



Hosea 7-9

Tape #7351
Hosea 7-9
By Chuck Smith

Hosea is a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel. He, like Jeremiah is called of God, to oversee the death of that nation. So he delivers God's complaint against them, and shows to them the reasons for God's judgement. So God declares, and this really sort of ties together with the verses of the previous chapter, where he speaks of the troops of robbers. "They wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent: they commit lewdness. I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel: there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled. Also, Judah, has set an harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people."

So, "When I would've healed Israel", and the thing is, it was God's desire to heal. The bible says that, "God delights in mercy". God loves to show mercy. He looks for any excuse to show mercy. God wants to heal, that which is torn, that which is wounded.

But when I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, the wickedness of Samaria: [Ephraim the major tribe of the northern kingdom, and Samaria the capital of the northern kingdom.] for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without. And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: [People seem to forget God. They put God out of their minds. They somehow feel that God is not aware, as in the seventy third Psalm, as he is expressing the thoughts of the wicked. He said, "And they say, How doth God know? Is there knowledge in the most High?"] And here, God declares that, "They think that I forget. They think that they can just do these things, and they will not have to be responsible for their actions. They don't consider that I remember these things, all of their wickedness:"] their own doings have beset them about; and they are before my face. [God is declaring, "I do see them".] They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies (7:1-3).

Actually, the government was encouraging the wickedness of the people. Making laws that gave freedom for their wickedness. Where these things were once against the law of God, and would've been punished by the law of God, they now had made new laws, in which there were no punishments, or penalties, because the government itself, the men of the government, the leaders of the government were in themselves corrupted. Thus, the laws that came forth were corrupt laws. "The king is glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies."

For they are all adulterers, as an oven that is heated by the baker, who ceases from rising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened (7:4).

They're adulterers, and he speaks of their being hot in their passions, adulteress passions. "Like an oven of the baker, that is heated." And we use the term, even to the present day, concerning a person who is burning with lust, he is in "heat". So the prophet declares concerning the nation itself. They were hot in their passions for evil.

For they've made ready their heart like an oven, [They're just waiting for the opportunity to indulge in evil. Looking for opportunity to indulge in evil.] whiles they lie in wait: [Just waiting for opportunity.] their baker [he said] sleepeth all the night; and in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire (7:6).

Now the picture he is painting of, is the baker who has made the dough, and has set it aside for the leavening process, put the leaven in it, and is letting it sit, until the whole lump of dough, it be leavened. But at night he lights the fire of the oven. He gets it hotter than it needs to be to bake. In fact, it's too hot to bake the bread. So he sets the dough aside, letting it rise, and in the morning when he wakes up, the oven has cooled to the proper heat, for the breaking, baking of the bread. "But they are burning in their lusts all night long.", is what he is saying. In the morning there is still that, that desire, that lust that is there.

They are all hot as an oven, and they have devoured their judges; and all of their kings have fallen: [Those judges that were righteous, those judges that were good, they got rid of them. They put judges in

their place who were corrupt, and as evil as they were. Thus, justice no longer proceeded from the courts. They, he talks about their kings. When you read the history of Israel towards the end there, it was a dangerous thing to be a king. Your insurance premiums went up tremendously, because they were assassinating one king after another. I mean it was really an anarchy that had taken over. To be a king was to be in a very dangerous position. Because one king after another was assassinated, and the whole nation had just really deteriorated, and gone to pieces. So the Lord says,] *there is none of them that calleth unto me* (7:7).

Now quite often, when things get really bad and corrupt, then people finally wake up, and they begin to call upon the Lord. But here, in the midst of, of this terrible condition of the nation, rapidly deteriorating, rapidly going down, still there was no one who was really calling upon the Lord. I think that one of the mysteries is the lack of prayer amongst the people of God.

It would seem to me that at this time of our own national degradation, that God's people would be praying like never before! That we would make prayer a top priority. That every prayer meeting that the church had would be packed with people seeking God. But even those who were spiritual, have more or less resigned to the fate that was to befall them, and the Lord said, "There is none among them that call unto me". What a sad and tragic time for a nation's history.

Ephraim has mixed himself among the people; [God had wanted the nation to be pure. But yet there was this mixing themselves among the people. And He said,] *Ephraim is a cake not turned* (7:8).

Sort of like a pancake on the griddle, that's been on the griddle too long. The bottom of it is burned, but the top of it is still raw. Thus, neither side is really edible. The bottom is black, being burned, the top is raw, and thus, it's, it's of no value. "Ephraim is a cake not turned."

Strangers have devoured his strength, [and the thing is,] *he doesn't know it:* [I think of Samson, when Delilah put him through all of these machinations, seeking the secret of his strength, pressuring him daily, until finally he opened his heart, and he revealed to her, that he had a Nazarite vow. He had been consecrated to God. It was represented by his long hair. It had never been cut. He had been consecrated to God from birth. If the hair would be cut, it would be a sign of a broken covenant, no longer consecrated to God. He would be weak like other men. So, luring into a sleep again, she called them in, they cut his hair, and she said, "Samson the Philistines are here!", and he jumped up. He said, "I will go out as at other times", and it said, "And he knew not that the Spirit of God had departed from him". Here, strangers had sapped the strength.

Ephraim had mixed herself and now the strangers had sapped the strength. But they didn't know it. They were weak and powerless, but they didn't know it. As so often there have been people who have walked with the Lord, and they begin to sort of mess around with the world. They begin to get entangled with the world, until they are really in, ensnared by the world, but they don't know it! They still think everything is okay. "Oh I'm strong, I'm able. I can stop anytime I want". You know, how many times have you heard that? They're ensnared and they don't even know it! Sin is such a deadly, dastardly thing, because one of the effects of sin in your life, tolerated sin, is the blinding of your eyes. You can't see what's really happening to you. Your friends can see it, they try to warn you of it, they try to tell you, "Hey, things are not so good", and yet, you don't seem to see it yourself. There is that false sense of capability. "I'm able", when in reality, you are weak as other men. You knoweth it not.] *gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he doesn't know it* (7:9).

Interesting. Think I'm just as strong as I ever was, just as capable. The gray hairs are there but somehow, you don't realize that the strength is ebbing away. That you're not the man you used to be, nor were you ever!

The pride of Israel testifies to his face: [And here is the tragedy.] *they do not return to the Lord, nor to seek him for all of this* (7:10).

At this time, you'd think that they would be seeking God. The nation is going down the tubes, it's almost over, they're in the final death, death throws. Gasping, about to die, fluid is building up in the lungs, you hear the gurgle in the throat, it's almost over. But they don't realize it. They're not seeking God. They're not returning to the Lord.

But they're like a silly dove [Now doves I think are one of the dumbest of all birds. When I was a kid, we used to have slingshots. Oh, yeah, I know. But, we would shoot birds. That was before all of you "earth people" came along. Ha, ha! It was interesting, little sparrows up on the wires, you shoot, you miss, and they all fly. Crows, you couldn't get near them! But a dove? You shoot, and you can go right by him, and he just sort of looks, and just sits there. Doesn't seem to be aware of the danger, and he just sits there till you get him. And, Israel's like a silly dove. Not aware of the danger, they're,] *without heart*: [They're not aware of the danger. They're without heart. They're without any consciousness of the danger that they are facing.] *and they flit over to Egypt*, [for help] *or they flit over to Assyria*. [for help] *But God said, When they go, I will spread my net upon them; I'll bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard* (7:11-12).

So they will be ensnared in God's net. They're not looking to God, they're looking to Egypt for help, they're looking to Assyria for help. They're not looking to God, and so God said, "I'm just gonna trap them. I'll ensnare them in the net".

Woe to them! because they have fled from me: [They've actually run from God! Rather, not, it wasn't just a case of not seeking God, it's a case of fleeing from God. Thus, "Woe to them!", secondly,] *destruction to them!* [Because they flee from God, they will be destroyed. God is their strength, their only place of strength. You leave that place of strength and you're gonna be destroyed.] *because* [God said] *they have transgressed against me: though I have redeemed them*, ["My people, I had redeemed them, yet they have transgressed against me."] *and they have spoken lies against me* (7:13).

They had developed false concepts of God. No longer walking in the truth of God.

And they have not cried unto me with their heart, [When Jeremiah was overseeing the death of the southern kingdom of Judah, God said at that time, and when, "And when you seek me with all of your heart, I will be found of you". But they weren't seeking God with their heart.] *when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and for wine, but they rebelled against me* (7:14).

Even as they started to go through some of the misery, some of the shortages, the judgements of God had begun, until they would lie on their beds and they would howl over the conditions of the deterioration of the nation. But even then, they were rebelling against God! They weren't seeking God!

Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, [When they were weak, in the times past, God had ministered to them. When their arms were broken, so to speak, God bound them. He put them in splints, He took care of them.] *yet do they imagine mischief against me*. [God had been so good to them, so gracious to them, and yet they're turning their hearts against Him.] *They return, but not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow*: [You go to pull the bow and it will break. You think you have strength, you think that you have defense, you think that you have security. You've got your bow, but it's a deceitful bow.] *their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt* (7:15-16).

So, they'll be carried away, some of them will escape to Egypt, and there abide. Others will be taken to Assyria, and they'll be scattered. The handwriting is on the wall for the kingdom of Israel! Here they are dining, and wining, drinking the wine, the leaders giving themselves over to wine, the princes making the kings drunk. "The day of the king, the princes had made them sick with a bottle of wine", verse five. "He stretched out his hands with the scorners." That drunkenness and all is associated with the heated passions. They say that wine is as oil to the fires of lust. So the kings being filled with lust, and then the oil of wine inflaming even, those passions. Those who do not abide by the mercies of God will be pursued by the justice of God. The "silly doves", not abiding by the mercy of God, seeking to flee to Egypt or to Assyria for help, but will be pursued by the justice of God.

Chapter 8

So as we move into chapter eight, God said...

Set the trumpet to thy mouth. [The trumpet was used to warn the people of an invading army, of danger, much like an air raid siren. It was sounded to alert the people of an imminent danger. "Set the trumpet to thy mouth".] *He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant, and they've trespassed against my law*. [Forsaken the covenant of God. Transgressed against the

laws of God.] *And Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee.* [But they don't.] *Israel has cast off that which is good: and thus the enemy shall pursue him (8:1-3).*

Jesus tells us that in the day of the establishing of His kingdom, there will be those that more or less say, "But Lord we know you! Have we not prophesied in your name? We have done miracles, and marvelous things in your name. Cast out devils, healed the sick!" But the Lord will say, "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity. I never knew you". There are a lot of people doing so called, or supposed miracles today, who will be in that category. Because these men are nothing but rip off artists, and they have ripped off, and continue to rip off the body of Jesus Christ. They are making merchandise of the people of God. They are fleecing the flock of God. Yet they say, "Oh but God we know you!", but God says, "I don't know you". Not in the capacity of Lord. He isn't really the Lord of their lives. Money is the Lord of their lives. Possession, mammon is their god.

Here was Israel crying, "But Lord we know you!", but they had actually cast off God, and the rule of God over their land, and over their lives.

They have set up kings, but not by me: [God chose David, had Samuel go down to the house of David, house of Jesse actually, to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as king. He was God's appointed king. Now Israel was just setting up kings by any method. Some of them came to the throne by force, assassinating the king that was on the throne. It was a tragic period of their history, as they were setting up kings, but not really seeking the Lord, or the guidance of the Lord for the leadership of the nation. Thus the nation came under the rule of corrupt men, with corrupt ideals, who were doing things that were against and opposed to the laws of God.] *with their silver and gold* [The Lord said] *they have made them idols,* [Which will be the cause of,] *their being cut off (8:4).*

These idols, and this idolatry, these false gods were the things that would ultimately destroy them. A sex crazed society. Worshiping Ashtoreth, worshiping Molech, the god of pleasure. Their strength is gone. They're gonna be cut off.

Thy calf, O Samaria, has cast thee off; [When Jeroboam formed the northern kingdom, at the death of Solomon, and the son of Solomon, Rehoboam, began to rule in his father's place, the northern kingdom divided from the southern kingdom, and they appointed Jeroboam to be the king over the northern tribes. Now he felt that, the people if they would return to Jerusalem, as was required under the law for the three major feasts, that when they came back to Jerusalem, and they saw the temple, and the worship within the temple, that these old memories, traditions, would come back and they would be drawn back to a loyalty to the king of Judah. The descendant of David. So he decided that they needed to develop their own kind of religious tradition. So in the northern most part of the kingdom, in the city of Dan, they made an altar, and they placed there the calf. A place for the people to gather there to worship. Also in the southern most part of the kingdom, in Bethel, they set up another calf. They said, "These are the gods that brought you out of Egypt, and have made you strong". So the northern kingdom lapsed immediately into the idolatrous worship of the calf, tracing back to the heritage or the traditions of the Egyptians, in the worship of the sacred calf. So the Lord now speaks against that. "Thy calf, O Samaria, has cast thee off;"] *my anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency (8:5)?*

"How long can I tolerate, and put up with this?"

For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: ["Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And the picture here, is sowing the wind. You reap in kind. You sow the wind, you'll reap the whirlwind. Now the desert whirlwind, on hot days in the desert, you can see these whirlwinds, as they move across the desert, swirling, picking up the tumbleweeds, picking up the dust, picking up papers and all, and lifting them up into the sky. You watch the swirling of the whirlwind, scattering things all over the place. So they are going to be scattered. They're gonna be lifted up out of the land, they're gonna be tossed and scattered into the various parts of the world. They have sown the wind, now they're gonna reap the whirlwind, as God is going to allow them to be scattered throughout the world.] *it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers will swallow it up. For Israel is swallowed up: and now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein there is no pleasure (8:7-8).*

They're gonna be outcasts. They're gonna be living now among the Gentiles, and they'll be persecuted,

they'll be hated. They'll be a byword among the people. The people will be saying, "Oh those dirty Jews!", and, and they will be subjected to all kinds of bitter experiences among the Gentiles, experiencing the hatred, and the venom of the world against the people of God. Because they turned from the love of God, from the place that God had put them. They turned away from God, and now God is turning away from them. They turned their backs on God, God's turning His back on them. They are reaping what they have sown. Nothing substantial left. There is no stalk. No more fruit. They're not bringing forth fruit to the Lord any longer. Israel was once a fruitful vine! But no longer bringing forth fruit.

Oh how these things should speak to our hearts tonight, as we can see the parallels between what was happening to Israel, and what's happening to us today! How it should bring us to our knees in seeking God, because the only hope for America, is a revival, sent by God and the nation turning back to God. For if we continue our present direction, we cannot stand. We will be destroyed. Our strength morally, is already gone, but we don't really realize it yet.

For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim has hired lovers. Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes (8:9-10). [They've, they've turned for help to the wrong places.] *Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.* [And God said,] *I have written to him the great things of my law, but they are counted as strange things (8:9-12).*

God reached out to them. But the law of God became something that was strange.

They sacrificed flesh for the sacrifices of my altars, they eat it; but the Lord does not accept them; [No longer are their sacrifices acceptable. God isn't looking for sacrifice, He's looking for obedience. You remember when Saul disobeyed the commandment of God, in respect to the Amalekites, who he was to utterly destroy. But he brought back some of the finest of the cattle and of the sheep. When the prophet of God, Samuel, came out to face him for this disobedience. The prophet was old, and because of old, his age, was now blind. But he was led out to Saul, and his victorious troops coming back from their victory over the Amalekites. As Saul greeted the old prophet, he said, "As the Lord liveth, I've done everything that God has said!" And the prophet said, "If you've done everything that God has said, how is it that I hear the lowing of the cattle, and the bleeding of the sheep?" He said, "Oh, well, they were so nice, I thought that I would bring them back to sacrifice them to God". And the prophet said, "To obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken to God is better than the fat of rams. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and because you have rejected God from ruling over you, now God rejects you from ruling over the people." Samuel turned to go away, and Saul grabbed him by the coat, and Samuel kept walking, until the coat was ripped, and he turned around, and he said, "So God is gonna rip the kingdom from you!". Here, they were still offering sacrifices. But at this point, they were actually blasphemous. No longer accepted by God.] *now will he remember their iniquity, and he will visit their sins:* [And some of them will actually] *return to Egypt.* [As back to the old life, back to that which God had once delivered them from. Now, "Back to Egypt".] *For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and he builds temples; and Judah hath multiplied the fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof (8:13-14).*

So, Judah is, is moving in this direction. They're not as far gone as Israel yet. But, "forgot their Maker".

Chapter 9

So [God said] rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for you've gone whoring from your God, you've love a reward upon every cornfloor [cornfloor]. The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall not fail in her. [There is coming a time of drought, judgement.] *They shall not dwell in the Lord's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat the unclean things of Assyria (9:1-3).*

No longer will they be able to observe the Lord's dietary laws, but they will be corrupted as they go to Egypt and to Assyria.

And they shall not offer the wine offerings to the Lord, neither shall they be pleasing unto him: their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; and all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the Lord (9:4).

They're gonna be scattered, they, they will be scattered, they will be unable to come into the house of

the Lord.

For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt will gather them, Memphis shall bury them: [They'll die in these places. They'll be buried in Memphis there in Egypt.] *the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them:* [There, the land is, is gonna return to nature, actually. The once pleasant places will now be fields of nettles, weeds. The houses where they put their beautiful silver vases, will become ruinous, and will become just covered with weeds and debris.] *thorns will be in their tabernacles.* [Their dwelling places.] *The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come;* [God's visitation and God's recompense. Those days come. Now because God often times, because of His mercy, is slow to anger, plenteous in mercy, and He withholds judgement for a period of time. But, unfortunately people, many times misinterpret this longsuffering of God as blindness. "God doesn't see." Or, as ignorance, "God doesn't know." You don't realize that God is just merciful, He's loving, He's slow to anger, plenteous in mercy, but you misinterpret that. You say, "Well God doesn't know if you're, or God doesn't care", or even worse. As we hear today, "Well God approves of what we're doing". That's probably the worst blasphemy to think that God actually approves of those evil practices that He has condemned over and over within His word. But that's just how blind people can get, when they give themselves over to sin. They lose all sense of reason, perspective. It's a dangerous thing when you begin to misinterpret the mercies of God, for tolerance, or acceptance of your evil. That's exactly what Israel has done. Misinterpreted God's mercy. But now the day of recompense, reward, has come. Where God is going to reward them for their evil.] *Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool,* [They have been saying to the people, "Peace, peace!". They have been comforting the people in their evil deeds. They have become liberal in their theology. They have preached a weak God that doesn't care, or will tolerate a syrupy loving God, who didn't hate evil. Thus the people were deceived, but, "the prophets were fools",] *and the spiritual man is crazy,* [They were being led in the path of destruction by their so called spiritual leaders.] *for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred. The watchman of Ephraim was with my God: but the prophet is a snare of a fowler* [Or a trap of the fowler.] *in all of his ways, and hatred in the house of his God (9:6-8).*

Then the Lord begins to give His indictment.

They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: [What happened in the days of Gibeah? Go back to Judges, chapter nineteen. You have this horrible story of a Levite who had been in Bethlehem, of Judah. He had been visiting his father-in-law. When he was wanting to go with his concubine and servant back to his home, the father-in-law kept saying, "Oh spend another night! Let's just drink tonight and all, and you can leave tomorrow". Did that night after night until one evening, the fellow says, "I've gotta go, I've just gotta go". "No, no! Wait some more!" "No, I've gotta go." So, he left and began to journey homeward, and as they were coming near the city of the Jebusites, which was Jerusalem, the servant said, "Well it's getting late. We better turn in here", and he said, "No, no. That's the city of the Gentiles. Let's journey on to either Ramah, or Gibeah, in the territory of the Benjamites". So they came to Gibeah, and they were there in the streets, because no one offered them hospitality and shelter. But an old man came in out of the fields. He had been working late, and he saw this man with his concubine, and his servant. He said, "Come and stay at my house! You can't spend the night here in the streets". The fellow said, "Well, I have food for the donkeys and I have food for ourselves. All we need is just a shelter". He said, "Hey I've got the food, don't worry about that. Come and spend the night at my house". And as the darkness came on, much like the city of Sodom, the men of the city came and began to beat upon the door. They said, "Send out the men that have come into your house, that we might know them!" Gay activists. That's exactly what they were, exactly what they were. Aggressive, demanding that these men be sent out, in order that they might rape them. The old man objected. "They are my guests. They've come under the hospitality of my roof. Don't do this!" So, instead they sent out his daughter, and the concubine, and the men forced the concubine all night long, until the day began to break. She crawled back to the door of the house, and there died. When he got up to go in the morning, he went out and saw her lying there. He says, "Get up, and let's go!" Boy, women you've come a long way. You think that you're being abused, but through Christianity, the place of the woman has been elevated just tremendously! There, they were just a, a chattel. She was dead! So he finally realized that, picked her up, and took her back to his house. The rest of the story is there, it's rather

gruesome. But, here the nation had was like Gibeon. Now, that is, the homosexuals had become activists, and they had begun to demonstrate. They've begun to demand rights. This was the final straw. God could not tolerate any longer, the evil of Israel.] *therefore* [God said] *he will remember their iniquity, and he will visit their sins. I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time:* [The nation had once been fruitful, once been a blessing.] *but they went to Baalpeor, and they separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved* (9:9-10).

No longer loving God. No longer serving God. No longer fruitful. No longer pleasant.

As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception. Though they bring up their children, yet I will bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them (9:11-12)!

Woe unto any people, when God has departed from that people. God will not force Himself upon you, upon a community. That's not God's nature. That's not God's desire. God doesn't want to force a relationship with you. God wants to develop a loving relationship with you. He wants you to love Him, and to serve Him out of a heart of love, and thus He doesn't come with heavy demands, forcing you to follow Him, forcing you to love Him, forcing you to serve Him. But, He gives you that freedom, in order that your relationship with Him, might be meaningful, a truly meaningful love. If you forsake Him, He won't force himself upon you. If you depart from Him, He often will just linger, continuing to work in your heart, in your life. But oh, beware of that day, when God departs from you!

Israel had come to that day. They had turned their backs on God. They had gone their own way. They were worshiping the other gods, and now finally, after entreaties, after the warnings, after pleadings, now God is gonna depart from them, and leave them to that horrible judgement that will come to them, when the Assyrians come in their cruelty, to destroy, and to scatter.

Ephraim [He said] *I saw as Tyrus, it was planted in a pleasant place:* [The northern area, it was beautiful. The tribe of Ephraim inhabited the beautiful mountains of Samaria, the beautiful valleys. Like the city of Tyrus, just planted in a beautiful place.] *but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer* (9:13).

The children are to be dashed in the streets, they're to be destroyed without compassion or mercy. War is such a horrible thing! It surely reveals the basest part of man's nature. The cruel atrocities committed during warfare! Shock, the sensitivities of a person. That a man can do to a fellow man, what is done during warfare, is unthinkable! Truly war does demonstrate the total depravity of man, and the need of redemption by God. Their children will be murdered by these Assyrians, brutally mutilated. The Assyrians would mutilate the bodies of, of their prisoners. They would cut off their ears, or cut off their noses, or cut out their tongues. They were brutal. They would pluck out their eyes. Brutal! God is so loving, God is so good, God is so kind. God wanted to do His work among them. They refused! So God said, "I will, I will forsake you, I, I will depart from you. I will leave you then to your own fate". The prophet cried...

Give them, O Lord: what will you give them? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. All of their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings and I will drive them out of my house, [The place of worship, Gilgal. "I'll drive them out!", God said.] *and I will love them no more: and all of their princes are revolvers* (9:14-15).

Oh, I'll tell you, they've gone too far. When God says, "I hate them. I love them no more". They've crossed the line!

Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb. [Their children are to be destroyed.] *My God will cast them away because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall become wanderers among the nations* (9:16-17).

Terrible fate, terrible judgement. The reason, they didn't listen to God. Oh God help us that we'll hearken to the Lord, and the voice of the Lord. That we'll hear the voice of the Lord. Jesus said over and over to the churches, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the church". But, hearken is a little stronger, it's not just hearing, it is then responding in obedience to it. Harkening to the voice of the Lord, means that there's a change of activity in my life. I am now responding to what God has said in a positive way. May God help us to respond to the warnings of the Spirit in these days, in which we live. As

our nation is moving in the same path, that Israel was moving. Away from God. "If my people", God said, "call by my name, will just humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and I will heal their nation".

It's time you, God's people, humble yourself and pray. What is it May 6th we're gonna have the day of prayer for the nation? Oh, I think that's sort of sad, isn't it? We ought to be praying every day for the nation, every day. But, May 6th is a special day, so we'll, we'll be here at the church praying for the nation on May 6th. But listen, any time you have some free time, you want to come in here and pray, do so. The place is open. Pray, pray for the nation, pray for revival. Pray for a renewed work of God's Spirit in the hearts of the people, that they will turn back to God. Because we're getting dangerously close to that place where God says, "I'm gonna depart from them".

Now, you're a child of God, He'll never depart from you, He'll never depart from you. You're His child. But yet, the consequences upon the nation will be severe. We're already seeing just chaos moving in, economically. We're in, we're in severe economic problems, with the national debt, with the jobless numbers of people. With a, well, these, these are like kids playing games, they don't know what to do with it. They're, they're searching for answers, but they don't really have any. They act like they're smart, but they're just as dumb as we are. With all of these announced programs, there was a 3.7 % decline in the last month, in the economy. So they say that the, the uh, oh what do they call it? The, uh renewal of the economy, or the rebirth or whatever they're talking about, they say it died. But, I'm so glad that I'm a child of God, and I don't trust in man's answers, or man's solutions, I'm trusting in God for my preservation, for my strength. God will not fail those who put their trust in Him.

Father, we thank You for the warnings that you give to us through Your Word, through history, as we can see the patterns that brought destruction, Lord, they are warnings to us. Beware, when we see those same patterns emerging in our nation. Lord the amazing thing is the failure of the people to call upon You. But only increasing their evil until they were destroyed. Help us Lord not to be caught up in the world, or the things of the world. May we not sow to emptiness, but may we sow to the Spirit. Lord, may we, Your people, get serious before you. Seeking Your face, seeking Lord the power of your Holy Spirit in our lives. And, seeking the moving of your Spirit across this nation. Oh Jesus work, work mightily. Deliver our media from the powers of darkness. Deliver our school system, and our government Lord from those that are determined to destroy the knowledge of You, from the land. Oh God, work mightily, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.