greatness of the Bible and how it is often received as a strange thing by the natural man.

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## Transcript

We should remember as we come to Hosea chapter seven, that Hosea, the prophet spoke mainly to the Northern kingdom of Israel. And he spoke to that Northern kingdom. Basically in a time where they had great prosperity and success and peace, they were morally and culturally corrupt and Hosea warns them about the coming judgment of God.

Let's begin here now. Hosea chapter seven, verse one. When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered and the wickedness of Samaria, for they have committed fraud.

The thief comes in a band of robbers take spoil outside. They do not consider in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness. Now their own deeds have surrounded them.

They are before my face. They make a king glad with their wickedness and princes with their lies. You see, if you notice there's three locations or groups mentioned in verse one, he says, when I would have healed Israel, that's the name of the Northern kingdom.

We remind ourselves again at this point in Israel's history, the people of God are divided into two different nations because of the civil war. You have the Northern kingdom of Israel and you have the Southern

kingdom of Judah. So he's speaking to the Northern kingdom when I would have healed Israel.

Then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered. Ephraim was the largest and most influential tribe of the 10 tribes that made up the Northern kingdom of Israel. And so often God will refer to this Northern kingdom in shorthand or just in another way as Ephraim.

And then if you notice the next line says, and the wickedness of Samaria. Well, Samaria was the capital city of the Northern kingdom of Israel, the capital city of the Southern kingdom of Judah was Jerusalem. And so you had Jerusalem in the South and Samaria in the North.

And so obviously this is focused against the Northern kingdom. And what does God have against them? If you notice in verse two, he says it very plainly. They do not consider in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness.

The problem among the people and the leaders of Israel was they forgot. And might I say they will fully forgot that the Lord saw and remembered their sin. We often deliberately forget that the Lord sees and remembers when we sin.

Isn't it amazing how we have the ability to do that, to sort of walk into a let's pretend this sort of reality and act as if God doesn't even see. There's a book that I used to read stories to my children out of out of bedtime, and they enjoyed it a great deal, although now they sometimes talk about it and say, oh, wasn't it terrible when Daddy used to tell us those stories from a very thick book done compiled by William Bennett called The Book of Virtues. And it has wonderful stories in it that reinforce different values.

And one of them was the value of honesty. And so it related a story that my children remember very vividly about a man who was going to steal some watermelon and he was going to go under the cover of night. And so he went out and he took his daughter with him and he told his daughter that he wanted her to stand guard and say, please alert me if somebody comes along while I'm in looking for some good watermelons here among the field.

And so he starts walking out in the field. And before he gets very far at all, his his daughter cries out, Father, Father, someone is watching. And so he crouches down low and he sort of crawls back.

He goes, well, he looks around, sees nobody, figures they must have gone. And so he goes out again to walk out in the field. And she says it again, Father, Father, someone's watching.

And she does this three times and each time he can't see anybody. And so now he's getting very annoyed with the little girl, of course. And then he speaks to her very sternly.

You've said three times that someone's watching and there's nobody out there. And she says, but Father, God sees from heaven. And.

Well, in that case, the girl was wiser than the parent, wasn't she? You see, we often forget, deliberately forget that the Lord sees and he remembers when we sin, it may be secret before men, but not before God. He says they are before my face. We should ask ourselves, have we forgotten? Do we think that God doesn't see? Do we think that God doesn't see that he's blind to our adultery? That he's blind to our premarital sex, that our pornography habit goes unnoticed before the Lord? Do you think God's eyes are closed when you're getting drunk or or when you're off on drugs? How many church going people today think that God forgets or never sees such things because they do them and yet they'll come and they'll

come to church and make a profession of godliness, pretending that those things are never really part of their life? I think when I see then verse two, where it says they do not consider in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness, I can't help but think of one of the precious promises under the new covenant would be terrible for for somebody to remember something bad about you.

You know, the first impression impressions mean a lot, don't they? And if you've ever had the unfortunate experience of getting off on a wrong foot with somebody and or or making a bad impression on somebody, you wonder how many years it's going to be until you have to undo that initial bad impression. You know, when will they forget about that terrible thing that I said or the foolish thing that I did? And we wonder what will make God forget our sin? What makes God forget our sin? Some people think time makes God forget our sin. You know, well, I did that when I was a boy, I did that when I was a young man, everybody shows their wild oats when they're young.

It's different now. You know, time does not make God forget sin. He remembers it today just as vividly as the day you committed it.

Good works don't make God forget sin. Well, I've done so many other good things since. Look at all the times I've obeyed.

Surely God forgets it. Well, you know, try that the next time you get pulled over on the traffic stop. Tell the policeman how many times you stopped at that red light and how many times you stopped at that stop sign.

Well, sure, I stopped at it a hundred times. I'm entitled to run at once. And he'll say, no, I don't care about the hundred times you did it.

I'm here to write you a ticket for the time that you did it right in front of me and you did not stop at the stop sign. What will make God forget our sin? It's the new covenant. It's the work of Jesus Christ in our behalf.

Do you remember that precious promise? Jeremiah, chapter thirty one, verse thirty four, for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin. I will remember no more. Well, what makes God forget to talk about God, forgetting to God, choosing not to remember something, how glorious it is.

So now you say, well, God, what about that sin I committed as a young man, as a young woman, I was sowing my wild oats. God says, I don't remember that sin. It's been covered in the blood of Jesus.

Well, God, what about that thing that I did just just last week? And I'm troubled about it. And I'm so sorry, Lord. And he says, if you confess your sin, I am faithful and just to forgive your sin and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

You know, it's easy to preach the part about the guilt and the conviction of sin, isn't it? I don't have to lay that on very thick at all in your own conscience, convicts you and maybe even Satan wants to whisper the condemnation into your ear. I wish I could preach just as strongly and just as powerfully the beautiful and complete forgiveness there is when we turn our lives and turn our sin over to Jesus Christ. The cleansing and the forgiveness is complete before him.

He remembers it no more. It's as if you never even did it. What would God would have done? Look at it there in verse one, he says, when I would have healed Israel, God was willing to heal Israel from their sin and from its effects, but not as long as they acted as if God did not see their sin.

They had to act as if God was really there, a God who really did see their sin and that he remembered unrepentant, uncovered sin. Interesting, also in this passage, it speaks in verse three, they make a king glad with their wickedness and princes with their lies. And then in the following verses, there are certain lines in there that probably refer to one of the successful assassination plots against one of the kings of Israel during the days of Hosea's ministry.

And you say, well, which king was that? And it's very difficult to tell. Because in a period of 12 years, there were four kings violently overthrown or assassinated. So which one is it? Who knows which one it was? There were so many, it's hard to narrow it down to one.

If you see, verse four, God continues on, he says, they are all adulterers, like an oven heated by a baker, he ceases stirring the fire after kneading the dough until it is leavened in the day of our king. Princes have made him sick, inflamed with wine. He stretches out his hand with scoffers.

They prepare their heart like an oven while they lie in wait. Their baker sleeps all night in the morning, it burns like a flaming fire. They're all hot like an oven and have devoured their judges.

All their kings have fallen. There is none among them who calls upon me. Interesting, the picture God paints of Israel in their in their immorality and in their idolatry, he says they're like an oven heated like a baker or by a baker.

Israel was inflamed with desire and passion after idols. That's how passionately they love the Baals and the Asherites. It was like the coals of a freshly stoked fire ready to bake bread.

You know, Paul used the same picture of burning lust in First Corinthians seven, didn't he? He said, but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry, for it's better to marry than to burn with passion. He said, yeah, they're burning with lust. You're like an overheated oven.

Well, what does God say to do? He says, well. Seek God's remedy and marriage instead of burning with lust in that. And then he says, none of them calls upon me.

Did you notice it at the end of verse seven? Israel could be hot like an oven after idols and and they would also call upon the Lord. They were continuing to sacrifice to the Lord, but it was an empty ceremony. It was not a true calling upon the Lord.

Look, he reflects on this even more in verse eight, he says, Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples, Ephraim is a cake unturned, aliens have devoured his strength, yet he does not know it. Yes, gray hairs are here and there on him, yet he does not know it. And the pride of Israel testifies to his face that they do not return to the Lord, their God, nor seek him for all of this.

All this describes the pride and the stubbornness of Israel. What a vivid picture there we saw in the previous verses that Israel was like an overheated oven. Right.

And they're passionate, inflamed state after the idols and after immorality. Well, God says that they're not just like the oven. They're also like the cake.

They're like a cake unturned. The idea is of a half baked cake. You know, in that day, bread was often prepared as a cake that was cooked on both sides, something like a pancake and thinking they could serve both the Lord and idols.

What was Israel like? Well, they were like an unturned pancake. They were burned on one side and uncooked on the other. It's no good on either side, is it? Isn't that a beautiful picture of the worldly believer? You're burned on one side from the world and you're not ripe.

You're not done. You're not cooked towards God on the other. And what's it good for? It's good for nothing.

You can't eat that. It's not a suitable thing to eat at all. You throw it away, don't you? You know what it's like? You're making pancakes and something bothers you and you're off on the side.

All of a sudden you come back to the griddle and it's all burned on one side and it's all sort of just uncooked on the other. And it's just gunky and it's gross. What do you do? You scrape it off with a spatula and you don't say, well, I'll give it to the littlest child.

They won't mind. No, they won't eat it, will they? They won't have anything to do with it. You have to throw it away.

You throw it in the trash. This is what Israel was like, useless, good for nothing towards the world. They were burned towards the other side.

They were uncooked towards God. Good for nothing in that terrible place. If you notice as well, it says in verse nine, aliens have devoured his strength.

But he does not know it. This makes the tragedy of Israel's ruin even worse. The nation was being ravaged by sin, but they did not know it.

They should have known it. I mean, look how they should have known it. It says there in verse 10 and the pride of Israel testifies to his face.

But they do not return to the Lord, their God, nor seek him for all of this. They should know it. Their own pride testifies to his face.

Yet in their blind ignorance, they do not return to the Lord. You know, mankind has an amazing ability to deceive himself when he's in sin. It's absolutely amazing to be honest with yourself.

It's horrifying, isn't it? Horrifying how we can lie to ourselves when we're in sin. Well, did Jeremiah the prophet say the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked who can know it? Well, I'm just following my heart. It's right in my heart.

My heart tells me it's OK. That's a dangerous signal, my friends, because the Bible tells us that our hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Look at the repetition of the phrase here in verses eight through 10.

It says in verse nine that aliens have devoured his strength, but he did not know it. Gray hairs are here and there on him, yet he does not know it. And the pride of Israel testifies to his face, but they did not return to the Lord, their God.

They were burned and ruined, but he did not know it. Their strength was devoured, but they did not know it. They were aging and weakening, but they did not know it.

Pride was testifying against them, but he did not know it. You have to think of Samson when you think of a situation like that, don't you? Staggering passage in Judges 16, 20, after Delilah finally cut his hair, it says, but he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. That terrible.

The Lord had departed from him, but he did not know it. And so he stood up. He thought he was strong as before.

No, what a terrible fall of Samson. And this is where the people of Israel and some followers of God today are. They're far from God and they're already suffering the effects of it, but they can't see it.

By the way, too, they were having their strength diminished like an old man. It says there in verse nine, yes, gray hairs are here and there on him, but he does not know it. It's as if Israel is foolish as an old man who thinks and acts like he's still young.

There's nothing more foolish than that, isn't there? You see some 60 year old man, you know, dressed up in big baggy clothes, you know, with the baseball cap turned around on the other side and, you know, he's got the skateboard or something with him and you say, you foolish old man, you're old, your hair's gray, you don't even notice, you don't even see. Act your age for heaven's sakes. By the way, I took a look at one commentator named John Trapp, he's a favorite commentator of mine, and when it says the gray hair and the old age, we kind of wonder what age is he talking about? Well, John Trapp sets it out for us.

He said he began, but the decline and decay as a man doth when he grows toward 50. Well, I guess that was old age in John Trapp's day. Of course, he wrote in the year 1654.

So I guess age was a little bit different then. We don't consider that to be that old now. Maybe we're just thinking wishfully these days.

But anyway, back to Israel, if you notice, he continues on with the pictures here. Verse 11. Ephraim also is like a silly dove without sense.

They call to Egypt, they go to Assyria, wherever they go, I will spread my net on them. I will bring them down like birds of the air. I will chastise them according to what the congregation has heard.

You see, Hosea is piling image upon image. Now Israel is like a bird fluttering about. It's confused.

It's without direction. They think they can escape God by running to the other nations. But the Lord says, no, I'll spread my net on them.

And they'll say, if you know, it's very staggering what he says here in verse 12. I will chastise them according to what their congregation has heard. And amazing.

In other words, the chastisement against Israel will be in proportion and given out accordingly to what they have heard. Friends, let's not forget that greater knowledge means greater accountability. As Jesus said, to whom much is given from him, much will be required.

And to whom much has been committed of him, they will ask the more. Might I say, and I hope I don't say this to discourage any of you from coming. I'd be terrible, feel terrible if any of you didn't come next week because of what I'm about.

I'm going to say right now. But you're here tonight increasing your accountability before the Lord. You've heard more.

God holds you more to account. It can be a dangerous thing to listen to the word of God. Of course, it's even more dangerous to close your ears to it.

But then he goes and he speaks about this running to the nations here. Verse 13. Woe to them, for they have fled from me.

Destruction to them because they transgressed against me, though I redeemed them. Yet they have spoken lies against me. They did not cry out to me with their heart when they wailed upon their beds.

They assembled together for grain and new wine. They rebel against me, though I discipline and strengthen their arms. Yet they devise evil against me.

They return, but not to the most high. They're like a deceitful bow. The princes shall fall by the sword for the cursings of their tongue.

This shall be their derision in the land of Egypt. They return, but not to the most high. Israel saw their problem.

We've got a problem here. We've got to return to something. Maybe it was back to basics.

Maybe it was back to the right kind of economic plan. Maybe it was political reform. Maybe it was back to bail movement or back to asterisk.

I don't know. They saw that they had to return. They returned, but not to the Lord.

You see, they saw their problem, but they didn't see their sin. When man notices that God's hand is against him, it's very easy to discern that you have a problem, right? Well, we're having six. You've got a problem.

Your world's crashing down around you. You can only play. Let's pretend for so long.

Of course, you've got a problem. But what you don't see is that you have sin. So often in counseling, it comes and it's pastor.

Fix my problem. I have a problem, pastor. Can't you fix it? Well, you see your problem, but do you see your sin? Israel didn't see it.

They wailed upon their beds, but not unto the Lord. They sought remedies, but not from the most high. As a matter of fact, they were like it's a beautiful picture here in verse 16.

This chapter is filled with vivid images. He says they're like a deceitful or a treacherous bow. Hosea adds another image of a faulty bow that won't shoot an arrow straight.

Well, there you draw the arrow back and you aim your very best and you line up and who you let it go. But there's a flaw. There's a defect.

The bow's bent or twisted or tweaked in some way. And so when you let the arrow fly, does it fly straight? No, not at all. The sights are off that the markings are off and everything that comes from Israel is like

everything that comes from a faulty or a treacherous bow.

It misses the mark. They're like a useless and dangerous weapon. There you are.

I've got the faulty bow. It's in my hand. I'm going to shoot an apple off of your head.

Well, you better watch out because even if I line the sights up precisely, it's not going to hit the apple. It might hit you right between the eyes. It's dangerous.

It's treacherous. This is where Israel is pointed in the wrong direction. It's reflected more in chapter eight as Hosea cries out in verse one, set the trumpet to your mouth.

He shall come like an eagle against the house of the Lord because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law. Israel will cry to me, my God, we know you. Israel is cast off the good.

The enemy will pursue him. They set up kings, but not by me. They made princes and I did not acknowledge it from their silver and gold.

They made idols for themselves. They might be cut off. Your calf is rejected, O Samaria.

My anger is aroused against them. How long will it be until they attain to innocence for from Israel is even this a workman made it and it is not God. But the calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces.

You know, trumpets were used to assemble God's people and they call the troops to battle. And here God commands the trumpet to sound to gather the mightiest Syrians against Israel for judgment. Why? Because they transgressed against the covenant.

Did you see that in verse two? It's very vivid. Says Israel will cry to me, my God, we know you, but you see, their cry is not sincere because Israel has rejected the good that they set up their rulers and their princes against the Lord who and they were all steeped in idolatry. It's not a vivid phrase.

My God, we know you. But it was empty. They didn't really know God.

And it would be the same for many churchgoers today. We remember the words of Jesus, don't we? Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name and done many wonders in your name? And I will declare to them, I never knew you depart from me. You who practice lawlessness.

That's from Matthew, chapter seven. And so they're established in their sin against them. Look at there in verse four.

They set up kings, but not by me. Oh, it was a long time ago in Israel at this time that they sought the Lord's direction or the Lord's will in the choosing of their national leaders. No, that's a distant memory.

Now they choose leaders that will please them and will further them in their idolatry. But God will cut off that idolatry. Did you notice it there in verse five? It says that the calf of Samaria will be broken in pieces.

Your calf is rejected. Oh, Samaria, Israel made beautiful idols out of silver and gold, but they weren't going to stand. God rejected them.

You know, literally one commentator says that that phrase in verse five, your calf is rejected. Oh, Samaria, that sounds sounds kind of majestic. Your calf is rejected.

One commentator says a much more accurate translation of that is your calf stinks. That's what God thinks of idols, anything we set up against him. Oh, we might think of flowery language.

God putting a very noble. Well, sometimes God doesn't put it very nobly. That's right.

Is your your idol stinks? It stinks to me. They go on here, verse seven, they sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. The stock has no bud.

It shall never produce meal. If it were, it should produce aliens would swallow it up. Aliens, it's not speaking about the little men from Mars here, please.

The aliens, it's speaking about people from other countries, conquerors. You know, that was one of the worst judgments that would come upon Israel when they had disobeyed the Lord and when God was using his rod of chastisement against them, he would raise up other nations against them. And in many passages, he both predicted and then we find it recounted in the book of judges and in the book of other the book of other places.

You understand what I mean? The book of other places, like a new book of the Bible. I'll write that the book of other places sometimes. Well, beyond all that, in many places, it's described this idea where Israel would work very hard and they would plant the heart, the plant, the grain, and they would nurture it and see it grow, having plowed the fields and prepared the ground and the seed is sown and it grows up and they harvest and they bring it into the threshing floor and they get it all done and then their enemies come in and steal it.

Well, you think, why couldn't you be stealthy with stolen it when it was on the stock for heaven's sakes, then it could have been more work for you. No, we'll let you get through all the work and then we'll steal it. We'll take it away.

And that's what God says here. You notice there in verse seven, it says it shall never produce meal if it should produce. Aliens would swallow it up.

Israel is swallowed up. Now they are among the Gentiles like a vessel in which there is no pleasure, but they have gone up to Assyria. Like a wild donkey alone to itself, Ephraim has hired lovers, yes, though they've hired among the nations.

Now I will gather them and they shall sorrow a little because of the burden of the king of princes. You see, it says they're very vividly in verse seven. I think I'm repeating that word over and over again tonight vividly.

But that's exactly what this prophecy is. It's very vivid. Verse seven, he says, you sow the wind and we we reap the whirlwind.

Will seem to Israel that the judgment that they receive from the Lord is is worse than the sin they committed. Well, look, we sowed the wind and we reap the whirlwind. That's not fair, God.

I mean, shouldn't it be that we sow the wind and we reap the wind? If you want to answer back judgment, God, I for I tooth for tooth, just according to what our sin deserves, that's fine. You know, God is entirely

fair, although this is how judgment feels. This is very true as to how the judgment of the Lord feels, because you know how it works.

We sow our sin over a long period of time. We reap it in a contracted period of judgment. Think of sowing the wind for years and years.

That's a lot of wind, isn't it? What God does is he kind of lets that wind get all contracted and then he gives it back to us in one little compartment. And then you got a whirlwind, don't you? You got a tornado. It's just the same breeze.

It's been blowing for years and years. But you sow the wind and you reap the whirlwind. You notice God won't accept their offerings.

Verse 11. Because Ephraim has made many altars for sin, they have become for him altars for sinning. I've written for him the great things of my law, but they were considered a strange thing.

But the sacrifices of my offerings, the sacrifice of flesh and eat it. But the Lord does not accept them. Now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins.

They shall return to Egypt. Amazing there in verse 11. Says Ephraim again, that's another term for this northern kingdom of Israel.

Ephraim has made many altars for sin. They have become for him altars for sinning. Isn't that interesting? Then see how that connection goes.

Israel foolishly built many altars for sin. And you know what they did on those altars for sin? They sinned. Wasn't that funny? You make a mechanism, you allow an occurrence, you build the platform in your life and then you find yourself sinning.

Say a person, you know, has a problem with alcohol in their life. Well, don't go to the bar. Don't buy the liquor.

You build an altar for sin and whoa, I don't know, I fell into this all of a sudden I'm sinning. We'll never build the altar for sin. If there's a place or a temptation or something that's that's getting you and casting you down, then don't build an altar for that sin.

When you give yourself opportunity and occasion for sin, well, then I suppose it's not surprising when we end up in sin, is it? If you see the real problem, they've also rejected the word of the Lord there in verse 12. Did you see that? I have written for him the great things of my law, but they were considered a strange thing. In their sin and idolatry, Israel also rejected the word of God.

God had great things for Israel, but they seem like a strange thing to them because their hearts were far from God. You see that, I love how he puts it there so simply, it's such a simple line, but it speaks so much there in verse 12, it's a good little memory verse, isn't it? I have written for him the great things of my law. Well, first of all, that tells us where the Bible comes from, doesn't it? Who wrote it? I have written for him.

It's not Hosea. That's the Lord God speaking. God is the author of the Bible.

This book is the work of the finger of the living God. Each letter was penned with God's almighty finger, each word in it came from his own everlasting lips, each sentence dictated by the Holy Spirit. I could treat

you to some words of Charles Spurgeon on this exact verse.

He says, if this be the word of God, what will become of some of you who have not read it for the last month? Most people treat the Bible very politely when they get home, they lay it up in a drawer till next Sunday morning, then it comes out down a little for a little treat and it goes to chapel. That's all their Bible gets in the way of an airing. That is your style of entertaining this heavenly messenger.

There is dust enough on some of your Bibles to write damnation with your fingers. Well, if you notice, it also tells us what the content of the scriptures is. Verse 12, I have written for him the great things of my law, great things.

That's what's in the Bible, great things from beginning to end, great things. We're talking about it a little bit right before service. I am basically a very boring, unanimated person.

I, I like to just, you know, be satisfied with the most basic, repetitive things. I bear the brunt of it just a bit in my family. I'm the person who can go to the ice cream place and get the same flavor every time.

It doesn't bother me one bit. You know, I just like the same repetitive things over and over again. I'm really basically a very boring, not very animated person.

But I get so excited about the word of God, so excited about the Bible. There are great things in this book. It's filled with great things.

There's a great thing on every page. I mean, I would just defy you to pull out a page of the Bible that does not have a great thing on it. And that's something to get excited about.

That's something to be animated about. So there I've written for him the great things of my law, but verse 12. But they were considered a strange thing.

That's how the Bible is received by the natural man. Paul tells us the same idea in First Corinthians chapter two. He says, but the natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him.

Nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. The word of God and things of the spirit. Well, they're great things, but they seem like a strange thing when a man is in sin.

They seem like a strange thing when the man is in idolatry. Oh, some people pick up the Bible and seem so strange, it seems so foreign, it seems so unreceivable to them. Well, that's a bad indicator of their spiritual life, isn't it? If you notice here, it says towards the end there, verse 13.

For the sacrifices of my offerings, they sacrifice flesh and eat it, but the Lord does not accept them. Oh, yes, they still brought the sacrifices. Here, God, here's a bull, here's a ram, here's a lamb sacrificed unto you.

But it was all just an outward ceremony because they were still steeped in sin and idolatry. Therefore, their sin remained uncovered and God would remember their iniquity and punish their sins. Look at it there in verse 14.

For Israel has forgotten his maker and has built temples. Judah also has multiplied fortified cities, but I will send fire upon his cities and it shall devour his palaces. Well, Israel forgot his maker.

Yes, they built temples, but not unto the Lord who made them. Well, look at the great temple we built. Yes, but it's under bail.

Well, look at what an achievement. Look at the beautiful building. It's not unto the Lord.

But then there's Judah. Remember now there's a little line here at the end of verse 14 referring to the southern kingdom. Judah also has multiplied fortified cities.

Now Israel practiced outright idolatry, but Judah was guilty of a far more subtle sin. They trusted in the fortified cities that they built against the Assyrians and those cities would be of no help. Look at what God says there.

I will send fire upon his cities. Those cities would be of no help. And only the Lord would preserve Judah from total destruction.

And that's how it worked out. You know, in the history of all, when mighty Assyrian army came down from the north and it totally conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. They sent him into exile in the most brutal fashion imaginable.

When they laid waste to the northern kingdom, they swept down into the southern kingdom. They certainly planned on conquering the southern kingdom of Judah as well. And they did a very good job of it.

They conquered almost the whole nation except for Jerusalem. And that was the only thing left to topple. Just conquer over Jerusalem and then everything's gone and Judah's destroyed just like the northern king of Israel.

But God said, no, I'm not going to allow that to happen. Judah built all the fortified cities and they trusted in them. We've got this fortress and that fortress.

They were nothing before the Assyrians. And finally, when the Assyrian army, hundreds of thousands strong on the outskirts of the city of Jerusalem, under the direction of the king of Judah, Hezekiah, and then in the days of Isaiah, the prophet, well, the prophecy came forth and God delivered Judah. The angel of the Lord went out and in one night he killed 180,000 Assyrian soldiers.

No fortified cities, no battle. They just woke up and the army was gone. And they went back home.

Well, that was the Lord delivering. I think we always have this tendency. We want to be satisfied with temples that we've built or to multiply fortified cities unto ourselves.

And I think sometimes we can capture some of the ungodly heart of Judah by examining our own attraction to bigness and nice facilities. Is there anything wrong with a nice temple or anything wrong with a fortified city? No. Unless you trust in it.

What could be wrong with success? What could be wrong with a nice building? Well, they easily become idols if your heart turns from God. If God brings size and great buildings, it's wonderful. As long as we don't turn our eyes off Him making those things into idols.

And that's what Judah did and God had to correct them. We finish up tonight with chapter 9 here. Verse 1. Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like other peoples, for you've played the harlot against your God.

You've loved for reward on every threshing floor. The threshing floor and the wine press shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her. They shall not dwell in the Lord's land, but Ephraim shall return to Egypt and shall eat unclean things in Assyria.

They shall not offer wine offerings to the Lord, nor shall their sacrifices be pleasing to him. It will be like the bread of mourners to them. All who eat it shall be defiled.

For their bread shall be for their life. It will not come into the house of the Lord. You see, at the time Israel brought this prophecy, things were pretty good in Israel.

Maybe there was plenty of fun and good times. Many commentators believe that this prophecy was probably given at a feast time. Everybody's partying.

Everybody's having a good time. It's a good time in Israel. But Hosea sees beyond the superficial success of the days, the economic boom time, and he says, judgment's coming.

He looks forward to a day when they're going to be taken off in captivity to Assyria. And there's going to be no more celebration. There's going to be no more fun.

They shall not dwell in the Lord's land, he says in verse 3. Ephraim shall return to Egypt and eat unclean things in Assyria. I'm going to cast you off as exiles to the nations. In the land of exile, there would be no bread for food.

Or for sacrifice to the Lord, only for survival. It comes here, the days of their punishment here, verse 5. What will you do in the appointed day? And in the day of the feast of the Lord, for indeed they are gone up because of destruction. Egypt shall gather them up.

Memphis shall bury them. Nettles shall possess their valuables of silver. Thorns shall be in their tents.

The days of punishment have come. The days of recompense have come. Israel knows.

Now look at the response of the people to Hosea's words here in verse 7. The prophet is a fool. The spiritual man's insane. Because of the greatness of your iniquity and the great enmity, the watchman of Ephraim is with my God.

But the prophet is a fowler's snare in all his ways, an enmity in the house of his God. They are deeply corrupted as in the days of Gibeah. He will remember their iniquity.

He will punish their sins. You see, they all went the way of destruction because Israel did not honor the Lord in their appointed feast days. God says, well, take the feast days away.

In the land of exile, you're not going to be able to celebrate Passover or Feast of Tabernacles or any of those. They won't allow you to. And the people of Israel, they looked at Hosea and they said, well, you're a fool.

You're insane. Hey, prophet, you're crazy. Who in his right mind would prophesy a judgment like that? We're in the midst of such blessing.

Things are so good. But no, no, it wasn't good. Matter of fact, if you notice, it says in verse 9 that they are deeply corrupted as in the days of Gibeah.

Maybe you want to make a little notation in your Bible next to that verse, verse 9. Notation describing Judges chapter 19. I won't even go into the horrific story. It is one of the most grotesque and horrific stories in the Bible.

Of the sin and the depravity of Israel at Gibeah in the days of the Judges. And God says it's just like that. Look at God's assessment here.

Verse 10. I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness. I saw your fathers as the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season, but they went to Baal Peor.

And separated themselves to that shame. They became an abomination like the thing they loved. As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird.

No birth, no pregnancy, no conception. Though they bring up their children, yet I will bereave them to the last. Yes, woe to them when I depart from them.

Just as I saw Ephraim like tire planted in a pleasant place. So Ephraim will bring out his children to the murderer. See now with pain in his voice.

The prophet Hosea describes how horrible it's going to be when the Assyrians come and conquer over Israel. They're not going to spare women and children. They're going to kill them brutally.

Might I say history tells us that there have been few occupying and conquering armies more brutal and oppressive than the Assyrians. When they led the people of Israel away, and we know this from archaeological depiction from pictures, not only from words, but they would literally strip them naked, put fish hooks in their lip and string them together on a line and march them hundreds of miles from their native land of Israel to the land of Assyria. They would strip them naked just to humiliate and degrade them.

And they would make them walk in this case with fish hooks. Now you keep up with the line when there's a fish hook in your lip. And they would kill women and children and just do disgraceful things and God says I don't want it to be like that.

This is the warning. I'm warning you against this. Don't end up in this place.

It says they became an abomination like the thing that they loved. Now Israel loved their disgraceful idols, and then they became like them. Isn't it amazing? You're going to become like the God you serve, whether it's the Lord or whether it's an abomination.

I want you to focus in here in verse 14 because I think it's something very meaningful there. You just had this very vivid description of judgment, the horrific character of what's going to come upon Israel in the Assyrians come to conquer them. And then now in verse 14 is the is the prayerful response of the Prophet.

You could just see Hosea just stops and he wants to pray to the Lord and he says Give them O Lord and then he stops What will you give? You see the idea is that Hosea began an angry prayer against his people Lord stick it to him God Give them O Lord and then he stops He checked his heart and he didn't know what to pray What will you give? We often pray like that. Don't we angry prayers? Against that enemy against the person who are your whole Lord, you know torture on a bed of nails. It's too good for

them Lord I pray that you'd really put it on them God.

Oh Lord, give it to him boys Sock it to him Lord and you just lay it on what the Lord should do But really if you stop and check your heart, maybe you won't know what to pray. I want you to see what Hosea prays It's very strange in verse 14 Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts See well, that's not a very nice prayer But I want you to see that Hosea if it's possible to say such a thing he meant that really in the best way He said when I see the horrific judgment That's going to come upon that the children and the people of Israel when the Assyrians come and God that that poor woman Let her never conceive Let her never give birth to a baby who's going to be pillaged and Tortured and perhaps murdered by the terrible Assyrians Give them few children Lord so that those children will not have to face the horrors of coming judgment You know, I am reminded here of a principle Hosea was a godly man and he lived in the midst of an ungodly people and his heart were obviously burned He looked they saw the idolatry and the immorality all around him and it grieved him and in verse 14 You get a sense of the frustration he felt But do something you're going to give it to those people Lord. Just just what are you gonna do? But sometimes those who see themselves and perhaps they're accurate They see themselves as more spiritual or closer to God than others in a church or in a group They get angry and they get frustrated With those who don't seem to have their hearts burning for the Lord you've ever been in that place It's like you're you have such a heart for God.

It seems like nobody else does What are the where are they you think? You maybe get that Elijah mentality of Lord. Am I the only one not kneeling my bowing my knee I should say to bail The frustration is understandable, but I want you to take pause at the pause at Hosea's prayer here It's a good thing to have a heart and a desire for revival and spiritual passion among God's people Friends do you see how Satan wants to twist that good desire in your heart? He wants to take it and make you proud or angry or bitter against others if he's done that then Satan is one a great victory So God give us a great passion for for revival for renewal for for a burning hot Devotion unto the Lord among us all Never in the sense of it stirring up pride or anger or bitterness against others The chapter concludes here beginning at verse 15 All their wickedness is in Gilgal for there. I hated them Because of the evil deeds I will drive them from my house.

I will love them no more all their princes are rebellious Ephraim is stricken Their root is dried up. They shall bear no fruit Yes, were they to bear children. I would kill the darlings of their womb My God will cast them away because they did not obey him and they shall be wanderers among the nations Gilgal was a center of idolatry.

It was a place where where idols were worshipped and God said, oh I hated them there They said I'll drive them from my house, you know in this sense exile was the perfect punishment for Israel They had disgraced God's house So God says I'm going to evict you. I'll evict you we can't read this Without thinking of the warnings Jesus gave to the churches in the book of Revelation We said unless you repent I'll come and I'll remove my presence from you. I'll remove the lampstand from you That says you you'd be driven from my house you disgrace my house.

I'll drive you from my house If you find that ultimately happened verse 17 My God will cast them away because they did not obey him and they shall be wanderers among the nations This is exactly what the Lord promised under the terms of the old covenant He said if you just obey me, I'll cast you out. I'll cast you among the nations but thankfully We can come to God tonight on the basis of a new and a better covenant Where he promises to remember our sins no more When we come to God on the basis of his

grace and his mercy based on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf Friends how important it is But I I feel compelled to the Lord tonight Say shouldn't shouldn't we in this room? Repent before the Lord God. No, it's very easy to think of all the other people that we know who must repent And it's it's far more entertaining to confess the sin of other people than it is to confess our own sin, isn't it? Friends what about us before the Lord? What about each one of us? Have a clean heart Have confessed sin before the Lord Set right before him.

I pray that God Show us how to do that and bring us to that place father. We thank you for your word Lord we believe the promise that comes to us on the basis of the new covenant a covenant that Israel never knew until Jesus came and fulfilled it Covenant that says if we confess our sin He's faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness Lord do this great work within us and cleanse us tonight We pray in Jesus name Amen

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