



Hosea 4-6

Tape #7350
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By Chuck Smith

As we mentioned last Sunday, Hosea was basically a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel. His period of prophecy was pretty much the same time as Isaiah. However, Isaiah was prophesying to the southern kingdom of Judah, and Hosea to the northern kingdom of Israel. God is faithful. He has not left Himself without a witness. Even at the time of national deterioration, the nation turning their back upon God, apostasizing, and as Hosea declares, "Israel is sliding back, as a backsliding heifer". Israel in this backslidden condition, God is still faithful to give them His word. He does not leave Himself without a witness, and thus in this backslidden state, a state of apostasy, God continues to warn.

I do believe that as long as God is speaking, that there is the opportunity to repent. When God is no longer speaking, then is when you want to be careful! You know, if you're living in sin, if you've turned your back upon God, and God is speaking to your heart, good. There's still an opportunity to repent. But, be careful that, that day doesn't come when God ceases to speak. When you no longer hear the voice of God checking you in your activities that are sinful.

So God is still speaking to Israel, though they have really crossed the line. They've gone too far into their iniquity, and into their sin, and judgement must come. And, as we will get in our scripture tonight, judgement does come upon the nation, but yet, the mercy of God. Though God has torn, yet will He heal. That tearing of God is always with the ultimate result of healing.

God only afflicts in order that He might bring you to the place of repentance, walking again with Him, where He can heal, where He can bless. Oh the mercies of God, they never cease! I thank God for that wonderful mercy that He has bestowed, and showed to us in our failures. I thank God for the chastisement that brings us back to Him. He doesn't let us go, but He stubbornly loves us, refusing to let us go, drawing us back to Himself.

So the first three chapters, God was speaking to them through similitudes, as the prophet will mention later, how that God does speak through similitudes. There was a similarity between the marriage of Hosea to this prostitute, and the children that were born of that relationship. Her turning her back then upon Hosea, going out and becoming destitute, finally worthless. Being sold at a slave auction, he purchased her for sixteen pieces of silver, which is not even a decent price, which would indicate just how far down she had sunk.

It was all a picture of God taking the nation of Israel, and their turning from God, their worshiping other gods, but just being destroyed through their own sin, and their own lusts, and how that God will redeem them again, and draw them back unto Himself. It was all through similitudes.

Now, as you get into chapter four, it changes and God is not speaking through a similitude, but He is speaking directly to the nation, straightforward.

Hear the word of the Lord, you children of Israel: for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, [And the controversy is over the fact that,] there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land (4:1).

No truth. They no longer were walking in the truth. They had turned aside to lies, to deception of the enemy. No mercy, they were not showing mercy any longer. There was that judgement, heavy judgement. Thus, the merciful God will show Himself merciful, but there is no mercy in the land. Remember the second child was called Lo-Ruhamah, or "no mercy". As the result, no knowledge of God in the land. They had turned to other gods. The priesthood had become corrupted. God will speak about the priesthood further along in the chapter, but the knowledge of God ceased. The understanding of the ways of God, the laws of God, the judgements of God, no longer in the land. As the result...

There was swearing, [cursing, there was] lying, there were killings, there were stealings, committing adultery, these kind of sins were breaking out all over the land [There was no restraint, they had broken the

bonds of restraint. It was “anything goes”, kind of a mentality. Sort of as what we see in the US today, where there are no restraints it seems, for what people will do. They go on in unbridled evil. And violence.] *blood touches blood* (4:2).

There’s just a violence now within the land.

Therefore [As the result of this] *that land itself will mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish*, [There’s going to come a time of suffering, there’s gonna come a time of captivity. The land will mourn because of the absence of the inhabitants, and the people will languish, the nation will languish, as they are taken captives. Not only the land becoming desolate of the people, but of course the animals.] *the flocks, the beasts of the field, the cattle the sheep will be gone, the fowls of the heaven; yea, even the fish of the sea shall be taken away* (4:3).

The land is to be made desolate, because of the evil, the sin that has resulted from their departure from truth, from mercy, and from the knowledge of God.

And yet [He said] *let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest. Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother* (4:4-5).

The priesthood, the prophets, they were corrupted. Thus when, it really comes to the final stage when those men who are supposed to be teaching people the knowledge of God, are themselves, apostatized. They start all kinds of philosophies, and good thoughts, and no knowledge of God, no really teaching of the judgements of God, the prophets and the priests together.

So my people [He said] *are destroyed for the lack of knowledge*: [The lack of the knowledge of God, ultimately brings the destruction. “My people are destroyed for this lack of knowledge”.] *because you have rejected the knowledge of God*, [It’s interesting how that today, there are people who have rejected the knowledge of God, they have rejected the Bible. They do not believe that the bible, they say it contains the truth of God, but it is not the truth of God in their estimation. There are even those scholars who gather to determine, which parts of the bible are inspired and which parts are not inspired. They have rejected the truth of God. There are certain characteristics of God that they find odious. That He is a God of judgement, they don’t like. They want a syrupy God of love and sweetness, “and anything goes, you know accept me as I am, don’t judge me, don’t condemn me, don’t tell me I’m wrong”, and they don’t like the idea of a day of judgement coming. They don’t like punishment of the wicked. Thus, they’ve changed the truth of God. Paul the apostle, speaks of them in Romans, chapter one. “Who, when they knew God, they would not glorify Him as God, but became vain in their imaginations, their foolish hearts were darkened, and professing themselves to be wise, they were actually fools. For they changed the glory of an incorruptible God, and made it like unto beasts, creeping things”, and all. Because they did not want to retain God in their minds, “God gave them over to reprobate minds”. He begins to describe the practices of those with reprobate minds. One of the marked practices is lesbianism, and homosexuality, as Paul describes it there in chapter one. This results from not wanting to retain the knowledge of God. Thus the people are destroyed, he said, because they have not the knowledge of God. They have rejected the knowledge of God. They even teach that God approves such a thing. “God made me this way!” And they try to blame God for their sins. But then Paul goes on, and in the final part of chapter one, there’s sort of an indictment, and it’s one that you should pay careful attention to, because he said, “Not only did they do those things that were worthy of death, but they took pleasure in those that do them”. I wonder if that doesn’t describe the pleasure that people get from movies, watching people commit adultery, or fornication, or whatever in the movie, taking pleasure in sinful practices. “They take pleasure in those that do them.” And, this world of entertainment, where we are entertained by, by seeing people killed, and maimed and all. You know, what kind of entertainment is that? In taking pleasure in some movie, where they’re blasting everybody to bits, and then going out and fornicating, you know. But that seems to be what the movie industry is all about! And people pay, and they go, and they watch these things, and take pleasure in them. Surely the, the final verse of chapter one, “Not only do they do those things that are worthy of death, but they take pleasure in those that do them”. But it comes from not wanting to have God in your mind, or your consciousness. Wanting to get rid of God, the idea of God, the truth of God. Putting Him aside, rejecting the truth of God. Making up our own god, a god

that will be lenient, a god that will be tolerant. A god that will wink at sin, and tolerate evil, and not judge for wrongdoing. But that is not the God that is revealed in the word of God. To only speak of the love of God is to only deal with half of the truth. He is also a God of justice. Yes, He is a God of mercy, but He is also a God of justice, and judgement. A love that demands justice and judgement. So, the people are destroyed, they're going to go into destruction, they're going to be conquered, the land is going to be desolate, because they lack the knowledge of God. They rejected the knowledge. Thus God said,] *I also will reject you*, ["You say, You deny me? Okay, I'll deny you. You reject me, I'll reject you." Jesus said, "If you confess me before men, I'll confess you before my Father. If you deny me, I'll deny you."

So here, God declares to them, "You rejected the knowledge of me, therefore I'm gonna reject you",] *and you will be no priest to me*: [Not really a priest of God.] *seeing that you have forgotten the law of God, I also will forget your children (4:6).*

"So if you seek God", the prophet said, "you'll find Him. If you forsake God, He'll forsake you. You forget God, He'll forget you. Reject God, He'll reject you."

And as the people were increased, [The nation was prosperous, it was blessed.] *so they sinned* [God said] *against me: and therefore I will turn their glory into shame (4:7).*

How we see this in history, history of nations! Nations that were once glorious, powerful. Look at Great Britain. The glory that was once that of England's, but look at England today. Once it was the center of world mission, once it was a beacon and a light to the world, as far as the gospel is concerned. But now, it has forsaken God, it has rejected God, and we see the consequences, as God has rejected them. The glory that was once the mark of the United States, "God shed His grace on thee", but now we see the deterioration as we've been increased in goods, in material things, but yet forsaking God for materialism, God changes the glory into shame. Thus with the nation of Israel. The glory that was once that of Israel, has now been turned to shame.

They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. [They've turned their hearts from God, and they're following, pursuing after iniquity.] *And there shall be like people, like priest*: [Following a corrupted priesthood, they've become corrupted.] *and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their doings (4:8-9).*

"As a man soweth", the scripture said, "so shall he also reap". Don't be deceived about this. The prophet said, "They have sowed the wind, they are about to reap the whirlwind". So the judgement of God is going to come upon them, punish them, reward them for their doings.

For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: [All of the concubines, and all yet, the children will be cursed. The populated, the nation will not be increased or made strong by the number of children.] *because they have left off to take heed of the Lord (4:10).*

Usually in times past, before the industrial society, when we were an agrarian society, children were looked upon as a blessing. Living on the farm, every child represented wealth to the family, in the labor that they would provide up until the age of their being married. As a farm hand, doing the chores, and doing the labor, they would provide something like 25,000 dollars worth of labor. So each one was sort of an investment. They were looked forward to as, "My! I'm rich, I've got fifteen kids!", you know. "All of this labor on the farm for years. We're sort of set, because we've got all of these farm hands here!" But, and thus there was strength. Children were in increase, they meant an increase to you.

But with this industrialized society, where they estimate that it'll cost you something like 70,000 dollars, to raise your child through high school, they are no longer an asset, but a debit. Thus the attitude towards children has changed, like, "Who needs them!" They no longer represent wealth or an asset to the family, but a, a debit, because of the cost of raising the children in this industrialized society.

Here, they were going to, they had, they had given over to open promiscuous sex, but yet it did not increase. It didn't represent really wealth, or power. The children were really neglected and in the way.

There is a strange phenomena in the world today. Especially do we see it in South America, and in some of the foreign lands, where there are thousands, hundreds of thousands of abandoned children. Just abandoned to the street. These children roam in gangs, in packs, almost like rats. They are thieves. They've learned to just live by their wits, by thievery, and they're a menace! They're looked upon as a menace. In

fact, the police on their off duty hours go off and shoot them like rats. There's a bounty on the heads for these kids. It's a horrible thing that is happening! They don't represent a future for the nation, but a problem for the nation, as they are growing up on the streets. It is really epidemic proportions, this problem, in many of the foreign countries. Especially Latin America. They really don't know what to do with them, they don't know what to do with them.

A nation that turns its back upon God, on the principles, the laws, the judgements of God. They may think that they are being modern, they're being sheik, they're being uh, you know sort of up to date kind of a thing. But in reality, you break those basic laws of God, and God established the family, and God established these relationships and you break that, and all kinds of problems that you didn't dream of, begin to surface. God said in verse eleven...

Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart (4:11).

They take away your heart from God. They cause you to do perverse things, to think perverse things. It's interesting, in Proverbs, as Solomon is talking about wine, and those who are given over to wine. As he describes the things that they do while under the influence of the wine. He, in his warning about the drinking and all, he speaks about how that you will, your eyes will be turned towards strange women. The fidelity to marriage and all, will be gone. "Who has woe, who has sorrow, who has contentions, who has babbling, who has wounds without cause, red eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, and go to seek the mixed wine. Don't look upon the wine when it is red, when it gives its color in the cup, when it moves itself aright. At the last it will bite like a serpent and sting like an adder. Your eyes will behold the strange women."

Under the influence, a lot of the natural inhibitions that God has built in, are removed. You will do things under the influence of alcohol, that if you were sober, you'd never do. You'd be embarrassed and ashamed to do. "Your heart will utter perverse things. Yea, you'll be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or lies on the top of a mast." I mean you just do weird things, you try to do crazy things. "They have stricken me, you will say, and I was not sick. They have beaten me, and I didn't feel it! When I awake, I'll go look for more wine." You know, sober up, and go out and get drunk again. Strange values that the world has. You know, this business of, "Let's go out and get drunk this weekend!" What a weird, strange value! He said...

My people [And here's the thing. God hasn't really disowned them yet. "My people",] *but they are asking counsel at their stocks*, [The little pieces of wood that they've carved into idols. So they go to these little idols to seek counsel. They ask counsel of these stocks.] *and of their staff*: [They used to put the staff up, and then just sort of let it drop, in order to, "Which direction shall I go?" Put the staff up, and then you pray to the spirits, and you let the thing go and see which direction the staff drops. Then you head off in that direction. Seeking guidance by asking the spirits to direct the drop of the staff. Or praying to the little idols, instead of seeking the wisdom of God, instead of seeking the counsel of God, and the guidance of God for their lives, they were looking to these things.] *the spirit of whoredoms has caused them to err, and they have gone awhoring from under their God. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and they burn incense upon the hills, under the oaks, and the poplars, and tamarets, because the shadow thereof is good*: [They had established these places of worship on the high places, the mountains. Of course we've gone through that, as we were going through the book of Kings, and all. The high places that were built for the worship of their gods. The groves, in which they worshiped the Ashtoreth, and,] *your daughters will commit whoredom, and your spouses will commit adultery. I'll punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, and your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: and therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall (4:11-14).*

God's declared judgement. No knowledge of God, no understanding of the ways of God, and thus they shall fall.

Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; [The people of Judah were warned], *don't come up to Gilgal*, [One of the centers of the religious worship of the northern kingdom. "Don't be curious, don't look into what they are doing. Don't come to Gilgal."] *and neither go up to Bethaven*, [Bethaven is the house of idols. It was of course Bethel, in the beginning, the house of God. But now it's called the house of idols, because that's where they put up the golden calf, and they invited the people of the northern kingdom

to come, and to worship there. So, Bethel the house of God, became Bethaven, the house of idols.] *nor swear, The Lord liveth (4:15).*

Now here's the weird thing, these people can be doing all these corrupt things, and yet, they can talk spiritual language. "Well the Lord liveth brother!", and we hear it today. "Praise the Lord brother", as he's ripping you off, cheating you. "Bless God brother! Praise the Lord!", you know, and picking your pocket! A lot of people think that because they can spout the religious jargon, that they're okay. "Well, you know, I know pretty much, praise the Lord brother! Just praise the Lord!", and they think that just spouting religious jargon's gonna do it. It doesn't. God, it says, "Just don't say, The Lord liveth". That was sort of the equivalent of our, "Praise the Lord". It's just declaring, "Oh the Lord liveth!". Yet, here they were in all of this idolatry, all of these horrible practices, that were an abomination to God, and yet they're, they are swearing by the Lord.

For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: [Now the, the picture is, trying to get a heifer to pull the plow, but the heifer, rather than going forward, is coming back against you. Of course, you've got the goat to get it to go forward, but it, it's twisting trying to get out from under the yoke and you can't plow a straight line. The old heifer is backsliding. He keeps coming back, and you just, you can't use it for, for plowing. So, "Israel is like that heifer",] *and thus the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place (4:16).*

In other words, Israel is gonna become desolate, like a lamb that's just turned out to the field on its own, to forage on its own. It can't survive. The sheep need a shepherd to watch over them. They, they don't have enough sense to find pasture for themselves. They can't survive in just a large area on their own. Thus, Israel will be like sheep that are just turned out on their own in the wilderness, to forage for their own. They're not gonna make it, they won't survive.

Ephraim [He said] is joined to idols: let him alone (4:17).

You know, it is really a very sad, and tragic day, when God says of a person, or of a nation, "People, let them alone. They've given over themselves to idolatry, let them alone". God said to Jeremiah, "Don't pray anymore for their good. If you do, I won't listen to you". A person can go so far, that God gives them up to their vile lusts, and to their practices. You can, you can go so far that God will write you off.

Thus with Ephraim, they've gone so far, God says, "Just let them alone. Don't prophesy to them anymore. Don't warn them anymore. Don't try to draw them back, just let them alone". When God says to the Spirit, "Let them alone. My Spirit", He said, "will not always strive with man". There can come a time in your life, where your continual turning your back on God, turning against God, that God will just cut you off and say, "Okay, let them alone". No more conviction of sin. No more drawing unto Jesus. "Just let them alone. They're given over to idolatry."

"There is a place, we know not where. A line, we know not, there is a time, we know not when, a line we know not where, that marks the destiny of man, twixt sorrow and despair." There is a line, that once it is crossed, even God Himself, in all His love, has sworn, that all is lost. You can go too far. Ephraim had gone too far. God said, "Let her alone".

Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love, Give ye. ["Give them over."] The wind hath bound her up in her wings, ["They'll be carried off by the wind."] and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices (4:18-19).

Chapter 5

Hear ye this, O priests; [Now God will direct, the other was to Israel, now directly to the priests. "Hear ye this, O priests",] *and hearken, ye house of Israel; give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgement is toward you, because you have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor (5:1).*

Mizpah was on the east side of the Jordan river. It was where Jacob and Laban parted, drew the line. Laban said unto Jacob, "Mizpah". Now it means, "The Lord watch between me and you while we're absent one from the other". It, it in one way it, it sounds beautiful. You know, if you're parting from a friend, "Mizpah. The Lord watch between us while we're absent one from the other". But, in the original, as Laban was leaving, he had just accused Jacob of ripping him off, stealing him blind, taking his daughters, and his grandkids, and leaving in the sly, and all. "You've taken advantage of me. You've ripped me off, and now

you're going, and I won't be able to watch what you're doing with my daughters, and my grandkids, so Mizpah! May God watch you brother, while we're absent one from the other!"

It was really sort of a heavy duty kind of a thing, rather than a pleasant, beautiful, you know parting. "Oh may the Lord watch between us while we're absent..." No it wasn't that way, it was, "You snake! You crook! May God watch you! I'm not gonna be able to, may God watch you, while we're absent one from the other."

Now, this place of Mizpah, over on mount Tabor, on the west side of the Jordan, that dome mountain there in the valley of Jezreel, these are the places where they had established places of worship, for these false idols, and gods, and all, that they were worshiping. As they became a snare to the people. The people were ensnared by the, by these places of worship.

And the revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all. I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: [Remember when Jesus was addressing the churches in the book of Revelation, "To each church", He said, "I know thy works". Here, God is declaring, "I know Ephraim. Israel's not hid from me, I know what's going on. I know what's happening". Sometimes people think that they, they're covering their, their bases. That they are getting by with what they are doing. That nobody really knows what's going on in the secret innermost places of their hearts. The things that they are sneaking around and doing. God says, "Hey, I know all about it. I know". Remember with Ezekiel, God said, came to wall, He said, "Dig a hole through the wall, now climb inside, look around". He saw all the filth and pornography on the walls. God said, "I have taken you into the minds of the rulers. You see what's going on in their minds". That's what God can see, what's going on in your mind. The imagination of your heart. And God says, "I know", and that's heavy! "I know Ephraim, Israel's not hid from me:"] *for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled. They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord (5:2-4).*

Again, going back to the original indictment, the knowledge of God is not there. "They have not known the Lord."

The pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; and Judah will also fall. [So here's the prophecy of the fall of both the northern kingdom, and the southern kingdom. Though the southern kingdom lasted another hundred years, beyond the northern kingdom, yet they both did fall.] *They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find him; he's withdrawn himself from them.* [They've gone too far, God has withdrawn Himself. Even though they take now, sacrifices and try to return, it's too late.] *They have dealt treacherously against the Lord: for they have begotten strange children:* [The children of the whoredoms, and the prostitutes and so forth.] *and now shall a month devour them with their portions.* [Or the new moon will devour them with their portions. He is speaking of the fact that the judgement will come very quickly, within a month or so this judgement will come.] *So blow the cornet in Gibeah, the trumpet in Ramah:* [The Assyrians that will attack and destroy the northern kingdom, will then be moving and so, you start at Gibeah, north of Jerusalem, and then they're coming close to the trumpets of the invading army. They get to Ramah, just north of Jerusalem.] *cry aloud at Bethaven, after thee, O Benjamin (5:5-8).*

So the area that was once the portion of the tribe of Benjamin, will be covered by the Assyrians.

Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be (5:9).

God is declaring, "I've told them what's going to happen. I've made known that which surely shall be". And God has made known to us, that which surely shall be. The word of prophecy is a fascinating thing! I, I love delving into prophecy in the scriptures, because God has let us know what is going to be.

The princes of Judah were like them that remove the boundaries: [Now the Lord said, "Cursed be the man", you remember when they came into the land they were to stand on mount Gerizim, and mount Ebal, and from Ebal they were to pronounce the curses? And all of these people standing in the valley, and up on top. Men were saying these curses, and the people down below were to say, "Amen! Amen!". One of the curses was, "Cursed is he who moves the landmark of his neighbor". Now, they, the land was all divided off to the various families, and they had these piles of rocks that would mark the, the borders of your land. They

didn't have little surveyor kind of stakes in the ground, like we have today. But they had these piles of rocks, and at night, these people would go out and move the pile of rocks, five feet over, you know. Ha, ha! So they would increase the size, and diminish, of their own land, and diminish the size of their neighbors. Thus, "Cursed is the man that removes the landmarks". But this is what they were doing. I mean law and order was a thing of the past. The whole system was in a state of disarray. Ephraim is.] *and I will pour out my wrath upon them like water (5:10).*

God said, "Cursed is the man that moves the landmarks". They were doing it. Thus God's gonna pour out His wrath.

Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgement, because he willingly walked after the commandment. Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, [Eating, and destroying.] and as the house of Judah as rottenness. [The corrupting. God said He will be that to them. He is the one who is going to destroy.] When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, [Rather than turning to the Lord in their, in their weakness and all, they turn now,] to the king Jareb: [The king of Assyria.] and yet he could not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. [So God declares, "I'm the one that's gonna tear, like a lion I'm gonna rip them".] And I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early (5:11-15).

So God said, "I'm gonna tear them, I'm gonna destroy them, and then I'll go away and I'll just wait until the day comes, when they seek my face".

It is interesting that when Jesus was talking to the Pharisees, He said, "I came in my Father's name and you did not receive me. Another will come in his own name, and him you will receive". Then He declared, "You're not gonna see me again until you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord".

Now the nation of Israel has gone through heavy, heavy persecution. Unparalleled by any other ethnic group. No group on the face of the earth has been so persecuted, has been the Jews. Of course, even in some of our lifetime we remember how Hitler sought to exterminate the Jews. But there have been programs??? against the Jews throughout history. Persecuted people. God said He's just gonna let them go, until they acknowledge their offense, and they seek God's face.

There has to be that confession. "God we have offended you. We've, we've, we've turned against you. We've sinned against you." And there will come a day, they haven't seen the worst of the persecution yet. There will come a day, when they say, "Blessed is He, who comes in the name of the Lord", and then Jesus will return to establish the kingdom of God. But, as we move into chapter six, He tells us the time.

Chapter 6

Come, [And this is what they will say, the voice of the people that survive. "Come",] let us return unto the Lord: for he has torn, [They recognize that this is come, the judgement has come from God. "He has torn",] and he will heal us; he has smitten, and he will bind us up (6:1).

The very God who has torn is the God who will heal. The very God who has smitten is the God that will bind up the wounds. Again, God in His dealing with us is severe, but it's for our benefit. It's so that we are not destroyed, or we don't destroy ourselves.

If you would go to a doctor, and say, "I have this lump, and it's painful, and it seems to just sort of radiate heat". So he takes a portion of the tissue, and has it, has a biopsy performed. You get the call, and he says, "You know, it's cancerous, and we've got to cut it out". "Well, that's gonna be painful isn't it?" "Well, yeah it's gonna be painful." "That's gonna restrict me for awhile." "Yeah, it'll restrict me for awhile, you for awhile." "Oh, I don't want to suffer pain. I don't think I'll have the operation." "Well, you know it's the type of cancer that grows very rapidly, and if you don't get it now, it'll probably get you." "Oh, but I don't want to go through any pain."

But, you see, the cutting is for the healing. The surgery is for the healing, and much surgery, the purpose is for healing. There's something wrong, you've gotta get rid of it. Yes it is a painful process. Yes, there will be a time of recovery, but in order to be healthy and strong again, you've got to do it! And so with God. He

sometimes uses painful processes to excise from you, that which is destroying you, and that which will destroy you, if it isn't removed. Sometimes you think, "Well, God is too severe!". No! He is loving, and because He is loving, He allows you these things. He will smite in order to heal, in order to turn you around.

Thus, He has smitten, but He will heal. That's the important thing, to know that God only smites to heal. God only smites to correct you, to keep you from destroying yourself. It's really the mercies of God that He deals with us in these severe ways. It's for your eternal benefit. But, here's the exciting thing...

After two days he will revive us: and in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight (6:2).

The Bible says that, "A day is as a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is as a day". So, "2,000 years He will revive us: and in the 3,000th year, He will raise us up". The interesting thing is that from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, by Titus and the Roman troops, in 70AD, it was just about 2,000 years that Israel was dispersed and scattered throughout the world. "But after the 2,000 years, or the two days, He will revive us."

As was prophesied by Ezekiel, the valley of dry bones, God said, "Can these bones be made to live?", and God said, and Ezekiel said, "Well Lord, thou knowest". God sort of said, "Watch this!", and he watched the bones come together, and stand up, and muscle and all, and God spoke of the reviving, bringing back from the dead, a nation, that was like dead, and in the grave. Here it says, "After the 2,000, or two days, or 1,000 years as a day".

It is interesting that it was 2,000 years from the time of their destruction, to the time of their reviving, and in the 3,000th year, or in the millennium, the third day, He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." Getting close to that millennial reign of Christ! The Biblical prophecies are predicated upon 360 day years.

I did a little bit of calculation on this, and we're just ten years away from the beginning of the third millennium, since the destruction of Jerusalem. You know, it'll be interesting to watch, and see how things go. But, "God has torn, God has smitten", but they, "God is going to restore. And after two days, He will revive us".

Surely that cannot be literal days, because it didn't happen in two days, it happened in 2,000 years. "And on the third day, He will raise us up, and we will live in His sight. We'll be restored by God." They, they will again, uh, God will take them back as, as Hosea took back his wife, and be restored to that relationship with God. "Live in His sight."

Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, and the latter, and the former rain unto the earth (6:3).

Joel also uses this, "former and latter rain", idea of, God blessed them in the beginning, long period of drought, but then the latter rain, and the prophecy of Joel says that, "The latter rain will exceed the former rain". God's glorious pouring forth of, of His refreshing rain upon the people, upon the nation. So, "Then shall come unto us as the rain, the latter, and the former rain unto the earth".

O Ephraim, [And here's God, and, and the heart of God is revealed. It says that He does not really punish willingly. It's, it's, He's reluctant. He does everything to keep from having to be severe. "O Ephraim",] what shall I do unto you? O Judah, what shall I do unto you? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, [It's, it's evaporated, it's gone.] as the early dew it goes away. Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgements are as the light that goeth forth. For [God declares] I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings (6:4-6).

"What I really desired was mercy." Now, David in, in his prayer in Psalm fifty one, said, "Lord you didn't really want sacrifice, else would I have given it. But thou delightest not in burnt offerings". David also was a prophet, and he recognized that God doesn't want the sacrifices, and burnt offerings, He wants your heart to be open to Him. He wants you to be merciful, and He wants you to know Him. The knowledge of God is more important than burnt offerings.

But they like men have transgressed the covenant: they have dealt treacherously against me. [God's people. They broke the covenant, they dealt treacherously against God.] Gilead is a city of them that work

iniquity, and is polluted with blood. And as troops of robbers they wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent: for they commit lewdness. [The whole social system is, is deteriorated. They, they wait in gangs, gangs will attack people.] *I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel: there is the whoredom of Ephraim, and Israel is defiled. Also, O Judah, he hath set a harvest for thee,* ["You have reaped", I mean, "You have sown to the wind, you're gonna reap the harvest. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. The day of harvest is coming."]*"] when I return the captivity of my people (6:7-11).*

So the prophesies of Hosea. Heavy, heavy, as God pronounces the judgements that are coming upon the people.

Now there are tremendous parallels between Israel, and the United States, because God established the nation of Israel, and God blessed them. They sought God, they put God at the heart of the nation, they were blessed. But, in time, in their prosperity, they forgot God, they turned their backs on God, and there was no knowledge of God in the land. They were perverse, and the land was filled with violence, stealing, cheating, lying, gang warfare. God allowed them to be destroyed.

The United States was established by God. The interesting thing, Columbus, when he came to America, he came to be a bearer of Christ to the people. He was really on a missionary journey. Actually, the pilgrims didn't come, you hear they came for religious freedom, they actually came, and it's in their documents, to convert the Indians to Christianity. They were a bunch of missionaries. They weren't looking for freedom of religion. But they were looking to evangelize the natives, here in the United States. Things that you don't read in your history books. They established our nation on a foundation of God's word. They sought God. God blessed our nation, God made our nation strong.

But we're following the same path. In our prosperity, we've turned our backs on God. No mercy, no truth, no knowledge of God. We're following the same pattern. And, that is why these prophesies are so relevant to us today, because we are in that very place that Israel was in, when Hosea was prophesying, and telling them the inevitable consequences of the path that they had chosen to walk. This path that you've chosen is gonna lead to destruction, and the path that the United States has chosen, will lead to destruction.

Thus, these prophecies become very relevant to us in these days. Because you can see the same parallels, the patterns, that were there, are the same patterns that we see here. We follow just the progress, the sequential progress of events, as they are taking place.

It behooves each of us, these days, to live our lives completely and fully, for Jesus Christ. This present world system is rapidly passing away. You dare not put all of your values in the worldly material things. It's rapidly passing. Put your values in spiritual things. Start living in the Spirit, and walking after the Spirit, like never before. Start seeking the face of God. I do believe that the world is ripe for judgement. I do believe that the great tribulation period is going to begin at most any time.

I do not believe that God will allow things to get much worse than what they already are. Jesus said that in these last days, that things would get so bad, that if He didn't shorten those days, even the elect would not survive. I believe that we are living in that time when, unless the Lord does something rapidly, we're not gonna survive. We're gonna see the whole thing go down.

So, let's walk after the Lord. Let's seek the Lord with our whole heart. Jesus said, "Pray always that you'll be accounted worthy to escape these things that are going to come to pass upon the earth, and you'll be standing before the Son of man". Time for prayer. Praying, "God I want to walk with you, and I want to be worthy to escape your judgement that is coming. I want to stand there in heaven, and declare the glory and the worthiness of the Lamb, as He takes the scroll out of your right hand". Escape those things that are coming. Let's walk in a way that's pleasing to Him.

Father, speak to our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, and may we hear Your voice as you speak to us. Lord, we ask that we'll be very sensitive to hear You. Speak Lord to our hearts, and to the issues of our lives, Lord where we may be going astray, where we may be like that heifer, straining against the yoke, pulling back. O God help us that we would go forward. Forward for You, serving You. In Jesus name Father, Amen.