Kings and Prophets 15-01-23b

Let's continue our study now. We're in Kings and Prophets. We're in the days of Jeroboam II, circa 750 BC.

It is the final opportunity for the northern kingdom to turn. God has dealt with them in miraculous ways through men of God, including, but not limited to, Elijah and Elisha, and then most recently, Jonah. And the second writing prophet that we now direct our attention toward is also in this same explicit time.

Not all of the prophets are easily dated. This is particularly difficult, for example, with the prophet Joel. He has been dated all over the map, anywhere from the 8th century BC all the way down to past the days of the Maccabees.

And there are no real firm chronological references or details in his prophecy that help us to narrow him down. But it is not the case with Jonah. We have a specific reference to him in the days of Jeroboam.

And the next prophet we look at is Hosea. Hosea, if you will. And if you turn there, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea.

And you'll see immediately why I am so confident that we have the right prophet at the right time. The word of the Lord that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel. Well, that nails it down pretty nicely.

Now, Hosea is a prophet to the northern kingdom, as most of them are. We really only have one prophet who directs his prophecy to Judah. The rest of them almost exclusively talk about the northern kingdom.

Why? They need it. But let me pose a question to you, a bit of a puzzle. If Hosea is going to prophesy to the northern kingdom, why does verse one read as it does? How does he position himself historically? In the days of whom? Uzziah and following.

Why? Why would you guess? What sort of dynasty is there in the north? What connection do they have, let's say, to the man after God's own heart? None. So, a prophet of God recognizing the legitimate way to measure historical circumstance is going to be looking at which throne? The throne of David. Even though he is a prophet in the north, he acknowledges very overtly and explicitly here that as far as God is concerned, the legitimate throne is in Jerusalem, co-located with God's own earthly presence on Mount Zion.

A second reason for this is, and this is partly Jewish tradition, there is some evidence to indicate that Hosea, having delivered his prophecy, and of course it several decades, if you look at these kings and their reigns, with the demise of the northern kingdom, it appears that Hosea retired

in Judah and may have actually published his prophecy down there. If it pertains, we'll get into that a little bit later. But the main thing is, there is an acknowledgment here that God is honoring his promise to David.

You will not lack a man. You will not lack a man to sit on the throne. And even if the man is not actively sitting on the throne, you will not lack the man.

You remember baby Joash, Athaliah occupied the governmental seat of authority for some years, but there was a lineal Davidic descendant in the wings and he was present. So he didn't say there will always be one of your guys sitting on the throne. He said, you won't lack a man who can sit on the throne.

Well, so this is the book of Jonah, which is simultaneous with this. It is co-chronological. It's at the same time.

And the perspective in the book of Jonah is Israel versus the Gentile nations and the responsibility for witness, to be a light to the Gentiles, right? This is a horizontal view. What is your responsibility? What is your opportunity? What is your mission? What is your purpose? Oh, Israel, God, having raised you up and brought you forth from the loins of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who are you and why are you here? You are a living testimony to the grace and the faithfulness of God. And that light should shine beyond you to the world.

You could sum this up in the Lord Jesus words in Matthew chapter five, verse 16, Matthew five, 16. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven. They look at you, they glorify the father.

Isn't this sort of the pattern in Nineveh? They look at Jonah and perhaps God will relent, they say, right? That's the idea. Looking horizontally at Jonah motivates them to look vertically toward God. Horizontal view.

They look at Israel. Israel doesn't have any business sitting on a hill, plant or no, watching for the destruction of the rest of humanity. Jonah should have still been down there as a witness, but he withdraws.

He's angry. He's unhappy with, he didn't want to do it in the first place. Well, now that we come to Hosea, same situation, it's the same Israel in the same historical context.

However, we're going to get a different perspective. Those of you that remember or went through or have heard at some point, our study in the book of Revelation, one of the biggest insights into understanding the book of Revelation is realizing that it's not sequential. It overlaps the seals and in the great earthquake, the trumpets and in the great earthquake.

Then you rewind and it's the vials, the bowls, which end in the great earthquake, not a great earthquake, the great earthquake. And what we discovered in studying that in detail is that these are the same events viewed from three different perspectives. Seals are made of clay.

They are of the earth. And the perspective, as you look at the details of what is described in the opening of the seals is from the human perspective. This is what happens to the earth.

The trumpets, trumpets blow in the air. This is above the earth, but below heaven. And this is the angelic perspective.

And you have a lot of angelic activity going on. The angels blow the trumpets. Who breaks the seals? Who breaks the seals? It's the lamb.

It's the God man who partook of human flesh, dust thou art, right? The Lord Jesus breaks the seals. He is worthy because he is the lamb that was slain. And as the lamb, he is one of us, the earth.

So he breaks the seals. Does Jesus blow the trumpets? Why not? Trumpets exist in the realm of the angels. The angels blow the trumpets.

And these are the angels charged with superintending and executing God's will on the earth. They are a certain class of angels. Then great earthquake.

You rewind and you have, of course, the earthquakes, which are hidden because as with God's perfections, you know, four faces on the cherubs, but you can only see three at any one time. If you look at a head that's got a face at every 90 degrees, you can never see more than three at a time, can you? You just can't. It's geometrically impossible.

Well, the thunders we don't get in John isn't allowed to write that down. That's the hidden face, but then we have the bowls and the bowls are God's perspective and God's highest angels are charged with pouring out those vials. And that's God's perspective on things.

Three different perspectives, seals, trumpets, and bowls. I would suggest, I would submit, I would offer you the thought that in the book of Jonah, in the days of Jeroboam, you have the horizontal perspective. Oh, Israel, why are you looking at the Gentile nations with such anger and with such reserve and completely ignoring your mission? You want to go the other direction.

You do just a little bit and then you depart for your own purposes, for your own comforts, not talking about their sins. Jonah doesn't go off and sin. It's talking specifically.

It's just one aspect. It's one picture. God says, look, I've got other prophets talking to you about your idolatry, about your departing, about your repeating the days of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.

I've already given you that message. I want you to remember who you are and why you are here. This is a message that transcends their disobedience and goes to their attitude toward their primary mission and function, which is to be a light to the Gentiles.

God's mercy is wider and broader than just Israel. It looks forward to the millennial kingdom

when the blessing of the son of David sitting on the throne is going to extend to the whole earth, right? The whole earth will bring tribute. The whole earth will glorify the Lord.

Well, this is nascent. It's incipient. It is potential.

It is a hope and a prophetic expectation in the days, and it could have been fulfilled if they had gotten with the program. But instead they pull a Jonah and they're self-centered and they're self-interested and they're angry at the nations. They don't look at them as those who can potentially come to God and worship God with their flocks and their herds.

They want to step back and watch God wipe them out. And if God is merciful, that just makes Jonah angry. And Israel isn't interested in its primary mission, completely lost sight.

Well, that's horizontal interaction with those on the same earth. Hosea, very closely related to Yeshua. The Yeshua part of that is the same root that you get Joshua, Yeshua, Hoshea, Hoshua.

So this is going to look at it, I would suggest to you, from the vertical. This is going to be God's perspective, the relationship between God and Israel. Jonah, the nations, and Israel.

Hosea, God, and Israel. Let's see if this pans out, if it holds true. We're going to scan here real quickly the word of the Lord that came to Hosea the son of Beri.

When the Lord began to speak by Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, go take yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry. For the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the Lord. So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

The Lord said to him, call his name Jezreel. For a little while, I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu. You remember the story of Jehu and all of those things that took place in Jezreel? I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu and bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.

If you remember your chart, who is the last guy in the line of Jehu? You know, we've had a series of short dynasties that get wiped out and some other guy takes over. Who's the last of the line of Jehu? You remember? Starts with J and ends with the second. Jeroboam II.

Jeroboam II, last of the line of Jehu. He's going to come down. Well, you know, it's been a few weeks.

But yeah, that's why God says I'm going to avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu. Remember what he talked about the house of Omri? I will avenge the bloodshed. Dogs are going to lick the blood and so on.

I will bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. It shall come to pass in that day, I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. She conceived again and bore a daughter.

God said, call her name Lo-Ruhamah, which means no mercy. Raham is the Hebrew word for mercy. Lo-Ruhamah, no mercy.

God has been merciful. He was merciful to Israel. He's potentially merciful to the nations.

He was merciful to Nineveh. He was merciful to Jonah with the plant. But the days of mercy are going to end.

No mercy. I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel. No more patience.

No more putting up with generation after generation of them that hate. I will utterly take them away. Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah.

I will save them by the Lord, their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword or battle, by horses or horsemen. When she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a second son. We've got son, daughter, son.

Call his name Lo-Ami. Am means people. The E on the end means my.

Lo means not. Not the people of mine. Not my people.

Lo-Ami. You are not my people, and I will not be your God. Notice God is in italics.

You are not my people, and I am not yours. You're not mine. I'm not yours.

This is pretty strong stuff from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God of Mount Sinai. The God of the covenant.

The God who has sent prophet after prophet after prophet to the northern kingdom. Sign after sign. Miracle after miracle.

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, You are not my people. There it shall be said to them, You are the sons of the living God.

And at the same time that he's pronouncing judgment, he says this is not a permanent judgment. This is the worst judgment yet, and it looks like death, but it's not. You're going to be gone.

Not my people. No mercy. But you're coming back.

It seems contradictory. So much so, it's fun to read the history of interpretation of this book because they said, well, this can't be the same thing. Somebody has chopped this up.

Two different hands, two different authors. Somebody's interleaved this. They thought it was too harsh, so they had to put some stuff in.

No. And if you look at the style of the Hebrew, this is all of a piece. It's the Lord God confronting the people with his divine prerogatives.

He breaks and he heals. He woundeth and he maketh whole, it says over in Job. He can slay and he can raise up.

And when he slays, you're dead. Look at the Lord Jesus. He was in the heart of the earth for three days, just as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days.

Nobody comes back from that. And yet Jonah does. Nobody comes back from that.

And yet the Lord Jesus does. Nobody comes back from 2600 years of not being a nation to becoming a nation except when God does it. And that's exactly what's going to happen to the nation of Israel.

What you see over there now is not the nation that God is going to have Ezekiel prophesy to, and breath is going to enter the bones and the flesh, and they will stand on their feet. That's yet future. But notice now, this isn't talking about interaction.

This is God. And he says, he's, he's, Hosea is going to, is going to symbolize or represent metaphorically in this picture, the Lord God himself. And he says, go take yourself a wife of harlotry.

What this means is she has already been and is promiscuous before Isaiah marries her now this has has caused many interpreters down through the centuries to just vibrate they can't believe that God would instruct a prophet to marry an impure woman and so they found all kinds of gymnastic ways to make this not say what it says it says what it says and you think when you think well how and why would God do that well it's for the purpose of this prophecy why would he tell prophets to lay on their side and walk around in a loincloth and bury things and chop off pieces of their beard and burn it and attack it with swords all these other strange things it is a sign and he said well but that's that's against the law of Moses he's look God wrote the law never when they were walking through the field Jesus says I'm Lord of the harvest I think I can tell my disciples when they can pull grain off and when they can't you know man wasn't made for the law the law was made for man and if I'm the son of man and I say it's okay it's okay and for purposes of instruction God tells Hosea go marry this impure woman and do you not think that this would have been equally shocking to the people of the day of course it was do you think people talked of course they did it was the talk of everybody who were it spread as fast as the word of repentance did through Nineveh when Hosea did this are you kidding me you're the man of God and you're we know this woman they look at her she's a they don't know if she was a just promiscuous or she was actually a prostitute a woman for hire but she was notoriously well known for this and God told Hosea you go marry her why it is a reminder to Israel that they weren't selected by God to be his chosen people because of their merits they were as depraved and evil as any other people on the earth it isn't their personal value they weren't well you know Abraham he's just a special guy his descendants will just be inherently

superior there's just a little light of divine spark in them that isn't in the rest of the nation's no when God selected them for his own and said I Satan you can have the whole rest of the world you can have all the other people you can have all the other prostitutes I'm gonna pick this prostitute and she's gonna be mine no qualitative difference it is God's demonstration of his grace and of what he will do with those who respond when he selects Israel so he took Gomer we don't know what Gomer means that it's been speculation nobody knows what the word means nobody's real sure what dibble a means it is dibble aim a town or a man because it says dibble aim this is a common suffix on town names so this may be where she's from and not who her father was typically when a woman went into some sort of promiscuous lifestyle nobody would claim her and nobody's gonna say oh yeah that's my daughter so this is kind of what they think about Mary of Magdala you know the Magdalene from the town not here's her lineage on the assumption that she was some sort of a fallen woman which is probably not the case in fact I'm pretty sure it's not the case anyway same thing here daughter of dibble aim this is probably a town although they can't find the town either there's lots of little towns that came and went she conceived and born a son so what good is going to come of this call his name Jezreel call her name lo Ruhamah call the third child the second son lo Ami you're not my people I will not be your God yet there is this future promise and it just stands in such stark contrast Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together and appoint for themselves one head they shall come up out of the land great will be the day of Jezreel what's another name for the valley of Jezreel harm a ghetto the valley of Jezreel is right below our mountain of Megiddo and this is prophetic this looks all the way forward to the Millennial Kingdom now in chapter 2 there is a sermon which we're going to skip for the moment we're not skipping it we're laying it aside for the moment so I guess we're skipping it but not not not permanently we're laying it aside we'll come back to it go to chapter 3 the Lord said to me go again love a woman who is loved by a lover a paramour after the marriage she has been unfaithful and she is an adulteress you can't commit adultery unless you're married she is an adulteress she was fornicating and being promiscuous before she married Hosea that's the reason she was chosen because she's a picture of Israel in the unregenerate state in the undivinely sanctified state and she has gone back to what she was before her relationship with Hosea made sort of an honest woman of her and having children and and having the family you would think that this would bind her to her husband and her fulfillment no she goes back like the dog returning to his vomit like the sow returning to the wallow she goes back to what she did and what she was before her marriage this again is a picture specifically of the Northern Kingdom now you can only imagine the wrenching nature of this to Hosea but he is a faithful man of God his momentary light afflictions have been more than compensated by God in the kingdoms that are to come but this is a rough this is a rough time for Hosea how could you not be torn up by this right how do you think God feels toward his people when they do the same thing God is letting us know here he's not some sort of majestic omnipotent automaton incapable of feelings we're made in his image we have feelings and people tend to so theologize God that he's just a series of rules going into effect justice here mercy here it's all you know sort of mechanical God uses Hosea to picture himself there's nobody who reads a story that can't just grieve for Hosea why did he have to get entangled with this in the first place and it's gone from

bad to worse she's returned to her former ways and she's actively taking up with somebody outside the marriage she's got a paramour the Lord says go again and retrieve her not only has she's has she done this but apparently she has done something that is that has has put her in a kind of bondage that she has to be purchased out of did she take all the family money and spend it and she's in debt and the only way for her to to pay it off is to be indentured or worse is she actually become a slave has she been enslaved by her paramour who is abusing her we're not sure what this is but God says go again love a woman who is loved by a lover and committing adultery just like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel who took to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans the the dainties the little momentary pleasures how long does a raisin cake last this is not a substantial feast this isn't a meal it's a twinkie the twinkies of the Canaanites here the twinkies of the pagans so I bought her for myself for 15 shekels of silver and one and a half homers of barley this is a pretty big price this is a lot of money it probably cleans Hosea out it's not like as a man of God you know don't think about today with golden bathtub faucets and fancy cars and TV programs back then being a man of God wasn't a lucrative profession I don't know how and where he scrapes this money up but he manages and he can't do it all in cash he's got to do some of it in grain maybe he had to go glean the corners of a field to get this get enough barley you know barley is the poor man's green this is not wheat this is what he could glean out of the corners of the field apparently he put in every shekel he had and then he had to go work for the rest of it to buy her back it is as much as he can pay he probably doesn't have anything left and I said to her you shall stay with me many days you shall not play the harlot nor shall you have a man so too will I be toward you I'm bringing you back but we there's going to be no marital relation no cohabitation here you're going to be celibate and so am I I am bringing you back but our relationship is different we're not going to have any more children as we did in the past for the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince without sacrifice or sacred pillar without ephod or teraphim guess what this is this is a prophecy delivered in the days of Jeroboam when everybody says are you kidding what are you talking about Hosea look we've expanded the borders unemployment is down the economy is recovering it's strong the crisis is over so to speak yeah right 30 years and the nation does no does not exist nothing left well we're out of time for tonight but please understand these prophecies are important they speak to us and in in broad strokes you know the story of Jonah you probably recognize if you don't remember all of the specifics this particular personal aspect of Hosea's ministry God told him to go marry this fallen woman she produces three children and then she goes back to her fallen ways and he is instructed by the Lord to go by her back it is a picture of the Lord Jesus who re-initiates a relationship with Israel by redeeming Israel but the relationship after that is different what's the Lord Jesus came and died on the cross to save his people from their sins remember the prophecy that shall call his name Yeshua for he will save his people from their sins who are his people how would anybody understand that it's Israel it's Abraham Isaac and Jacob's descendants that he is saving but look at the difference in relationship after the cross it's not back to business go back to the land here's your inheritance instead no no intimate relationship for a space and it's detailed here they say there's no prophecy of the church age in the Old Testament I'm not so sure about that this can be in the immediate future looking at the

destruction of the northern kingdom but as with Joel and many other prophecies there is a longer view here as well God can hardly speak without being multi-dimensional he's he can't reduce himself to two dimensions when he speaks it's near and it's far it's close and it's distant I see him but not near a scepter shall arise smite the brow of Moab you know there's just so much going on anytime God speaks and yes there is a near-term fulfillment that there will not be a throne for a time but then it's coming back but in the larger sense when the Lord Jesus comes and buys his people Israel but there is a sterility of the relationship for an extended period that is but isn't it fascinating this is what's going on in Hosea it's God and his people right Hosea Yeshua there's just a tremendous reflection but think about it in broad strokes what is the meaning for you and me all of these things are written for our instruction as we examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith we have a two-fold perspective it's like the cross there is the vertical where do I stand with the Lord God am I being faithful am I being obedient or am I returning to my old ways am I engaging in the momentary raisin cakes of this world or am I remembering who I am and why I'm here the relationship I have with the Lord God which reflects itself in the horizontal I should be a an example to be looked at so that men will see the father and glorify him see the Lord Jesus and glorify him in me I am here for a reason and my ambassadorship is largely through observation Jonah says practically nothing it's seeing him and hearing that little bit God has already plowed the ground he's already given these people a sense of impending danger and doom God plowed the ground God prepared the way for the Ninevites to repent why do you think they snapped so quickly into sackcloth and ashes as soon as they heard the words of Jonah they were ready God did the work and it just takes that little tipping point that little morsel of truth and there is this massive repentance God does it God picked the time God picked the place God picked the means God even worked Jonah's disobedience into the equation because he knows all things it's the same with us we don't have to be perfect but we do need to be aware of our relationship with God in the vertical this is what we're going to see throughout the book of Hosea it'll take us a couple of Fridays to survey it because it's a longer book and notice by the way the relative length of Jonah responsibility in the horizontal it's a pretty simple picture and responsibility in the vertical how many chapters are there in Hosea it's more than three times as long as Jonah so where is the primary responsibility for us if we get the vertical squared away the horizontal will largely take care of itself think about where Jonah would have been and what he could have done if he had been right with the Lord before he started his mission so this is this is the big idea when you think about the days of Jeroboam God gives the northern kingdom full of idolaters and selfish self-interested right for judgment people he gives them unwarranted grace he causes the plant to grow over their angry heads their self-centered self-interested heads as a last opportunity to stop and think why this why now maybe I had a look to the rock from which I was hewn and the pit from which I was digged maybe I had to go back to the source of my salvation and my strength my life and the very reason I exist maybe I ought to go back and revisit that and when they do not 30 years later 721 BC they are no more that last exhibit of grace doesn't provoke a response and as in the days of the ark as in the days of every one of God's judgments there is grace before judgment no response to the grace judgment inevitably follows from the justice of God something to contemplate we'll pick up our study of the book of Hosea fascinating studies

so much in this book we're going to really be excited to see as we go forward but let's close in a word of prayer father thank you for your word and your grace toward us the long-suffering and the patience that you have with us the manifold beautiful ways that you deal with us and communicate with us and bless us with the presence of your spirit the power of your word we pray that these things will draw us closer to you through the Lord Jesus Christ so that we can represent him and ultimately you on this earth in the time that remains to us that the light of your glory will shine in us and be reflected through us to draw others to you and to remind us of the privilege we have in this life and the opportunities we look forward to in the next we pray these things in Jesus name