

12106U

A STUDY OF THE PROPHECY OF HOSEA - 1968

THE DOOR OF HOPE

Speaker: Bro. Maurie Stewart

Study #4: Watchman, what of the night?

Reading: Hosea 8&9

Brother chairman, my dear brethren and sisters and young people.

As we progress through this wonderful prophecy of Hosea, we're coming closer and closer to that fatal day, when Shalmaneser king of Assyria would come down upon the mountains of Israel, and how appropriate the title, 'Watchman, what of the night?' and especially so, b&s, as we come within sight of the second coming of Christ to the earth, to do an exact reenactment of this prophecy of Hosea in our lives. So more and more of the exhortation of Romans 15 verse 4 which we've emphasized from the very beginning, should come trembling before us tonight, 'that these things were written aforetime for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope'. We emphasized the other night, b&s, that the study of the scriptures of truth will do us no good, unless we can take it up and place it in our own lives and make it a driving force, so that it helps us to mould ourselves in preparation for the second coming of Christ.

CHAPTER 8

This was the thing that Israel failed to do, and as we come to chapter 8 verse 1, we read those words, 'Set the **trumpet** to thy mouth'. Now we know, don't we? very well, that the trumpet is an instrument of **war**, it indicates the gravity of Israel's situation; we read in the 33rd chapter of Ezekiel and verse 6, and b&s, these are words that are very applicable to the state in which we live today, 'but if the watchman see the sword come, and he blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned, if the sword come and take any person from among them, he will be taken away in his iniquity but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand'. Now these words of exhortation are applicable to us today, this is the gravity of that last command which our Lord gave when He said, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned'. This is the gravity of the meaning of the cherubim, 'one in whom God dwells; one in whom God rides' and His purpose, b&s, is to keep the way of the tree of life! To keep the torch burning in the sight of darkness, when darkness is covering the earth and

gross darkness the people'; the alarm must be sounded Hosea says, the danger is imminent, the danger was the coming of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; our danger, b&s, is the close of Gentile times. We read that 'he shall come like an eagle against the house of the LORD', now there's little doubt in our minds, that this reference is speaking of the invasion by Shalmaneser. That figure of the eagle speaks of his rapidity, which speaks of his strength, it speaks of his ability to destroy, and he's represented here as hovering over the house of God, just as an eagle does over the prey on which he is about to pounce. Remember, b&s, the eagle preys on corruption, it preys on impurities, and that's exactly the state of Israel's condition.

If we go back to that 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, the words are very familiar to us all, that chapter in which are recorded the curses that would come upon Israel if they disobeyed the LORD their God, and which have been fulfilled right to the letter, we read in verse 49, 'that Yahweh shall bring a nation against Israel from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand'. Now he's constantly employing this term of an 'eagle', he's speaking of it as the speed and rapidity with which the king of Assyria would come down against the land; it's a fitting example of Israel's condition as we said, because the eagle preys on corruption, that it preys on impurity. So we read in this verse, 'they have transgressed My covenant, have transgressed against My law', now this is a living testimony, b&s, of Galatians 6 verses 7 and 8, this law that has not changed from the beginning of time, it is true in the natural as well as the in the spiritual, 'Be not deceived, for God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting'. Of course, the exhortation is that God's inexorable law has not changed, it is just as binding today as ever; its violation can mean our everlasting destruction, or its obedience, b&s, can mean eternal life in the kingdom of God. If we want eternal life then we read the book of eternal life, if we want eternal life then we enact the laws that are related to eternal life, if we want eternal oblivion, then we cast our hearts and our minds not upon this book, we turn away from it and we'll receive destruction. This is basic and it is fundamental.

We read in verse 2 that 'Israel shall cry', when Shalmaneser comes down on the land and she sees the futility of her position, this is when she shall cry. We turn to another night, and that night is not far away, b&s, when that warning sound will come, 'the Master has come and calls for thee'. That time when we will at last realize, that we have not followed cunningly devised fables, as Peter has warned, 'when we made known unto thee, the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'. Just as certain as the sun rises on the eastern horizon tomorrow morning, just that certain, that day will come. The counterpart in our life will come, 'Israel shall cry' ; Israel's position is well indicated by the cowering of the prey of an eagle, and the warning is the same to us today, that Christ's coming will be swift, His judgment upon sin will be speedy but it will be complete.

You know, if we turn to the 24th chapter of Matthew, we have this picture of an eagle

used in two different ways. It's interesting as we read verses 27 and 28, and this is very important, b&s, for the position we find ourselves in tonight; for Matthew tells us, 'For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be'. (it's going to be swift, it's going to be sudden, it's going to be as the lightning for rapidity and then He says) 'For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together'. Now in AD 70 we know that Israel was that carcass, and the eagles were the Roman empire, but now the condition is going to reverse itself in the very near future, b&s, because the cherubim of God in relation to the 40th chapter of Isaiah at the 31st verse, they're going to be the **eagles**. They're going to rise up like eagles and the carcass will be the Roman empire or that which is in opposition to God. Babylon, under which heading, of course, comes now the Russian host upon the mountains of Israel, that which is the outgrowth of the kingdom of Nimrod, that which is in opposition to God, the seed of the serpent.

Then we read, 'My God, we know Thee', in verse 2. This is the same sentiment and the same sort of persons under the same feelings that are expressed in Matthew 7 verse 22, where we have a picture of the judgment seat, and these same individuals cry 'Lord have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?' We can see this type of people, can't we? whose love of the LORD God has not been in their hearts, b&s, and we go back to Deuteronomy 6, don't we? They're crying, 'we've served Thee and done many wonderful things in Thy name, we've made broad our phylacteries, we've enlarged the ribbons of blue, we have been to all outward appearances, thy children; but inwardly He says, 'you're ravening wolves', you have not loved the LORD your God with all your heart and all your strength and all your mind! Then He warns us in Matthew, 'then will I profess unto them, I never knew you'.

In verse 3 of chapter 8 we read, 'Israel hath cast off the thing that is good; the enemy shall pursue him'. B&S, these are vital words! God has dropped Israel, He's cast them off because they profaned His name; this group of people that are spoken of in Hosea, turned their back on Him. They are dead, they will not live, they are deceased, they shall not rise, Israel as we've said today, will be gathered back from those four corners of the earth; they are such an apostate group that we're talking about here, they're gone! and Christ said the warning to spiritual Israel, and this message is coming to you and to me, otherwise it wouldn't be here! Remember, that Israel here is within sight of Shalmaneser king of Assyria, their doom is written, and so the exhortation comes thundering to spiritual Israel, let's forget Israel for a moment let's look at their mistakes! Let's pick this up and put it into our lives as we approach the judgment seat of Christ. It's for us that He's speaking and He warns us that Israel has cast off the thing that is good, in other words, what He's saying is exactly the same thing that was said in the garden of Eden, we are free agents, we stand at the crossroads, we have the choice of direction, it is our own; my brother **cannot choose that for me**; you cannot choose it for me, and I cannot choose it for you. It is our own decision and when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, it will be too late to blame these things unto some brother. It will be too late to say, 'well, if it hadn't been for brother or sister so-in-so, I would have

done differently, Lord! No, it is an individual matter, we're are individual building blocks, we're individually built, moulded, and placed right into that place in the kingdom of God, that is our position when we stand at the judgment seat, and b&s, we have precious little time left to do that moulding! What is the exhortation of the hour? **to follow this glorious message that is before us.**

Verse 3 also says, 'the enemy shall pursue him'. In Romans 7 verses 18 to 22 we read, 'For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me'. Our natural inclination is to the flesh, isn't it? and it is that enemy that is constantly pursuing us.

We read in verse 4, 'They have set up king, but not by Me', and here was the point! They had an outward form of worship but it is not for Me that they're doing this; 'they had made princes and I knew it not; of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, why? that they may be cut off', in other words, not one, and I emphasize this, **not one of the kings of Israel** from the time of the division, was anointed unto Yahweh, not one! He says, 'I knew it not', in other words, they did not have Yahweh's approval, so it was not known or recognized by Him! He said their silver and gold have they made them idols that they may be cut off, in other words, they shall be cut off because of their idolatry, and their unfaithfulness and in the present day terminology it might read, 'they made them hydrogen bombs, trusting in the strength of man. They went to their idols of silver and gold for their help, for their sustenance, for their guidance in that direction, and they let my precious books gather dust on the shelf'.

So Hosea says in verse 5, 'Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?' Do we see, b&s, how often Hosea comes back, how God through His prophet reaches back and touches that which is competition to Him; He will not allow idolatry in His temple. We are the temples of the living God, and rest assured, that He abhors it in our life just as much as He did in the days of Israel; He will not permit this duality! 'Cast far from thee, thy calf, O Samaria, abandon thy idolatry for mine anger is kindled against thee; how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?' in other words, how long will you continue in these evil practices? We're reminded, aren't we? of the begging and pleading of the prophet Isaiah as he says in 55th chapter and verse 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and return unto Yahweh; return and He will have mercy upon him'. The calf or the ox which was the object of the idolaters worship of the Israelites, this was a supreme deity in Egypt, it was there they had learned this idolatry; in Egypt a white ox was worshipped under the name of Aphis and it was worshipped at Memphis; another ox by the name of Menevet was worshipped at On or Heliopolis, and the superstition still prevails in the east. The cow was still the sacred animal of the Hindus; the calf which Hosea denounced was set up in the reign of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin. The reason was very revealing, it had massive appeal to the flesh; if you turn back to 1 Kings 12 verses 27 to 32, we get some insight to what type of an individual this Jeroboam was, how he appealed to Israel. Verse 27, 'If this

people go up to do sacrifice in the house of Yahweh at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah'. Do you see how little God was in his heart, in his mind? he was thinking of self. Now he says, 'Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin; for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made a house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the 8th month, on the 15th day of the month, like unto the feast that was in Judah; and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made; and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the 15th day of the 8th month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart (note those words) and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense'. A picture of flesh!

Now b&s, there are 3 types of idolatry: those types of idolatry are with us today! One of them grows out of **ignorance**, this we see emphasized in the apostle Paul's speech on Mars Hill; then there's a type of idolatry that grows out of ignorance plus **egotism** such as Communism; and then there's idolatry that grows out of **knowledge of God and yet serving other gods**. This is exactly what Israel was guilty of, and so we read in verse 6,

'The workman made it; therefore it is not God'. Now God is the **Creator**, God is a Creator, He's a source of all, and **it's an utter impossibility for the created to create the Creator**, but nevertheless, this was the order of Israel's worship and it is the order of worship of man today, it has not changed; they are worshipping the created thing. The workman made it and therefore, it is not God, this is conclusive proof against idol worship.

Then in verse 7 he says, 'For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up'. **They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind**, we're coming back to that great law of Galatians 6 again, as a man soweth so shall he reap. They sowed to the wind, now they reap the whirlwind, and in the scriptures of truth the whirlwind always relates to the judgments of God. Remember in the 3rd chapter of Ezekiel, how he sees that mighty cherubim coming out of the north, and Ezekiel sees that cherubim which is a future manifestation of us, b&s, he sees it first of all as a whirlwind, this cherubim or this cloud enfolded with fire that is coming out to purge the earth of ungodliness, it comes in judgment. Now Israel has sown to the wind until they have reaped this judgment of God. Remember that as a man sows, he reaps except for one thing, he reaps in far greater abundance than he sows! If we place one seed in the ground, we get a multitude of seeds in return, but this also has a contrary action; he that sows to the wind, he also now will have a whirlwind to reap because every grain that we sow, that same proportion will come back to him in judgment. 'They

that sow the seed of unrighteousness shall reap a harvest of judgment. So it's a strong metaphor, b&s, but it is very true, and as we go back through the scriptures of truth, we see how basically sound this principle is; a man does not reap in some similar way he reaps in exactly the same way in which he sows. Jacob deceived his father, then in turn Jacob is deceived; Pharaoh slew the firstborn of Israel, in turn the firstborn of Pharaoh was slain; Ahab was responsible for the death of Naboth, but the old prophet comes to Ahab and says in exactly the same spot, 'as the dogs had licked the blood of Naboth, they're going to lick your blood, Ahab; I'm going to take care of that! Ahab says, 'oh, I'll take care of that, I'll disguise myself, I'll go into battle, they won't know who I am!' We know very well what happened, don't we? b&s and young people! By chance a soldier shot an arrow and struck Ahab because he doesn't recognize the king and he was in that chariot all day long. When they brought that chariot back that night, and they washed the blood from Ahab's chariot; where did they wash it? in exactly the same spot where Naboth was slain. 'As a man sows, so shall he reap!' and what an exhortation as we approach the judgment seat of Christ. We see them sowing to the flesh, we see Shalmaneser king of Assyria, coming down and fulfilling the fact that they will now reap corruption. The answer is before us, isn't it?, b&s, a whirlwind has far reaching effects, it blows seeds far afield, which can find its counter part in our evil deeds, our words, our thoughts of the flesh, and on and on and on. **Wind** expresses that which is empty and fruitless and it gives us an exhortation, doesn't it? that our conversation should settle around the solid things of the truth, and let these little trivialities go out the window, b&s, where they belong. We're going to see them in their true aspects, there's nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit. Certainly, we'll stand in the precincts of Sinai in the very near future, and we're going to realize for the first time in our lives, how much time has been wasted in these little trivialities of flesh. How much time has been wasted that could have been centred around the precious jewels that are centred in this word of Almighty God? that could have uplifted us and lifted our hearts and minds far above the petty things of this life; this is real fatal to do, as they let flesh take over in their lives.

This God has given to us, in the very next phrase, 'it hath no stalk (it hath nothing that can yield and blossom); if it hath a blossom it shall yield no fruit; if there is fruit they shall not enjoy it; for strangers shall eat it'. In other words, Israel's labour should be vain and useless; this kingdom that they had built, the riches that they had accumulated, now they're going to be enjoyed by Shalmaneser, they're going to be taken over by him, and Israel will be left desolate. What a picture of death, b&s, what a picture of death! a man accumulates fortunes, he dies and it's gone! is it any wonder that David looking these things in the face said, 'put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to the earth, in that very day his thoughts perish'. What is the inevitable result, we read it in the 8th verse.

'Israel is swallowed up' (she has sown to the flesh, what else can she expect? The man that wanders out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead), 'and now shall they be among the Gentiles, as a vessel wherein is no pleasure'. They shall be among the Gentiles, they should be turned back into the nations; does that mean something, b&s, that's familiar to us, as we stand at the judgment seat of

Christ, concerning the wicked? 'They shall be turned back into the nations, into a fire prepared for the devil and his angels, back into a time of trouble such as never was, since there was a nation upon the earth'; it has its counterpart, doesn't it? it speaks strongly of these things, in other words, sin has made its inroads and Israel has fallen victim. Israel had now reached the point of no return! Now he says, they shall be amongst the Gentiles, they shall go into captivity among those that have no hope. Ephesians 2 verses 11 to 14, 'Without God, without hope in the world', what a bleak picture! the shame was not in going among the Gentiles, b&s, let us remember this, their sin was not going among the Gentiles, but it was adopting the ways of the Gentiles. Naomi went to Moab, but Naomi did not become a Moabite; Paul went to Rome, but Paul did not adopt Roman idolatry. So Israel had gone to the Gentiles but they had adopted the ways of the Gentiles. We read that 'there's a vessel wherein is no pleasure!', a vessel that is unclean, they are now a vessel that is soiled, a vessel that is infectious and the reference here is to a rotten corrupted skin bottle. A bottle made of goat, deer or calf hide still commonly used in Asia and Africa, usually a highly ornamented on the outside, but inwardly it was rotten, it was the exact counterpart of the Pharisees, of whom Christ said, 'they were full of dead men's bones'; outwardly they were whited sepulchres.

Verse 9 he says, 'They've gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself; Ephraim has hired lovers'. Here we have a picture of someone who has been completely given over to the works of the flesh. They have turned to the heathen nations for guidance, God's says, not to Me! Regardless of all that I have done for them, regardless of the countless times, I've given them food, that I was there to guide, direct, protect and most of all, to save; they have now turned to the heathen nations roundabout. 'A wild ass alone by himself', Pliny states that one male wild ass will keep a whole flock of females to himself and will allow no others to approach them; and Israel had taken this attitude in complete and stubborn separation from Almighty God, because it's a figure, b&s, of Israel's headstrong perversity. Then it says, 'alone by himself', and it's a characteristic of Israel in all ages. Then the sad commentary comes in the last thought, 'Ephraim hath hired lovers', in other words, Israel had become one with the neighbouring heathen states, largely of their own freewill; no one had forced them! They had let these things of the flesh infiltrate, they had let God out of their hearts, and how true it was that Hosea had said, as we considered the other night, 'my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge' Hosea 4 verse 6.

Verse 10, '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', in other words, they had become so obligated to Assyria that now they could not withdraw without great difficulties. Isn't this a picture of flesh? as we become involved in the world, we become entangled in the world, it becomes more and more difficult to withdraw. This particular tribute had been imposed on Israel under Menahem, by the Assyria king Pul; we read of this in 2 Kings 15 verses 19 to 22, but in verse 11 he says, 'because Ephraim has made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin'. Now the Jews in Babylon were not obligated to worship the idols of the country except in this case that's specifically

called out in Daniel; it was indeed, far different in Israel, for many years previous to the captivity, Israel had thoroughly indoctrinated themselves in heathen idol worship, thus they saw and felt the evil of their idolatry and they were helpless in its clutches. It was voluntary, b&s, they were not commanded to do these things as Daniel was in the courts of Babylon under the decree of death; what a difference in the case of Daniel, they refused and remained faithful to God. Thus these many altars were in opposition to God's law; it's not the number of altars that counts, it's the quality of the altars! and it's true in the ecclesias of God today, b&s, it is not the quantity of the ecclesias, it's the quality of the ecclesias! Once again, we hammer home this that we have been speaking of, appreciate the quality of the ecclesias in Australia, appreciate the quality of the leadership that you have here, young people and brethren and sisters. Cherish it, cherish it, I admonish you! cherish it and hold fast, it can be and will be the key to eternal life in the kingdom of God. This is the warning message that comes out of Hosea.

Then in verse 12, God says and He emphasizes this point in this next verse, 'I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing'. I have written to him the great things of my law, now where does He write it, b&s? He does not write it on the golf course, He does not write it in the theatres, He does not write it in television, He does not write it in any of the works of the flesh, and we will never find it there, we will never find it in the stadium, we only find it in the Word of Almighty God. God preserves a reliable witness, if you want it, open up its pages, go into this book, and I will speak to you; but I won't speak to you from worldly sanctuaries! This is what He's telling Israel, that's what He tells spiritual Israel, and He says, 'they have no excuse because I have not hidden My truth from them. When we stand as the judgment seat of Christ, we too, will have no excuse, we may blame someone else then, b&s, 'brother so-in-so did something that I didn't like', 'sister so-in-so said something that I didn't like and if it hadn't been for that, I would have been alright, Lord!' That will not do, b&s, we stand alone at the judgment seat of Christ. They have no excuse for I have not hidden My truth from them. The time permitted tonight, and you know very well that we could go from Genesis to Revelation, explaining this great truth from scripture, God has placed it before us but He's put a condition there, b&s, **seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you!** Every adjective in this precious book, that describes our walk in the truth is one of action, it's one of going forward, the word 'retirement' is not in this book from Genesis to Revelation; we don't quite in the Lord's service. We had an old brother at one time in southern California who was blind, 82 years old, bless his heart, during that period of time when he was not blind, he had memorized scripture and he would stand on the platform at 81 and 82 years of age, and he would quote entire chapters and you thought he was reading! The tears would stream as he with compassion would beg and plead with his brethren and sisters; where was the truth implanted in his life? In him, in his heart, b&s, and even though blind physically, he was not blind spiritually! Yes, that law had been rooted in his heart!

Verse 13, 'They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but

Yahweh accepted them not; now will He remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: **they shall return to Egypt**'. Let's take it sentence by sentence! 'they sacrifice flesh', in other words, they offered to their idols things that belonged to Yahweh; while pretending to offer unto Yahweh, they eat and drink idolatrously and therefore, the LORD will not accept them. Look at the 5th chapter of Amos for just a moment; Amos describes the same condition, b&s, Amos 5 verses 21 to 27: this was the condition of Israel, Amos says, 'I **hate**, I **despise** your feast days, I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from Me the noise of thy sons; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Have ye offered unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness 40 years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith Yahweh, whose name is The God of hosts'. This was Israel, this was their condition - the exhortation, of course, is that our worship of Yahweh must be wholehearted and sincere. Our lives must be that of a burnt offering that is wholly consumed, co-crucified with Christ! b&s. Not on the ground looking up at the cross, not down there at all, but nailed to the cross with Him! because they had taken this attitude, and not followed the admonition of Romans 12 verse 1, we read that 'they shall return to Egypt'. Literally, many of them did return to Egypt after the conquest of Palestine by Shalmaneser, and many after the ruin of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. They had in effect, however returned to Egypt by setting up the worship of the golden calves which were the imitation of the Egyptian, Apis.

Then as we come to the last verse of the 8th chapter of Hosea, we read, 'For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples: and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof'. Now this is a very interesting word here, this word 'forgotten' (7911) because actually it means to 'mislay for want of memory'; this is the meaning in the Hebrew, in other words, **Israel has mislaid God or Yahweh for want of memory**; now what did Hosea say the other night? he said, 'my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge', he was saying identically the same thing, wasn't he? in other words, they have lost confidence in divine protection and therefore they have built temples to other gods, and Judah has lost all confidence in the divine protection, and therefore she has built many fenced cities; she's not trusting in Yahweh, the fire of God's wrath burnt up both the temples and the fortified cities just as He's going to do in the very near future, b&s.

CHAPTER 9

As we come to chapter 9, in verses 1 to 9 as we have on the chart, we have the exile of Israel foretold, and in verse 1 we read, 'Rejoice not, O Israel for joy, as other people: rejoice not for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor'. Now this word 'rejoice not' (8055), b&s, it has deep meaning; the

heathen nations indulge in orgies during their joyful festivals, but the prophet of Israel, Hosea, warns Israel, 'don't you have anything to do with them; don't you rejoice in their orgy, you are a called and a chosen people, don't imitate the heathen nor serve their idols. Do not prostitute your soul and body Israel on these heathen rites that are common to the worship of Baal and Astarte; for you have acted like a common harlot, who goes even to the common threshingfloors. Now Hosea warns, 'you conduct yourself with the meanest in order to get your share of the threshed grain. This was the reason they were doing it, they had no faith in Yahweh, 'they had mislaid God!'; what terminology! **they had mislaid God for want of memory**, what does man say today? God is dead! they were misleading; the cartoon we saw in the Tasmanian newspaper a few weeks ago, 'God is unemployed', it said. This is the attitude of the world, now 'for joy'? what are we talking about? We really have to go back in the history of the Jew to find out what '**joy**' meant! at this time of the year, because now it is a harvest and vintage time, it is a period of the annual vintage festival, as at Shechem and Shiloh to which neighbouring villages gathered. The corn is being reaped, the winepress is trodden, the vats are overflowing, it's the time of the feast of Tabernacles, that which symbolizes the beginning and the millennium; the beginning of that glorious day for which we hope and pray, b&s, but behind this bright picture there looms to the prophet's gaze a very sombre background.

For through this which was indicative and representative of that glorious day of rest, what did he see? He sees the exact opposite, these words expressed in bold imagery, the prophet's scorn to the idolatrous corruption of the people. The bounteous yield of the harvest is called '**the harlot's hire**'; note what terminology he uses; that it is the harlot's hire which lures Yahweh's faithless by the worship of false deities from whose hands these gifts were suppose to have come, the people's monetary prosperity is attributed to their idols. Pretty easy to do in our own lives too, isn't it? b&s, to think, 'I'm a little more brilliant than so-in-so, otherwise I wouldn't be so successful in business'; it's a very simple thing to do. We feel sorry for our brother or sister sometimes because 'he maybe doesn't have quite the ability to work such a financial deal as we can work', or something of this nature. These are the things that constantly come before us, b&s, and we get into the world of flesh; monetary gain today is probably one of the most severe trials that we have. The boss holds a better job than all of us, if we can put in a little more study, a little more effort, give more of our time to him, what is the reward? a fatter pay cheque, do you want it? It reminds me of a cartoon that was in the papers in America for sometime and it showed a little boy on the back of a dog, and he had a lot of weenies, (that's what we called them in the United States, maybe you call them different here), but he had them hanging out about a foot in front of the dog's nose; he was holding them there and that dog was running until he was nearly exhausted and he never did catch up! This is a picture of life, isn't it? it is a picture of man reaching for more at all times, and he never gets enough, and this was Israel's problem! God says, 'you've loved a reward on every cornfloor', in other words, Israel's neighbours took part in the licentious fertility rite, and Israel following them, loved that reward, it really was a harlot's hire upon every cornfloor. The heathen are offering gifts to Baal, they offered them to the fertility god, to induce him to made the fields fertile and fruitful, and Israel

had followed in their footsteps.

They were now placing their complete trust in Egypt, in Assyria, in the idols of the land. Hard to realize, isn't it? b&s, but it's well for us to stop and consider these 5 secular points as to why Israel went down!

1. The first reason was **that Israel was not to rejoice, because they had turned aside from Yahweh**. Now in leaving the truth, if we were so foolish, we leave all happiness behind! a sister was talking to me the other day, we had a decision to make here in Australia; if I do this I loose temporarily, but if I go the other way, I loose the truth. If I loose the truth, I can never find happiness again, she says, I will live not only in fear of the judgment seat of Christ, but I will loose all the other joys that accrue to me because I am a child of Almighty God. So there was only one decision as far as she was concerned and that flesh would be crucified. Israel failed to realize this, b&s, but if you and I were to leave the truth today, as the apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, 'we would of all men be most miserable', why? because we know what the truth holds, don't we? What would we sell the truth for tonight, as we see the events of the world coming to a close? If an individual put 15 million dollars in front of us tonight, would it appear as anything, b&s, in comparison with that glorious hope that we have? absolutely not! We are rich, we have a pleasure, and in leaving the truth we would leave all that happiness behind, we would of all men be most miserable! But this is what Israel was experiencing! they could not enjoy their feast days, they could not enjoy the true values of life!

2. The second reason Israel should not and could not rejoice was, **that she was living at ease in Zion**. You'll remember that Amos warns most of them that are at ease in Zion, there is absolutely no retirement in the truth. What is our position in the Master's service, b&s, are we active? are we active in our particular sphere? It is something for us to ask ourselves, isn't it?

3. Israel could not be happy because **they were heaping up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath**. They were heaping up to themselves judgment against the day of judgment.

4. They could not rejoice because **they were without hope in the world**. They had denied the source of all things, they were without God, they had cast their help and their strength far behind their backs.

5. And lastly, oh, b&s, may this never happen to us! They could not rejoice because **they were under sentence of condemnation!**

So we read in the next phrase of verse 1, '**For thou hast gone a whoring from thy God**', what does he mean? Israel's covenant with God was a marriage covenant, by which they were joined to Him as their God, and they had renounced all others. But before we condemn Israel too strongly, remember b&s, this is our exact position in

relation to our Lord Jesus Christ. We are married to Him, we are married to Him and He is ours, we are His, and it is very easy as much as we depise the word 'adultery', remember, God did not condone physical adultery in Hosea, but this is not the main lesson that we're driving at here; it is **spiritual adultery**, b&s, and He's using physical to illustrate the terrible situation that we can find ourselves in if we become unfaithful to Christ. True Israel committed physical adultery, but they did much worse, b&s, in spiritual adultery, because they turned completely from the One they were married to, and they turned to another. We can do the very same thing if we do not crucify the flesh, if we do not remember the words in the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy, 'thou shalt love the LORD thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, and all thy mind'. 'For thou hast gone a whoring from thy God', when they set up idols and worshipped them, when they prayed to creatures for help, when they placed their confidence in false gods, when they did all of these things; we can follow that counterpart in our lives, can't we? b&s. How many false gods do we have in our lives? they're there, aren't they? and when they did this, they broke the marriage vow, and they committed spiritual adultery. There were other idolaters, but this sin was not in them, for they had never experienced a close relationship with Yahweh; to whom much is given, much is required, but the sins of those who have made a profession of religion and a relationship with God, are more provoking to Him, than those who sin in absolute ignorance.

Verse 2, 'The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her'. The prophet here is warning them that the threshing floor and the winepress shall fail, in other words, the efforts to seek blessings from Baal, was now going to prove absolutely futile, why? God controlled, this is way, Shalmaneser king of Assyria was about descend. When we make the world and the things of it, our idol and portion, it is just with God to deny us support and nourishment. Remember, 'as a man soweth so shall he reap', it is well for us to ask ourselves in the light of the 37th Psalm and verse 4, b&s, what are the desires of our heart?

Now the obvious solution is given to us in verse 3, 'They shall not dwell in the LORD's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria'. The punishment is to be still greater; they're not going to remain in the land of Yahweh, They're going to return to Egypt, the place of enslavement, every life that's made captive by sin, is in Egypt, everyone! Jonah thought that by crossing the sea, he could escape the presence of Yahweh; to leave the LORD's land was tantamount to leave the LORD's blessings. More than that, the country to which Lot went was regarded as 'unclean', '**they shall eat unclean things in Assyria**', the prophet. This is where we will go, if we dare leave the sheepfold, b&s, if we dare leave the sheepfold, this is where we will go, we will go into Assyria, and at the judgment seat we will be cast out of the land of the living into Assyria, where we can no longer enjoy sweet fellowship with Yahweh. No matter how completely we fail, there is **hope**, hope b&s, as long as we have access to the balm of Gilead; and that balm of Gilead is not available in the land of Assyria. As long as we stay in the land, we will at least be exposed to clean food, which is the Word of God, it is certain that we will never hear of it, in the land of Egypt. Let us always

remember, let us always remember, b&s, that no matter what the problem might be in ecclesial life, that we need the ecclesia must worse than the ecclesia needs us. We must stay in the sheepcote!

Now the far country to which the prodigal son was sent, is not a geographical location; it is a spiritual condition; to live in the land of the Almighty is to live in harmony with His purposes, and in obedience to His laws, and Assyria was to be a second Egypt unto them. Israel could not participate with these other nations without partaking of food, that God had declared to be ceremonially unclean. Daniel found this out in the courts of Babylon, and Daniel proved sufficient to the test, this land was God's, Israel had not paid the rent, now their lease must be forfeited; this is the counterpart of Adam and Eve been driven from the garden in Eden, b&s, when Cain was driven out of the presence of Yahweh, he was a fugitive, he was a vagabond in the earth; and ever after that, he dwelt in the land of trembling, and that's exactly where everyone dwells, in the land of exile, in the land of trembling, everyone who leaves the land of Almighty God. This is what Hosea is warning!

Then in verse 4 he says, 'They shall not offer wine offerings to Yahweh, neither shall they be pleasing unto Him: their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of Yahweh'. In exile there would be no wine offerings; offerings here are likened to the bread of mourning. Because of its association with death, it was considered unclean. Food kept in Jewish homes while the corpse is there, it's still regarded as ritually unclean. Israel was a corpse - RSV reads, '**that their bread should be for their hunger only**', not as in the AV, 'bread for their souls', in other words, their captors would have bread to supply their physical needs, but Israel was now going to be cut off from their spiritual food. B&S, it is so easy to see the exhortation that God is outlining for us in this, let us always see in the bread of the memorial service, those life-sustaining qualities that became ours in our covenant relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and once more let us appreciate the mercy that has been shown, but also the corresponding responsibility that's placed upon the shoulders of each and every one who names the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then in verse 5, 'What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of Yahweh?' This is a question that we ask ourselves, if we leave God behind, what do we do on the solemn day? Israel could have no joy because all of the joy of such times, depended on the reconciliation and acceptance with God! This was the law of the tabernacle, wasn't it? b&s. There can never be any true joy in our lives when we bear in our hearts the sad conviction of our willful and persistent estrangement from God; there's no sunshine in a human life when God's smile is hidden. We all have experienced this at sometime in our lives, the feast referred to here are the 3 great feasts of Israel; Passover, Weeks and Tabernacles, no joy could be in Israel's feasts because sacrifice had failed to gain acceptance, this was the ground work, the great principle laid down in God's law must always be, sacrifice before feast! This was the law of the Atonement, this is the law in our lives and as we stray from God we might as well

ask ourselves, what will we do on the solemn day? What will we do, b&s, in the day of personal affliction? To whom do we turn? to whom do we pray? to whom do we lean upon in the hour of trouble? what do we do in the day of bereavement? what do we look to as we look upon the death of a loved one? They can do nothing, and we, alas, see our own insignificance, what can we do? But in the truth we hear those glorious words, **'I am the resurrection and the life'**; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet **shall he live'**. Then, b&s, what will we do in the day of judgment? **what will we do in the day of judgment** if we've turned our back on the only source of hope? 'There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth'; this was Israel's fate.

In verse 6, Hosea said, 'For lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles'. What a group of words he used to describe death and the consequence of sin, in other words, Palestine would be completely **depopulated**, and it's a matter of historic record, that many exiles took refuge in Egypt in 721 BC after the great overthrow of the northern kingdom. This verse also mentions Memphis which is the present day Cairo, which in that time, was a vast city in which Apis and Ibis, kings and men, laid by thousands mummified! It was a religious shrine of the Egyptian faith from which Israel had been emancipated at the Exodus, this is where many in Israel fled for refuge, but they met death because Egypt was the land of death, and because they had placed their trust in death, this was their destiny. 'As a man sows so shall he reap', and this is where many will flee in the near future when Russia invades the Land, b&s. Then the nettles and the thorns that he speaks of these would grow over their treasured cities, thus there would be no place for their idols and their silver. **Nettles** (7057) are a symbol of destruction, we can think of the curse that was placed don't we? in the garden of Eden because of sin; that 'thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee', it emphasizes the truth of David's words once again, 'put not your trust in princes'. Now it is all over!

As we come to verse 7, he says, 'The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred. The watchman of Ephraim, he says in verse 8, was with my God: but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God'. **The days of the visitation are come**, they're here! in other words, the destruction will now come speedily. They shall have no reason for hope because the days of recompense are come of which they had been so often warned to expect; but b&s, the great antitype is on His way! When they say 'peace and safety' - 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 3, 'then sudden destruction cometh upon them'. **Then Israel shall know the prophet is a fool**, so shall spiritual Israel, b&s, Israel will know the difference between true and false prophets and so will spiritual Israel; they shall know when the pretender to prophesy who flattered them in their sin, rocked them to sleep in their security, told them that they should have faith; they shall know that these were fools, mad men are not true prophets! A good example of this is Ahab, isn't it? another good example of this is Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had lead them into Samaria, who had made Israel to sin. Then he says, **'for the multitude**

of thine iniquity', because men receive not the love of truth, but conceive the hatred of it, and by the multitude of their iniquity bid defiance to it, therefore he says, 'God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie'. Always remember, b&s, that Pharaoh never hardened his heart until God extended His mercy towards him; Pharaoh never hardened his heart until God extended His mercy, and we've looked at Pharaoh many times as we go through those readings, and we wonder at him, don't we? and yet he is no different than any other human being! When we look through the pages of Israel's history through those 15 judges and we see their spiritual life going up and down like hills and valleys and they never hardened their heart until God's mercy was extended to them, and He sent them a deliverer! We look at spiritual Israel, don't we? and we experience God's mercy and it is in times that we experience that mercy, that our heart hardens and we turn to the world and worldly things. But when the judgments of God are in the land, and when we experience trial and trouble and sorrow, where do we go? we go back to the God of Israel, we soften our hearts, we plough the fallow ground, b&s, you see, human nature doesn't change whether it's in natural Israel, spiritual Israel or in the hard hearted Pharaoh. God says, 'in the multitude of thine iniquity' He says, because men receive not the love of the truth, but because they conceive a hatred for it, then He shall send them 'strong delusion' to believe a lie! But such days always come, they come as surely as the dawn, though often not so swiftly, there is no escaping of God's judgment! The moral deterioration of the individuals, the chaos, the confusion, the insecurities of society, its bleeding wounds, its...that cry to heaven, are they not all sin results of a course of action, that has been displeasing to Almighty God and at variance with His will and purpose? His punishment is never vindictive, when God is dealing with men there is never any spite nor revenge, the evil days which come are the inevitable results in a pain, when in a moral universe, men play tricks with the moral laws of God. B&S, if we will honestly go back and look at the troubles in our lives, we will see this is true! We will see that we brought it on ourselves; we read in Ecclesiastes 10 verse 8, 'Whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him', in other words, we cannot go around breaking the laws of God, without being hurt. If we place our finger in the fire, we're going to get burnt; any child knows this, but its and we do it everyday, don't we? and then we blame God.

Imagine how Hosea must have felt, b&s, imagine, say we put ourselves in his position: he's alone in the midst of a nation that knows not Yahweh; he had neither a disciple or a friend, he is without the solace of domestic affection for even his home was full of shame and sorrow, and yet with all this, he clings to Israel with inextinguishable love! The doom which he proclaims against his people, is the doom of all that is dearest to him on earth and his heart is ready to break with sorrow; for very reason totters under this awful vision of judgment that is before him. This is the reason that Hosea is so different than the other prophets; he's not driving, he's not delivering an ultimatum, he **begs**, he **pleads** with these people, he's one of them and he reminds us of Daniel in that prayer in the 10th chapter, when he cries out before Yahweh, 'we have sinned'; again, and again he renews his appeal to the heedless nation that is running headlong to destruction, but it's all in vain. All in vain, like a silly dove fluttering in the storm, they turn first to Assyria and then to Egypt. But they never turn to Yahweh! through it all

Hosea cries out his words of warning!

In verse 8, he cries out, 'the watchman of Ephraim was with my God; but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God.' The watchman here refers to undoubtedly, Hosea; and what more important rule could a man play? The watchman looks out for God's interest and therefore for man's best interest. Also note that man's best interests are always in line with God's will, **always**, b&s! The watchman's work is particularly important when darkness falls for it is then that evil prowls, and this is what makes our position in the world so important today; evil drives brethren and sisters more in darkness than it does in the light. There is more crime committed at night, the prophet and his senses are peculiar to Israel: Rome had her administrators, Greek had her philosophers, but Israel had her **prophets**. The true prophet spoke the truth regardless of consequence; an outstanding example of this is found in Micaiah's words to Ahab in 1 Kings 22 verses 8 to 14. The secular mind does not see life from a true perspective, it has too many blind spots, the God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not; if we want to know the truth about ourselves or our world, we must somehow transcend ourselves and our world and this is something man by himself is absolutely unable to do. Yet in many cases, men do want truth, Isaiah 32 and 11 we find this, 'Why would one call out of Seir and Edom?' As part of ancient Arabia, no doubt Edom had sorcerers, necromancers and wizards aplenty, yet when the men of Edom wanted truth, b&s, they didn't consult a secular mind, they sought the prophet of God who would tell the truth without fear or favour. Because the prophet Isaiah spoke the truth, this verse continues, 'A fowler's snare is on all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God', and that there is not only going to destruction themselves, but they're a snare to everybody around. B&S, we must remember this; no matter what the opinion is of ourselves, there is also a great number of people that are listening to us that we are an example to, and we cannot go down without taking others with us. You know, men once felt that the heavens they saw was all they wanted to see; so men think the truth they see is all there is to see; the prophet, like a modern astronomer had a fuller and clearer vision, because he's speaking through the inspiration of scripture. He does create truth, he discovers it, b&s, and he proclaims it, and because men with their limited vision cannot see, they do not believe him. This is a principle that we come in contact with in the scriptures of truth. The effect Jesus had on the Pharisees and the Sadducees is express in Luke 23 verse 5, 'that He stireth up the people', the Sadducees were not greatly concerned about Jesus's religious ideas, their hostility was aroused when the truth reached the temple treasury, and if the Lord Jesus Christ returned to this earth today and He went into the temple treasuries throughout the world, if He returned as a mortal as He did 1900 ago, and if He divulged the same thing today that He did at that time, He would be crucified again, b&s, because this is human nature!

Then in verse 9 (we must hurry on) it speaks of the days of Gibeah, it relates to that shocking rape and murder of the Levite's wife; it's mentioned in Judges 19 and 6, when the whole tribe of Benjamin patronized the villainy, and this lead to the almost complete annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin. God is saying that every tribe is now as bad as the

tribe of Benjamin was then, and can expect the same fate, and join with others in the defence of evil, is worse than to stand alone in evil!

He says in verse 10 that they're like wild grapes in the wilderness; we're very familiar with the fact, aren't we? that Israel's been likened to a vine; Hosea refers back to Israel's early history, God found His people like grapes in the wilderness. We know that the traveller rejoices when he comes upon an oasis with its luscious grapes and so in the same way God had rejoiced over Israel, who had received His law in the wilderness. In the wilderness they were not precious in themselves, but they were precious to Him, and they were precious as the first ripe grapes to the lord of the vineyard. He says 'He planted them a choice vine', He planted them with every opportunity to grow, He gave them the right seed; it speaks of the delight that God had put upon them, and in doing them good, not for their sakes but because He loved their fathers; but now b&s, if there is one thing we have seen in Hosea it is the great disgrace that Israel had brought, not only on themselves, but on the God of Israel. God had set them apart for Himself as a peculiar people, but they went to Baal-peor. They engaged themselves in the rites of Baal and Astarte worship, they joined with the Moabites in sacrificing in that dirty dunghill deity that is described in Numbers 25 verses 2 and 3. Now note if you will that it is interesting to see, that the firstripe fig ripens in June while the rest come to maturity about August. This world could have its counterpart in natural Israel being called first and the Gentiles being called last! Now he says 'they were according as they loved', this always holds me as going back to 6 principles: they were according as they loved, it speaks of Israel's complete consecration to Baal, Israel was a very fitting example of those of whom Isaiah speaks in the 55th chapter and the second verse, 'they spend money for that which is not bread, they labour for that which satisfieth not', in other words, they are not to use the talent at all, it would have been better, if they had not used it all, b&s, than to have used their talents for such an evil purpose. The RSV renders this and says, '**it became detestable liked the thing they loved**', in other words, as they had sowed they reaped! Now nothing so determines character as how a man gives his loyalty, and especially his religious loyalty, and when we speak of religion, b&s, we're speaking of the truth of Almighty God. We're not speaking of the apostasy about us on every side, but when man makes Yahweh in his own image, his Yahweh is very little more than just an enlarged disposition of himself. When man creates God in this form, he creates and limits His glory. This is exactly what Israel did, they created and pictured Yahweh, that glorious memorial Name, they pictured Him in the image of themselves, and so they simply had an enlarged disposition.

So he says in verse 11, 'their glory shall fly away like a bird', in other words, the bird's flight is unpredictable; it is sudden, it is swift, so the glory of man is of and by itself an unstable quantity. Man's true glory lies not in man; man's true glory, b&s, and this is something we must remember, **it's a reflected glory**. Man's true glory springs from his desire to glorify God, as we're told in 1 Corinthians 1 verse 31, and the only lasting glory for man is that which he doesn't seek for himself! I repeat! the only lasting glory for man is that which he does not seek for himself. It comes as a result of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; it is the glory of a character that's been

disciplined by denial, a spirit that's been inspired by noble ideals, a life that's been lived and built in love, a life which has been illuminated in hope and faith. This glory will not end in the day, but this glory will rise triumphant, b&s, to eternal life! But bear in mind that this glory not only flew away from Israel, it will also will fly away from everyone that handles it carelessly.

And so he says in verse 12, 'Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them'. That's children which survive infancy would not reach manhood. Woes are pronounced on a people to whom the LORD has departed, whose blessings are gone and they're awaiting His judgment, that's how awful it is when God has departed.

Verse 13, 'Ephraim, he says, as I saw Tyrus', Tyre was strongly situated on a rock in the sea; Samaria was a mountain both strong and pleasant, but the strength and beauty of those cities shall not save them from destruction. The impregnable fortresses of Tyre was a conspicuous object in the days of Hosea, and similarly, Samaria was a stronghold which was able to resist the long sieges; and this is what Israel placed their hope and desire in, something tangible, something real, something that she thought she could take hold of. But God said that 'Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer', the RSV says, 'Ephraim's sons as I have seen, are destined for a prey', Ephraim was leading forth his sons to slaughter, that is, her sons would be lead to a slaughter that is largely futile, this is the penalty of war. Now, b&s, in just 3 minutes now we're going to try and conclude this chapter!

In verse 15 we read, 'All their wickedness is in Gilgal', translated into modern life, the prophet plea would teach us that all their wickedness is in the house of God. All their wickedness in at the table of the LORD, or in repeated resolutions and vows. This helps us to realize how a Jew would feel who heard the prophet make this reproach; to give us some idea of what he's saying in verse 14, I feel this is a very high note to conclude on, for it is a note of exhortation! Remember that it was at Gilgal that the covenant of circumcision was renewed for the second time, since they came out of Egypt. What circumcision was to the Jew, b&s, baptism is to us. Circumcision was God's seal or guarantee to the Jew that He would plant and deliver them from the taint of Egyptian idolatry. Of course, baptism into Christ opens the door to the very fountainhead of mercy, from which our sins may be forgiven. We have this in Romans 8 and verse 1, as we quoted the other night. Secondly, it was at Gilgal that they celebrated the Passover for the first time, after they came out of Egypt. The Lord's supper with all its significance, is our Passover, that which we keep every Sunday morning; and thirdly, it was at Gilgal that God appeared in a most remarkable manner, to assure the people of Israel that He would be their Deliverer in Joshua 5 and 13. Though we are not directly informed of the fact, yet we have reason to believe that they had been guilty of some scandalous practices of idolatry at Gilgal, now this is strongly implied in Hosea 4 at verse 15. God says that it was in this place that I hated them! Imagine if God came to us and said that in the memorial service I hate you; you've defamed the memorial service, you've made idolatry out of it. Yet, b&s, as we put a close analogy on the 11th

chapter of 1 Corinthians, we can see the warning that is there for us, in exactly the same way. God says, 'for there I hated them', because of their wickedness God determined to drive them out of His house, so they would cease to be a part of the heavenly family, either as sons or servants. As long as Israel dwelt unrepentant in sin, she could not enjoy the blessings of God's love. God will now turn them out as unfaithful tenants, He will turn them out as those who pay no rent; as unprofitable servants. Israel had pious words but they had no deeds, b&s, it is by our deeds that God judges us, Micah 6 and verse 8. He has showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee? but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God'. Luke 6 and verse 46, 'Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' Matthew 7 verse 20, 'Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them'; Matthew 23 verse 14, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer you them that are entering to go in'. Jesus finds no pleasure in a barren life, my dear brethren and sisters and young people; we would have a veritable revolution in the work of the truth if our talk was translated into deeds and actions, if we do not realize this soon, many of us will hear, b&s, 'I will drive them out of My house'.

We stand within sight of the judgment seat of Christ; these things come thundering home to each and everyone of us, My dear brethren and sisters, they are real! and when the apostle Paul uttered the words of Romans 15 and 4, he was thinking of the prophecy of Hosea, where he said, 'these things were written aforetime for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the scriptures, we might have hope'.