

Kings and Prophets 15-01-30b

Let's continue our study now in Hosea. I want to be sure and get all of these in. So we've seen in chapter 4 verse 16 that God charges the northern kingdom of Israel, Ephraim, with being a foolish animal, an animal that is more interested in its own freedom than it is in its own safety.

And this is pictured as a rebellious calf, and the Lord will let them forage. Notice people say, what is that guy, Kenny Loggins. I'm all right.

Don't worry about me. Why? Do you want to give me a fight? Why can't you just let me be? Well, that's the attitude. Just let me be.

We're doing fine. We like it here. Look, it's prosperous.

And so you have the stubborn calf, and the Lord will let them forage. This is release. This isn't encroachment.

This isn't God enforcing his will. This is God allowing free will to function. And it's a very strong illustration of the fact that God is not a Calvinist.

He's just not. If you insist after a time of God calling and pleading and exhorting and sending prophets and sending illustrations and miraculous interventions to cause you to return, he's just going to let go. Okay, fine.

If you insist, go. That's number one, 416. Flip down with me now.

We're going to have four of these in chapter seven. I hate to skip these other chapters, but we'll never get through. Just take a quick look at the beginning of chapter six.

Well, I can't go past. Let me at least give you something out of each chapter. Look in chapter five at verse 10.

The princes of Judah. This is an omnidirectional bomb here. It's going to burst and hit Judah as well.

The princes of Judah are like those who remove a landmark. I will pour out my wrath on them like water. There was a landmark down there that was established in the days of Jehoshaphat.

Remember? They taught the word of God. People from the north were coming down there. There was strong echoes of the faith of David down there.

But now the leadership is pulling up those landmarks. They're removing the signposts. They're taking away the directional guidance.

What happens when you remove a landmark? Well, nobody knows where the boundaries are. Nobody knows where the road goes. Nobody knows where one thing begins and another ends.

Your reference points. And what's happening in our culture today and in societies around the world? The old landmarks are being pulled up. What is right and what is wrong academically? What is right and what is wrong economically? What is right and what is wrong morally? Well, it's whatever we all agree to today.

And we might change it tomorrow. But a bunch of us will get together and the loudest, the most vocal, will decide what is right. And we'll just shout down anybody that disagrees.

And we'll inure them by repetition. We'll just keep haranguing and haranguing. We'll keep pushing and pushing.

I said several years ago, several years ago, that the way the homosexual agenda would be perpetrated in this country is by repetition. Back then, there was just one or two quote unquote gay characters on TV. You had kind of an old early one on PBS.

And then they came out with Will and Grace. And they said, we'll make them witty. We'll make them funny.

We'll make them ingratiating. And we'll just keep pushing and we'll keep pushing. And we'll make it the... And there's not like a cabal of people in a smoke-filled room saying, well, let's put it in the next episode of this.

But it is the collective thinking of people who are far from God and who have a false sense of what freedom is. And they say, well, I should be free to do what I want to do. And so over time, do you see anybody raising cane if there's something on television anymore? It's so ubiquitous.

It's everywhere. And on every channel and in almost every series, sooner or later, there's going to be some sort of religious episode where, oh, look, the mean bigoted prejudice people caused a problem and the enlightened tolerant accepting people have solved it. And so an entire generation has been brainwashed with this to the point that every state eventually is going to have same-sex marriage.

It's just a matter of time. They've been falling like dominoes. There used to be none.

Then there was one. Then there was three. Then there were seven.

Now it's 35, 37 states have same-sex marriage. I mean, they're just falling like dominoes. And it's just this repetition and this inuring.

Well, it's people in positions of leadership, people in positions of leverage. The princes of Judah have pulled up the landmarks. So people who aren't already familiar with the ground don't know where they are.

Now, if you're an old timer, you don't need a landmark, do you? I can find my driveway. Even if they take all the telephone poles down, I know where I live. I've been there too many times.

But when you pull up the landmarks, it's people who need that for guidance who get confused and get led astray, who are deceived. Pulling up a landmark is taking away the truth. Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment because he willingly walked by human precept, by his own precept.

Therefore, I will be to Ephraim like a moth and to the house of Judah like rottenness. There's going to be decay. There's going to be loss.

There's going to be slow, steady, in some cases, invisible destruction. When Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah saw his wound, Ephraim went to Assyria. Remember, we talked about them going to, they saw pica and resin.

So they went to Tiglath-Pileser and said, hey, let's surround these guys. I'll ally with you. And together, we can get rid of this threat.

Well, little do they know, Assyria is a much worse danger than pica and resin ever were. And so it's kind of out of the frying pan into the fire. They're running into the arms of the one that is, in a couple of decades, going to enslave them.

And they're running to him, offering themselves to him, thinking that this is a solution. He cannot cure you nor heal you of your wound. Verse 14, for I will be like a lion to Ephraim.

Remember, at first, he was a moth. Now he's a lion. Starts slow, and you start to notice the moth holes.

It's a little here, a little there. Now he's going to be a lion. How long does it take a lion to make a meal out of a wandering lamb or a stubborn calf? And like a young lion to the house of Judah, I, even I, will tear them and go away.

I will take them away and no one shall rescue. I will turn again to my place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek my face.

In their affliction, they will earnestly seek me. I don't know about you, but just in the abstract, wouldn't it be better to realize how important it is to live the truth and to reflect the truth before God than to have God become a lion and a young lion, disintegrate us, tear us to pieces, haul us away, and then in affliction, we recognize that truth. I would rather learn it by observing the unhappy example of others, wouldn't you? Well, that's why it's here.

This is our chance to get ahead of the curve, to learn this lesson without having to be afflicted. And from those to whom much is given, much is expected. We can say, oh, you know, I'm not anywhere near that.

We need to look and we need to check because God's standards are high. He's a perfect God. And we cannot be too diligent.

We cannot be too watchful and too prayerful. Watch and pray. Well, in chapter 6, here's the call,

the appeal.

Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn, but he will heal us. He has stricken, but he will bind up.

After two days, he will revive us. On the third day, he will raise us up. What's happening with Israel right now? For 2,000 years, they've been in the grave as a nation.

On the third day, he will raise them up. That's one of the reasons I think the second coming of the Lord Jesus to Israel is not far in the future because those big historic days, two of them have passed, and the third one is about to dawn. Now, if you want to measure them strictly, it could be another hundred years.

70 AD is when the nation went out, finally. So 2070 would be two days, and it may be that it'll be after all of us are gone to glory. But after two days, he will revive us.

On the third day, he will raise us up that we may live in his sight. And by the way, it has occurred to me that it isn't necessarily 70 AD that would be the start of a 2,000-year clock. When is it that David no longer has a man on the throne? That's the end of the nation.

It's not when the temple finally gets knocked down and all those Pharisees and Sadducees get run out of town. When did the effectively cease to exist? 586. There hasn't been a Davidic king on the throne since the last one got blinded and hauled off in chains, and that was 586.

So you come forward two days, and you're at 1586, and we are now in the midst of the third day. When did a day start in Israel? When did they start a day? Sundown. When was the Lord Jesus raised? Early in the morning on the third day, halfway through, right? So again, lots of different ways to parse it, but I choose to parse it in a way that is favorable to us.

Whether we wake or whether we sleep, we'll get there just as fast. In fact, if you're asleep, you get there first. So it's good either way.

But after two days, He'll revive us on the third day. He'll raise us up. Notice, as we've seen over and over again in prophecy, even in the midst of harbingers of judgment and declarations of impending discipline, there is always the opportunity to turn.

Turn ye in my reproof. Why will you die, O house of Israel? Just turn. It's never too late.

Look at Ahab. He had his life extended because he had a momentary turn. Even the most evil kings, if they had even the slightest suggestion of a turn, God would grant them grace, and it's not too late for the nation.

Well, verse 4 of chapter 6, O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud. It's like the morning mist. You've seen that.

I, going up to Claremore, wake up in the early morning, look out, and above the ponds and

over the dewy fields, you'll see this little mist rising. But as soon as the sun gets up a little bit, it just all burns off. And pilots have known this forever.

Well, like a morning cloud, and like the early dew, it goes away. That's your faithfulness. It's there, and then it's gone.

The first heat of the sun, and it just evaporates. Therefore, I have hewn them by the prophets. I have slain them by the words of my mouth.

Isn't this what we talked about? Isn't it what we have seen throughout 2 Kings especially? Your judgments are the light that goes forth, for I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. It's not your overt obedience. Are you living the truth? Are you a living example of God's truth or not? That's the question to ask if we're going to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith, not what do I say, what do I model, how do people perceive me, what's in my heart? Am I living the truth? Anybody can perceive you offering a sacrifice.

God says, I desire mercy. The inward man is what is evaluated and judged, and you can't game God. You can't fool him.

You can't cheat him. There is no deceit with God. But like men, they transgress the covenant.

They deal treacherously with me, treacherously, untruthfully, deceitfully, unfaithfully. Gilead is a city of evildoers, defiled with blood, band of robbers, lying in wait for a man, company of priests, murder on the way to Shechem. They commit lewdness.

I've seen horrible things in the house of Israel, harlotry of Ephraim. Israel is defiled. Also Judah, a harvest is appointed for you.

You are not far behind your sister in the north when I return the captives of my people. Well, this brings us to chapter 7, and we're going to have, as I said, four of these similes now in chapter 7, but you see the drift. We're pretty caught up on the flow here in Hosea's prophecy.

This is one continuous prophecy. Chapter 7, when I would have healed Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered, the wickedness of Samaria. They've committed fraud.

A thief comes in. A band of robbers takes spoil outside. They do not consider in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness.

Now their own deeds have surrounded them. This is like the calf that goes out on its own. It's their own deeds that are going to do them, and God will turn them over, Romans chapter 1, the last half.

I'll leave you alone, and your corruption and wickedness will destroy you all by itself. That's one part of the judgment, but the other part is the active. I will be a lion.

I will be a young lion. I will be the moth. There is both active and passive discipline.

I saw somebody try to argue. This was a guy on the web. One of my nephews-in-law was watching a guy on the web, and he said, watch this guy and tell me what you think, and I watched.

He did a really good job, but he said, you know, God never actively judges. God just withdraws and lets our evil judge us. That's half the truth.

God does do that, and you can see that documented here. I will leave you to yourself, and you will implode. You will fall apart.

You will train wreck yourself. I will turn you over to what you have chosen, and it will eat you, but there is active judgment from God as well, and it is the one-two punch of divine judgment. There is the consequences that are inherent in our evil behavior and our evil associations and the collective critical mass.

It's like a bad, dirty nuclear bomb. You keep assembling enough of that uranium in close enough proximity, it is going to achieve critical mass and go, but there is also the active foreordained judgment of God where He actively comes in and brings Assyria, the rod of mine anger and the staff of mine indignation. God is going to wield that rod of discipline.

He doesn't say, well, you are going to bump into the rod of my discipline if you go astray far enough. God swings it. God wields it.

God will scourge every son whom He receives. He doesn't say, well, if you are disobedient, I will just let the consequences teach you the hard way. No, He scourges, He skins alive with a whip every son whom He receives.

That's the way Bob used to always translate it, Bob Thieme. I skin alive with a whip every son. Well, that seems a little extreme.

You don't skin your children alive, but you discipline them with the rod. Every son whom you receive, it's to their benefit, but it is active. It's not leaving them to the consequences.

Well, we're getting close to our second simile here. They don't consider in their hearts, verse 2, that I remember their wickedness, their own deeds surround them, they're before my face, they make a king glad with their wickedness and princes with their lies. The government is in collusion.

The government loves their corrupt nature and they exploit them through it, just like governments have always done and current governments are doing today. We will collude. The leadership know how to exploit these people who lack integrity.

Now, look at verse 4. They are all adulterers. That's not what it says. I could give you a fancy explanation in Hebrew, but there's been a confusion of letters here.

It's even better. They are all bakers. That's what it says.

They are bakers. They are all bakers. Like an oven heated by a baker, he ceases stirring after kneading the dough until it is leavened.

Well, let me give you a little bit more literal translation here. They are all bakers. And what he's going to do is turn this baking analogy around in different ways and compare different parts of the baking process.

He'll say, you're the baker, you're the oven, you're the bread. He says, this baking thing, I see you in each different phase of it. So he says, they are all like bakers.

And just real quickly, the word for adulterers has to do, it actually comes from the word that means to bake. It's afah in Hebrew. But by pointing this wrong, they ended up, it's a long story.

There's a confusion of noon and wow. Remember, a noon looks like a bracket, a square bracket. And wow is just the top part of the bracket and the little bottom leg is off.

That's the only difference. And they're easily confused. Because of that and a couple of other problems, they said adulterers, but it's bakers.

No question, it's bakers. So they're all like bakers. They are like a smoldering oven.

They're like a baker who does not stoke the fire until the kneaded dough is ready for baking. A baker keeps his oven smoldering all the time. And he doesn't have to start the fire from scratch.

There's already coals. This is what you do in the wintertime when you live in the country and you heat your house with firewood. You don't want to lose your coals and have to start from scratch.

You bank the fire. You keep the coals there so that you can start a fresh fire anytime you need to. And back before matches and butane lighters and all the rest of it, you needed those coals.

And so this is what he's saying. In the ancient world, they never let the fire go out. It'll go down and smolder and they'll bank it until they get the dough ready.

They don't want to burn a bunch of wood for no good purpose and keep a blazing fire going so it's smoldering. You're like bakers. You keep the fire.

It's not stoked until you're ready to bake. But the king and his princes get together and they get drunk on wine and they're hilarious and they're all partying and they conspire with evildoers and they say, this is how we can maintain and enhance our power. This is how we can keep on ruling into the future.

We'll fool the people. We'll hoodwink them. We'll hornswoggle them.

We'll pull the wool over their eyes. And they're all in a great state of hilarity. They conspire with

evildoers and it's verse six.

They approach him. They greet him. They embrace him all the while they're plotting against him.

They make friendly. They say, oh yes, we care about the little man. We care about the businessman.

We care about the average taxpayer. Here's Fred sitting in the stands here while I make my state of the union address. And he's just the average guy.

And look at the problems he has. I'm a friend to this category of people all the while plotting against him. We will get him to pay for everybody's free benefits.

They make nice to his face all the while they're plotting to rob him. Their hearts are like the oven. Remember the oven in the previous, uh, up in verse four, the oven has a fire going.

You just can't see the fire because it hasn't been stoked, but that fire has not gone out. It's under that layer of ashes. They, they just don't let the fire become obvious until they're ready to bake.

So they're kneading the dough. These people are like a baker and they've got two things. They're, they're needing the dough.

They're setting up what they're going to do. And you end up as people say, well, there's no fire, nothing to worry about. Well, when, when they've got the dough ready and they're ready to spring the trap, so to speak, now they throw wood on the coals and suddenly this fire springs up out of nowhere and you're cooked.

That's, that's the analogy. They're like bakers. They do this.

The fire, they know the fire is there, but they don't let on. And they're just needing this dough. They look innocent.

Looks like all is going to be well. Their hearts are like an oven. Their anger smolders all night long during the time the fire is baked.

Nobody bakes bread in the middle of the night. In the ancient world, they do now. Donut guys get up at, you know, three in the morning, bake all the donuts, but not back then.

He didn't work in the dark. So their anger smolders all night long, but in the morning it bursts into a flaming fire. As soon as it's light enough to bake, the fire just springs up out of nowhere.

All of them are blazing like an oven. Verse seven, they devour their rulers. All of their Kings fall and none of them call on me.

None of them calls upon me. The end of verse seven, it's all infighting. Remember the series of

assassinations, Menachem and Pekahia and Pekah and all these other guys, they get together, they drink wine.

They're all hail fellow well met. And all the while they're plotting against him. Then that guy's killed.

The next guy sits on the throne and the Kings represent what's going on in the population. Deceit lies. None of them call on me.

So that is the simile. They are like a baker. They are like an oven.

If you look down at verse eight, Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples. Ephraim is a cake unturned. What happens when you don't turn the thing you're cooking? It gets burned on one side, right? It's not cared for.

It isn't brought to its normal fruition. It's a cake left unattended and it's supposed to be turned. That when they bake this flat bread in the ancient world, you bake one side, you flip it over and you bake the other side.

If you've ever seen matzah bread that they still use today for their unleavened bread and stuff, you'll see that there's a brown, it's browned on both sides. It looks like a big cracker, like a big saltine cracker without the salt. I had my first taste of that in kindergarten.

They taught us the dreidel song and had us eat matzah, had us eat the unleavened bread. I didn't even know there was such a thing as Jewish people until kindergarten. And then I didn't make the association that people's last names would tell you a lot of times if they were Jewish until like 20 years later.

It's embarrassing. But anyway, that bread looked like a big cracker. It's browned on both sides.

Well, he says, you're a cake unturned. So you're raw and undone on one side and you're burnt on the other. Neither side is fit for use.

You're ruined. It's fit for nothing. And so that is the second simile.

You're a half-baked cake. You're half-baked. Aliens have devoured his strength, but he does not know it.

Yet gray hairs are here and there on him, yet he does not know it. And these are sort of the gray hairs of, these can be disease. Remember in the Levitical law it said if there's a white hair or a gray hair coming out, it's unclean.

So like a ruined cake of bread scorched on one side, foreigners consume his labor. He doesn't recognize it. His head is filled with gray hair.

He does not realize it. The arrogance of Israel testifies against him, verse 10. The pride is the

conviction.

Yet they refuse to return to the Lord their God. In spite of all this, they refuse to seek him. Now look at verse 11, and this is what we'll have to wrap up with tonight.

I had a feeling I wasn't going to get through all the similes. Ephraim has been like a dove, easily deceived and lacking discernment. Anybody want to guess what the Hebrew word is here for dove? Yonah.

Yonah. Not just any dove though. This is a Japeth dove.

Japeth. It's the same as the word, it's the root of Noah's son's name, Japeth. And it means, in its root meaning, to enlarge, to open up.

But what it came to mean, and that's still what it means in sort of the literal sense, and it could be just a blessing to have Japeth happen to you, is to be enlarged, to have your vistas open up. But what it came to mean in the intangible realm, in the realm of ideas, is to be seduced. You open up a possibility, you entice, you suggest that there's an opening here for convocation, for consummation, for that.

When you look at this in Hebrew and you find this, they say like a silly dove, I think, and it's not silly, like a seduced dove. And this word is used all over the place in Scripture for enticement and seduction. Just some quick examples.

At the beginning in Genesis 9.27, May God enlarge Japeth. And it's a pun, it's a play on his name. May God, Yapheth Elohim la Yapheth.

May God Japeth, Japeth. May God enlarge him, bless him with lots of territory. But when you get to Exodus 22.16, if a man Japeth's a virgin, if a man Japeth's a maid, if he seduces her, entices her.

Deuteronomy 11.16, beware that your hearts are not Japeth, that your hearts are not deceived. Deuteronomy 11.16, you've got to watch out that you are not seduced. And the verb is Japeth.

In Judges 14.15, in the story of Samson, came to pass on the seventh day, they said to the wife of Samson, entice your husband that he may tell us the riddle. Seduce him, do whatever you have to do to get him to tell us the answer from the eater came forth something sweet. Remember that, the riddle? Seduce your husband into giving the answer to you so you can give it to us so that he loses the bet.

Japeth your husband. And over and over again, you can do a concordance study in your Strong's Concordance even, this is Strong's number 6601. You'll get all, entice, seduce, entice, seduce.

It doesn't mean silly anywhere except here for some reason. What has happened to this dove? It is seduced, it is drawn by an opportunity for enlargement, for advancement, for blessing like

Japheth received. Ephraim is like a seduced dove and it says without sense, that's lev, without heart.

If you're without heart, you're heartless. There's no genuine ability for attachment. You can be seduced but you can never be one.

You're going to be going from one lover to another, seduce, seduce, seduce, but you have no heart to actually fall in love and have loyalty and fidelity and a genuine relationship. They've rejected their God and all they're left with is one night stand after one night stand after one night stand. That's the picture.

You're the dove that cannot make a meaningful attachment. You're seduced. You're seduced by Egypt.

You're seduced by Assyria and they're calling to Egypt, Hey, good looking. How's about spending some time with me? Wherever they go, I will spread my net on them and they're pictured as a flock of birds. The all Israel, it goes from one dove to a nation of doves and he says wherever they try to fly, if they fly to Egypt, if they fly to Assyria, I'm just going to throw a net.

I'll catch them all with one net because they're dumb birds and they're easily fooled. I will bring them down like birds to the air. I will chastise them according to what their congregation has heard, what they have listened to.

They didn't hear the prophets. What did they hear? Lies, seduction. They were fed a line, pickup lines and what they heard, that's what's going to bring them down literally.

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

It is a serious thing to misrepresent God, to misrepresent the truth of God, to twist and distort what scripture actually says on issues having to do with who can serve, who can marry whom and so on. What is legitimate and what is not legitimate in the areas of morality. You've never seen the Bible contorted, twisted, chopped up, diced and sliced and reassembled like a chicken McNugget like today.

There's never been a time when it has been so abused as it is today. God magnifies his word above his name and when you see what is going on with his word, he is not going to take that sitting up in heaven thinking about something else. Judgment is coming.

I can tell you confidently from the word of God that nations that permit this and encourage it and people within that nation that are like these doves easily seduced to the sound of that call are going to be trapped with God's net. This is not passive. They are going to fall from hunger and thirst and their own flightiness is going to do them in.

This is an active net cast by God. This is active judgment. God is going to move, he is going to ordain, he is going to enact judgment on those who choose deceit and flee from him and that's exactly what is happening today.

And it is easy to be sucked into this. It's easy to be tainted by it, to be infected with it, to have some small part of it, the leaven to get into the house. We've got to look through our house and find this leaven and cast it out or we will share in the judgment.

We won't be ready when the Lord Jesus returns. Remember what Jesus said, when the Son of Man returns is he going to find any faith on the earth? We want to be those who are ready, who are alert, who are watchful, who have learned the object lesson from these scriptures written for our instruction and because of this we are ready. We have been proactive in separating ourselves from this and there are so many different areas where it seeps and it creeps, it's insidious, it invades, it surreptitiously enters, it's in the back room when you've left something unlocked and we've got to search and we've got to find it and we've got to purge it out.

God is serious about this. I cannot emphasize enough and we will see this Sunday morning. If you want to read and be prepared, look at Acts 5, the story of Ananias and Sapphira, that will be our study, both sessions Sunday morning.

God is serious about truth, he is serious about deceit and it is clear here, it is clear in Ephesians, it is clear in the study we'll see in Acts 5. We'll close here tonight in a word of will, see each other Sunday. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the powerful ways that you communicate your will, your purpose, your grace, your mercy and your faithfulness, your willingness to put up with us long after any of us would have run out of patience.

But you do have a final call, you do have this far and no farther as a part of your character and we are grateful for the warnings that we receive. We're grateful for your Holy Spirit and the truth of your word that is able to convict us and able to illuminate our souls, to cut us open with a sharp sword and expose the thoughts and intents of our hearts. We pray that as we seek to have our hidden faults exposed and removed, that these truths will be a part of that process, that it will be hastened, that it will be quick, that we can maximize the potential and the opportunities that you've given to us in the time that remains to us in this life so that we can live in a way that reflects your glory and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray this in his name. Amen.