

10328U

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA - 1968

THE DOOR OF HOPE

Speaker: Bro. Maurie Stewart

Study #6: Arise, shine for thy light is come!

Reading: Hosea 13&14

In addition to what our presiding brother has said, I would like to say that we'd appreciate the comments more than questions, b&s.

As we come to those last 2 chapters this evening, we find that we have the divisions in chapter 13 of verses 1 to 3, the wicked bull worship that Israel was guilty of; verses 4 to 11, the gracious God that would bring destruction upon them, because Israel had chosen to sow to the flesh, and not to the things of the Spirit; in verses 12 to 16, the inescapable ruin and this is a downward progression, b&s, and it certainly bears out the truth of Galatians 5 which we've referred to so many times during this study, 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap'.

Then as we could expect from a merciful God, as we come to chapter 14, we have His benevolent mercy shown, He reaches back and He assures Israel that He will not forget those covenants of promise, that He promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to David, those covenants of promise, b&s, that formed the very foundation of our walk in the truth and the hope that we have set before us. In verses 1 to 3 of chapter 14, we will consider the call to repentance; in verses 4 to 8, the promise of pardon; and then verse 9, a parting admonition. It is a glorious hope that we have, b&s, and as we conclude this 14th chapter, we do so with the picture of a merciful God that is ready at all times to forgive, to pardon; all He asks is that we would **return** to Him!

CHAPTER 13

Now chapter 13 verse 1, we read these words, 'When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died'. Now this emphasizes, doesn't it? it emphasizes what we've been quoting from Micah, what we've been quoting from Isaiah, 'to this man will I look, to him that is of a humble and contrite heart spirit and trembleth at My words'. What does the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God.' **When Ephraim spake trembling**, in other words, when he did this, when he came to God he was meek and humble, when he came to Him with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then it was, that he exalted

himself, b&s. He became great in God's sight, he arose in the divine estimation in direct proportion as he sank in his own. Of course, this did not continue, and what was he doing? He was going back to the very basis of this whole study. That which was referred to so many times, in Deuteronomy 6, 'Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind', but Israel forgot this! Hosea had said, 'my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge', he had turned his back on God, that knowledge which had been so firmly implanted in him as a child, it had gone! so he had turned to Baal, 'he offended in Baal' the sentence says, in other words, he became an idolater, 'he died'. The sentence of death and divine justice went out against him.

Now in verse 2, 'Now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according (note the words, b&s) to their own understanding'. Remember Christ's indictment against Israel! '**your** house-no longer My Father's house', 'your house is left unto you desolate'. It was the Jew's Passover, it was no longer God's; and so he says, 'now they sin more and more, they have made them molten images of their silver and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen; they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves'. They have practised every kind of vice, Hosea is saying, they have even abandoned the great inspirer of virtue, let men once apostatised from God and there is no stopping, there is no stopping, b&s, every act of sin tends to increase the habit! Then he brings up a very significant thing to our view, he says, 'let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves'. Now this was going to be a real test - if there was a Jew that pretended sacrifice and whose conversion was the least bit dubious, now let him openly come and kiss the calves - this will show what he is! For no real Jew would do this, there were steps in which a man should worship the idol and that was:

1. they kissed the idol
2. when the statue was too high or too far off, they presented a hand in token of an alliance, very much in the same order that the Germans used to salute Hitler.
3. They brought that hand respectfully to their mouths and kissed it. In other words, they would salute, then they would bring their hand to their mouths, and they would kiss the hand, and in this way, it was a genuine act of adoration!

Now Hosea says, 'let a true Jew do this! let a true Jew now come forward and we will see by his own actions, where his heart really is!

Then in verse 3, 'Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away; as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney'. My dear brethren and sisters and young people, I want to call this to your attention, Hosea here, now picks up terminology once again, that is familiar to every Israelite. Familiar to everyone that is familiar with the **soil**; and this is the principle that God works with all through the scripture of truth. He takes the things of nature that you and I see from day to day, and He picks them up as similes that we

might apply them to our spiritual life. Now He's talking about something here very nebulous; there isn't anything more nebulous than a morning cloud. We've flown through them in planes haven't we? they amount to nothing as we fly through them; from the ground then appear to be solid blocks of white, but when you fly through a cloud you see it is simply smoke, so it is nebulous, it's a morning cloud, it's early dew, as the chaff, as the smoke. Notice how nebulous are these similitudes that he gives! Four things most easy to be driven about and dissipated: they are employed here to show how the Israelites should be scattered among the nations; how they were going to be dissipated by their captivity. Israel could not fail to realize the strength of this comparison.

It's interesting as God comes to the judgment in the latter days. In Daniel, you'll remember that the image is that which is indicative and is representative of the kingdoms of men, it's reduced to dust as fine as the chaff of the summer threshing floor. The chaff, that which is worthless! that which is blown away. Then the 5 building blocks outlined in the 3rd chapter of 1 Corinthians, 'we have trees which are combustible, wood and hay and stubble and they are in contrast to that which is permanent, that is, gold, and silver. Here Hosea picks up the same thing, and shows Israel how nebulous has been their belief in the things of this world.

In verse 4 He says, 'I am Yahweh thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but Me; for there is no Saviour beside Me'. God's going back, isn't He? going back to that time when He actually sacrificed the nation of Israel, that Israel might be saved. When He sent 10 plagues at those gods in which they trusted, those plagues were directed against that in which Egypt placed their hope and their adoration, and God showed them their absolute powerlessness to save! He brought a plague on everyone of them, and now He reaches back and He shows them that there was only one Saviour and that Saviour was the one that brought them out of Egypt, and carried them safely into the Promised Land. Now they've turned their back on Him! This was the first revelation that I made unto you at the burning bush', He's actually saying, 'this was the first commandment that I gave unto you, and I showed you that beside Me there was no Saviour. I proved it, Israel, all you have to do is to look back, all that you have to do is there for you to view'. As the apostle Paul told Agrippa, 'these things were certainly not done in a corner, king Agrippa'.

B&S, before we condemn Israel, let us look to the eastern horizon, let our minds only go back just 6 months, let's forget the rise of Russia, let's forget the rise of Israel, let's forget all of the stupendous fulfilment of prophecy that is about us on every side; let us just go back 6 months and look at the miracle that took place in front of our very eyes. It was as though God was saying, 'I've asked you to walk by faith long enough, now I'm going to give you a visible manifestation, that I'm still here! that I'm guiding and directing to a pre-determined end, that as truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. Wake up, Israel! this is the modern day Hosea, he said, that is bringing you this glorious message of hope; that miracle, b&s, was the same message in Hosea which was given to natural Israel, and it was proof positive that we're not following

cunningly devised fables. But that's not the only one that we have, is it? They're about us on every side!

Verse 5 he says, 'I did know thee in the wilderness: in the land of great drought.' **In the land of great drought** and it says in the margin that it speaks of it as plural; a land of droughts, and certainly it was! Not only physical but it was spiritually a drought, b&s, but He says, I did know thee there, regardless of all this, I loved you and I miraculously provided for you in the land of drought, I demonstrated My love. You didn't go hungry in the wilderness, Israel, 40 years you were protected, you were guided and directed; and God knows us, b&s, and He provides for us in the wilderness today. We see it on every side, don't we? He knows of our distress and God commanded us, in everything by prayer and supplication to make our request known to Him; and in turn He says, 'I will never leave you or forsake you, nor suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will with that temptation, make a way that you may escape. David says, 'I was young and now I am old and yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken or His seed begging bread'.

In verse 6, 'According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten Me'. It's rather a paradox, isn't it? God on one hand had given them everything, on the other hand, Israel had given God nothing in return! God had filled their needs but Israel had not come to God, they had completely forgotten Him. They had a rich pasture, they were amply supplied with goods and they became exalted in their heart; and when they became exalted in their heart, b&s, another idol moved into their heart. They had forced God out! they forgot God, they became a prey to their enemies! We read in Luke 18 verse 14, don't we? 'he that exalteth himself shall be abased'; these are first principles, 'he that exalteth himself shall be abased'. Many times as you would turn those sheep into pastures that had become poisoned because of diseased sheep, what was the result? The result was diseased herds and many times dead sheep! of course, the exhortation is to spiritual Israel, 'let us be careful what we feed upon, b&s, that our food must be the fruit of the Spirit!

Verse 7, 'Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them'. The word 'lion' here is from 'shachal' (7826) and refers to the black lion frequently found in Ethiopia. The word 'leopard' (5246) is from the Hebrew word 'namer', so termed from its spotted skin. And He says, 'will I observe them?' The leopard, the tiger and the panther will hide themselves in thick brushwood where they would expect any prey to pass, and just as soon as it comes near, they will spring suddenly upon it. In other words, they shall be harassed even on their way to Assyria when going into captivity. What's He saying? He says, 'Israel, you have virtually said what the Jews are going to say 600 years hence; that we have no king but Caesar! and now you are going to see the difficulties that will arise, Israel, when you fall into the hand of flesh.

Verse 8, it says, 'I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend

the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them'. Now here we have a figure to denote **excessive ferocity**, we read of this in David's adventures in 2 Samuel 17 verse 8, these animals are in each of us, b&s, they are in each of us, and the exhortation and the command of scripture is, that those animals must be chained at all times. This is what Paul tells us in Romans 7 verse 21 and Matthew 15 verse 19, and there's a day coming when they shall be subdued, for we read in Isaiah 35 verse 9, that no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there'. We're talking about animal nature as well as the physical. We're talking about that time, b&s, 'when nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore!'. In this verse we read that 'will rend the caul of their heart', now every savage beast goes first to the seat of the blood, when it has finished its prey, because in this fluid they derive more than in the most delicate parts of the flesh. There God says, 'I will devour them like a lion', now the lion here is from the Hebrew word 'labiy' (3833) and it means 'the old strong lion', and drinking blood and tearing the flesh and breaking the bones to get to the marrow. Then it says, 'the wild beast (2416) shall tear them', this probably refers to the jackal, who frequently hunts down the prey, which the lion takes the liberty to devour while the jackal stands by and afterwards takes the bones. This is the reason why the jackal is called the 'lion's provider and the lion's waiting man'. These metaphors speak of the ferocity of His punishment, to be inflicted by the Assyrians. God is taking animals here and He's taking the habits of these animals and is illustrating to Israel something that they would see in daily life and He's showing them what is going to happen in them, because they too, have become animals. They had turned to the earth, they had turned to fleshly things, therefore, He says, you're going to get the punishment that is coming from an animal, Shalmaneser king of Assyria. Why He has chosen to put his name in the earth, has been laid out for us in the 17th chapter of Jeremiah.

Then He tells them why, b&s, verse 9, there is no mystery about it; Israel has done this to themselves, and every man, woman and child who suffers the same fate, has done it to themselves. God has given them the formula that they may escape these horrible things, God has given them the formula, God has given the blueprint in His book of life; yet man turns in direct opposition and so God tells us and Israel through Hosea, in this 9th verse, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed **thyself**; but (and now He draws the contrast) **in Me is thine help!**' In other words, God is telling them that these punishments are going to be brought about because of their own action. We're going back again to Galatians! 'be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap'. B&S, it is as true today as it was in the days of Hosea, if we are willing to spend our spare time in the pursuit of the things of the flesh and it makes no difference what those pursuits are, whether it is anything of the flesh that attracts our attention, from the Word of truth; if we spend one minute on these things, b&s, it takes from the Word of life. How important it is, that we rise up as men and women of action and that we better ourselves on every second of time that we possibly can, to give to the work and the study of the truth of God, without which we had been called in Christ Jesus our Lord. The exhortation is here, He warned us, b&s, that to do anything else is self

destruction; He said, 'Israel hath destroyed itself; and why did they destroy themselves? they turned to material things. this is exactly the reason why they destroyed themselves; they turned to the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life; they turned away from the God of Israel. You know, b&s, we bring trouble on ourselves by **the violation of God's Laws**.

'But in Me is thine help', He says, 'Though you hast destroyed thyself, yet in Me alone can thy help be found'. We hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, don't we? as He stands by the grave side of Lazarus and He says, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live!'

But then the prophecy expands and He says in verse 10, 'I will be thy King; where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, give me kings and princes'. God had proven this, b&s, all of the 10 plagues had been directed against those gods of Egypt; yet nothing could be done! God went into the midst of these after He had given mankind an opportunity to reverse those plagues. God gave man a chance first to see whether he was capable of rising to the situation; and man failed! He did the same thing in the courts of Nebuchadnezzar. God **did not move in first**, He let the wisdom of this world first take the test, to see whether they could answer the king's dream and after the word of man failed, then God moved in and He's doing exactly the same thing today. For 6,000 years God has given the wisdom of man an opportunity to solve the problems of this world, and where does man stand today? He stands at the crossroads as we're told in the 21st chapter of Luke, 'distress of nations', absolutely no way out! Now we're repeating history again, God is about to move in! He's done it from the beginning of time, and He's going to do it again; but He always gives man the first chance, to see what man will do, but man in every case has failed completely. Now God moves in! He's coming and He says, 'I will be thy King; where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities?' (this is referring to when they cast off to divine theocracy and chose Saul instead of Yahweh. It could also refer to the kings of the northern kingdom, beginning with Jeroboam I.

But there is a principle here at stake, b&s, and in verse 11 He says, 'I gave you a king in mine anger; I took him away in my wrath'. Such was Saul, for the people highly offended God when they clamoured to have a king like the heathen nations roundabout them. 'He took them away in His wrath', in other words, He permitted him and the Israelites to fall before the Philistines.

Then in verse 12, Hosea says, 'The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid', and here we've come to verses 12 to 16, to **the inescapable ruin** that results from Israel's actions. He says that it's registered in the courts of justice. 'I saw your actions, Israel, I've been examining your heart; I know what was in your heart! the death warranted is in store and will be produced in due time, though there be not at present a judgment inflicted which such glaring transgressions demand. Yet Israel it's going to come; I move slowly, He says, but I don't overlook things! I know what's going on; I move slowly but that judgment will come. Such crimes cannot go unpunished.' Oh, b&s, how we

need to realize this glorious truth, in the words of Hagar, 'Thou God seest me', He is about us at all times; we may condone sin in our lives but God knows that it's there. I can hide my sin from you, I can put on a front in front of you, b&s, you don't know my life; my heart may be black, you don't know. But the same is true with you! but we can't fool the God of Israel, can we? and b&s, we do not fool ourselves either, when we stand in front of that mirror, the true self comes towards us. These are the things that must be purged from our hearts and our minds in these days in which we live.

Verse 13, 'The sorrow of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children'. In other words, these judgments shall come suddenly and unavoidably; the same simile is used in reference to the second coming of Christ. Christ tells us that 'this is the beginning of sorrows' as He gives us a sign in Luke 21 and Matthew 24, He gives a fourfold sign of what was coming on the earth as the beginning of the time of the end. Time permitting tonight, b&s, we feel that we can show that that fourfold sign, which was the beginning of the end of that age, was: 1) World War I; 2) the greatest famine that the world has ever seen which took place in the Volga valley in Russia, where 40,000 people a day were dying from starvation; 3) where the greatest earthquake that the world has ever seen to this date took place in Indo-china in 1920, when the earth opened up and in a matter of seconds 200,000 were swept to their doom; and 4) the greatest epidemic that the world has ever seen, the influenza epidemic (1919). All 4 cataclysmic events happened in a period of 6 years, and Christ said they would be unprecedented and He calls it out as 4 events, and He says 'it's the beginning of sorrows'. The Greek word there is 'odin' (5604) and it means 'travail', and it is in reference to a woman giving birth to a child, the first great labour pain! and the second great labour pain was World War II, and it made World War I look like a dress rehearsal, and now the world looks with fear and trembling to World War III, the final manifestation when the final product of sin will be borne into the earth to be crushed by the seed of the woman! that conception that took place in the garden of Eden, that gestation period which has occupied something like 6,000 years, soon is to be born into the earth, and the 3rd chapter of Genesis at verse 15, will be fulfilled that, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head and thou shall bruise his heel'. This is the same thought that Hosea is speaking of here, when he takes this terminology up of 'the sorrows of a travailing woman'.

'The place of the breaking forth of children', as there is a critical time in childbirth in which the mother in hard labour may need sedatives and skilled doctors to relieve the much suffering and danger, so there was a time when Ephraim might have returned unto God. But they would not! therefore, they are now in danger of finally being destroyed. This same figure is used throughout the scriptures of truth!

In verse 14 he says, 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes'. In other words, in their captivity they're represented as being dead and buried. Much the same picture is given of Judah by Ezekiel in the 37th

chapter in the vision of the valley of dry bones. Now he says, 'the gracious purpose of God shall not be defeated, I will redeem them from death'; we're going back to the covenant of promise, aren't we? we're going back to a God that doesn't forget, a God that remembers that hope which He swear to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Israel shall live, I will fulfil My promise to the fathers; once purified you shall hope for eternal life; once purified, Israel, you're going to be the nucleus of My kingdom upon the mountains of Israel. You're going to be ruled over by 12 princes, and in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel, Christ told the apostle Peter: 'Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes', on these points, He says, I will not change My purpose!

Now in verse 15, 'Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of Yahweh shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels'. It's rather a re-enactment, isn't it? b&s, of the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy. Those curses that were to come upon the 12 tribes, not 2 tribes, not 10 tribes, but the 12 tribes of Israel; remember the 12 tribes of Israel, 6 on Mount Ebal and 6 on Mount Gerizim, that heard these decrees. It was the 12 tribes not the 2 or the 10 that said, 'all that the LORD has spoken we will do', and it's the 12 tribes that are suffering these trials and these tribulations. Here we're dealing with Israel, Judah was to follow because they were following in exactly the same pattern. But God says in verse 15, 'though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come'; it's too late now, Israel, you've had your chance and even though life should manifest itself in the vine, it will **not** prevent Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, from coming into the land and bringing desolation upon you! He says, 'an east wind shall come', just as the east wind parches and blasts all vegetation, so shall Shalmaneser blast and destroy the Israelitish state. He says the desolation will not be temporary, so that next year new plants can be set out, for the very springs will go dry; the source of fertility will be destroyed. Not only her agriculture, her rivers, her springs, her commercial power, her wealth and her costly treasure, **but** human life also. Oh, b&s, it's easy to see the far reaching effect of this prophecy, isn't it? We live in a world today that has followed in the exact pattern of Israel, and God tells us in 2nd chapter of Isaiah, that everything is going to be destroyed with that great earthquake, which shall knock this earth from its very foundations. Mankind is going to see those big buildings and those monuments that he's built to the glory of man; those fortresses in which he has placed his trust; those dams in which he's sought to conserve the water of the earth for his own preservation, all those things that he has done himself, that he might be saved, that he might block God completely out of existence, those things are going to be destroyed! **God says, 'I alone will be exalted in that day; thus will I be magnified in thine eyes, O Israel'**.

This is the counterpart of this! but the reason is the same; the reason, b&s, is the same! It goes back to the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy, oh, what a powerful lesson there is here! The nucleus of the entire gospel is wrapped up in that one verse, and this is the reason that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes to Mark 12 verse 29 says it's the greatest command in all scriptures! 'Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with (what?) **with all thine heart**'. Heart, b&s, the mind, everything that pertains to the human body,

to be saturated in the word of God! It's a basic principle! Israel forgot this! 'My people are destroyed for lack of His knowledge' and they failed. The world has forgotten it, the world cares nothing for it, and they're about to be crushed. Where does spiritual Israel stand tonight? are they like the one in the first Psalm, that says, 'he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water'? why will he be like a tree? because 'in His law doth he meditate day and night!' He loves God, He's in his heart, God's his driving force and how did he get God in his heart? b&s, because he meditated in that law day and night. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God' and that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. This is a picture of the coming judgments of God, and those coming judgments are for the same reason that they came on Israel and Judah, **'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge'** and it is not secular wisdom, b&s, there's more secular wisdom in the world today than ever in the history of mankind. More secular wisdom today than ever in the history of mankind, where is that secular wisdom leading? it's leading to annihilation, it's leading to destruction, and the reason it's leading to destruction is that the world is being destroyed for lack of knowledge, true wisdom, and that knowledge comes from Almighty God.

So in verse 16, 'Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up'. Where was Samaria? it was the capital of the Israelitish kingdom, and in brief, b&s, these words simply speak of its complete and total destruction. Why? because they forgot God! and such has been the history of mankind. The flood, why did the flood come? because the thoughts and the imagination of the heart of man was only evil continually; why was Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed? the same reason. Why is Israel and Judah now going to be taken into captivity? the same reason. Why did Christ say to Israel, 'your house is left unto you desolate'? They said, 'we have no king but Caesar; give us Barabbas the son of Adam, we don't want Christ! This was the reason, and this was the reason for the siege and sack of Jerusalem, b&s. Why are the nations of the world about to be offered in sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel? why? because every man must die! and he either accepts the death that God has provided through the Lord Jesus Christ or he himself becomes that sacrifice; man has that choice! The nations of the world will not accept that sacrifice, so God says, 'very well, you've made the choice, I didn't do it! and now you're going to be destroyed upon the mountains of Israel.

CHAPTER 14

Now in chapter 14, He gives a call to repentance! O what a beautiful ending, b&s. Thirteen chapters in which we have a record of Israel going down, down, down. Going below that of the nations of the world even! the nations of the world looked upon Israel as an evil community, too low for them to associate with, from a social standpoint. This was where Israel had fallen, but God had not forgotten! Thirteen chapters in which we've experienced this, now as we conclude, we see **the God of mercy**, the God that's permitted you and me to address Him as 'our Father, which art in heaven; hallowed be

Thy name', and He in turn, He in turn, b&s, looks down on us as His children. Think of that! this is the message that comes to us.

Verse 1, He says, 'O Israel, return unto Yahweh', return unto Yahweh. Can you imagine! now as the promise projects itself into the future, **the Israel here is gone**, b&s. He's projecting it into the future and He's not only speaking to natural Israel, He's speaking to a group of brethren and sisters here in Enfield, Australia tonight, who can see the second coming of Christ, who can see the rising of the first dawn of Zion's glad morning, and He's saying, '**return unto Yahweh**'. How do we return unto Him? b&s, we return every morning, noon and night through prayer and supplication. Every day of our lives, if we let ourselves go, b&s, we drift away, we don't like to hear that, do we? but it's so true! The minute that we stay away from our readings one day, the minute that we stay away from the precious study of the Word of God, just one day, we **drift**. This is one of the most profound laws that there is in the universe today, we don't stand still in the truth, we either progress or we retrogress and the choice is ours. The way we progress, b&s, is through a constant and daily meditation upon the things of Almighty God. This is the reason for that exhortation to '**return unto Yahweh**'. We need that exhortation, b&s, and we return through prayer and supplication and meetings such as this! We return by leaving the sins of the world in the background and coming towards Yahweh, return unto Yahweh; it projects itself into the future! and this verse speaks to us of a God who is abundant in mercy, ever ready to draw near unto those who will genuinely repent and turn again to Him.

'The trouble with you, Israel, He's saying, is that somewhere along the way you got smart; and you thought, Israel, you could go it alone; you wanted to run your own show, but the truth is Israel, we've found yourself unable to do so'. Isn't that the story of the world today? they think they too can run their own show! Sis Hatcher had told me many times that Lyndon B. Johnson, who is firmly convinced, b&s, that by his own ingenuity he can bring peace to the world, and she says, 'he's thoroughly dedicated in that belief'. Thoroughly dedicated and that he needs no other help except his own ability to bring peace to the earth. He's doing a great job, isn't he? a great job! he's not ready to draw near unto the God of Israel; he is not ready to draw near unto Him and realize that of his own self, he can do nothing! and yet we have a God who is ever ready to draw near unto us, b&s, He only asks that we genuinely repent, and turn again to Him, no matter how far we stray from His will. The trouble is, He says, that you fail to remember the prodigal son, when he said, '**I will rise and go to my father**'.

Now Hosea says in verse 2, 'Take with you words, and turn to Yahweh: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips'. Now, b&s, follow closely! He says first of all, **return**, in other words, God is saying here, **in mercy He will pardon**. Secondly, He says, '**take with you words**', here we have the counterpart of conception spoken of in James 1 where it says, 'of His own will, begat He us by the word of truth'. Then He says, '**turn to Yahweh**', here we have a picture of the new birth in John 3, and when read '**take away all iniquity**' we have that of forgiveness given to us in the 6th chapter of Romans and also Romans 8 verse 1;

then when He says, '**receive us graciously**', we have coming into the family of God in Ephesians 2. Then when we're told that '**we will render the calves of our lips**', we are speaking here of the dedicated life that's spoken of in the 5th chapter of Galatians.

Now He says:

firstly, 'take with you words', that is, My words which I put in your mouth, not those of the flesh and the idols that you have followed, Israel. Note the seven steps that are outlined here, b&s, during these merciful invitations, believe them to be true! Now let's apply them to ourselves;

secondly, he says, 'cast aside your idols; return to God as your Maker, as your King and your Saviour;

thirdly, take with you the words by which you have been encouraged and plead them before God.

Fourthly, remember your iniquity, and not only remember it, Israel, but deeply deplore it. Beg of God to take it all away!

Fifthly, faithfully receive what God waits to impart; when Thou hast emptied us of evil, and what a prayer for us, b&s, when we have been emptied of evil, pray to God to fill that void with His goodness, with His knowledge, with those things that will grant us eternal life in the kingdom of God. Faithfully receive what God waits to impart and then, having just been cleansed, let us determine to live unto His glory, rendering sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving, gratitude, and of hearty obedience which our lips have promised. Last of all, having thus determined, specify your resolutions to depend on God alone, for all that can make you wise, useful, holy and happy.

But you see, Israel would not have had to rededicate themselves to these glorious truths, had they remembered that first command, b&s, 'thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, with all thy strength, with all thy mind; thou shalt have no graven images before thee'. It was all embodied there, but now Hosea is practically repeating that same thing, and he's sending it down to spiritual Israel tonight.

Verse 3, 'They shall say in that day, 'Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy'. It's a picture of Israel in the future age, isn't it? it's a picture of that time when they will say, 'we'll neither trust in nor fear this rich and powerful king; we will not look to the rich and powerful for true rest and peace of mind; and we think of those words of David, 'to 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'. We will not ride upon horses, in other words, we shall no longer fix our hopes on the proud Egyptian cavalry to deliver us out of the hand of our enemies. This was the reason why God did not want Israel to have horses, they were

not to place their hope in horses! They were to place their hope in Him; we will expect no less or satisfaction or happiness from the things of the flesh. You know the Arabs have a very beautiful description of friendship and it reads like this: 'A friend, they say, is one to whom one may pour out all the contents of one's heart; the chaff and the grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will take it and sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away'. Beautiful, isn't it? b&s, and it's a picture of that glorious future age actually!

Then they will say, 'neither will we say anymore to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods': we will not trust in anything or anyone but Yahweh, He will know that we have nothing but that which we have received from Thee. It reminds us of the prophecies of Zechariah, doesn't it? of a picture of that day when Israel is going to be purified and cleansed. God shall look on them and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be their God!

Now we read, 'for in Thee the fatherless find mercy'. Israel will at last realize that they are helpless, that they will say, 'we are helpless, we are desolate, we are perishing often, until we are translated into Thy family'. This is nothing new, b&s, 2,000 years ago the Lord Jesus Christ gave us that example, didn't He? when He said, 'of My own self, I can do nothing'. Of My own self, I can do nothing, and we think of the 2nd chapter of Philippians where He had become mentally and morally equal with God, and yet He thought that equality not a thing to be grasped at, but He emptied Himself and became as a servant, in other words, He had the unlimited power of the universe at His disposal, **but not once**, not once, b&s, did He use that power to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Of my own self I can do nothing; my Father is greater than I' (John 5 verse 30) and because that attitude was there, the Father hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name. That's what we aspire to, b&s.

So God tells them through Hosea, that once this attitude becomes theirs, **it is going to heal their backsliding**; I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him'. I will heal their backsliding (verse 4), here we have the answer of God to their prayers. Ye have backslided and fallen and are grievously and mortally wounded by that fall, but I who am the author of life, I will redeem from death, and will heal all those wounds and spiritual diseases. He says, **I will love them freely**, the Hebrew word here is 'nedabah' (5071) which means 'after a liberal princely manner', not merely a love of affection, but a beneficial love, an agape love, a love that knows absolutely no ending, a love that will fill them with delight making them supremely happy! **For mine anger is turned away from him**, why was His anger turned away from him? very simple, b&s, because Israel had turned back to the God of Israel. He's turned back to Me, God says, and thus because Israel has done this, because I stand firm, because I never moved and because Israel has turned back to Me, then in this way Israel and I can again become friends! It is not enough for God to forgive our sins, we must forsake them, b&s, absolutely forsake them; and in this healing we have a glorious picture, a glorious picture that is laid out for us in Exodus 15, and with this we would like to conclude in a few moments.

So let's go on for a moment, God says to them in verses 5 and 6, and notice, I want you to notice the goodness and the severity of God. The goodness and severity of God, just a few moments ago, they were looking upon God and God was coming to them as a nebulous thing in the dew, a nebulous thing in the dew, but now that nebulous thing has become a thing of blessing. Interesting, isn't it? So verses 5 and 6 we read, 'I will be as the dew unto Israel and he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. **He shall be as the dew unto Israel** and he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. The blessings that will accrue to Israel are likened now to that refreshment which copious dews give to the grass in summer, and if we consider the nature of the climate, and the necessity of the dews in hotter countries, not only to refresh but to preserve life; if we consider the beauty of the oriental lily, the fragrance of the cedars that grow upon Lebanon, the beauty of appearance of the spreading olive trees abroad, the exhilarating cool that is caused by the shade of such trees; and the aromatic smell that's hurled by the cedars; we shall then partly understand the force of the metaphors, b&s, employed here by the prophet. This joy is reserved for spiritual Israel also!

It takes us back again to the first psalm, doesn't it? 'That he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper'. Then he says that **Israel shall blossom as the lily**, now the lily in Palestine is not only beautiful, it is prolific; in the day of Israel's redemption it can truly be said, 'let the beauty of Yahweh be upon us'. Sin takes the bloom from us, b&s, it takes the bloom of life away! But one of these days, sin is going to be removed, and the desert is going to blossom as the rose; remember, the Lord Jesus Christ not only redeemed you and me at Calvary, He also wore a crown of thorns! He also wore a crown of thorns, that curse which came upon the earth, and so there is a dual manifestation in Calvary, not only is mankind redeemed, the earth is redeemed and the thorns and thistles will be removed now and the desert will blossom as the rose.

Verse 6, '**His branches shall spread**', he will not be like the seed sown in shallow soil, but he will be well grounded. Verse 7, '**They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon**'. Oh, b&s, under His shadow, under the shadow of those wings, under the shadow of the everlasting arms of the God of Jeshurun, under His wings, under the protective custody that glorious picture that comes to us even out of the first chapter of Genesis where the Spirit of God **moved** upon the face of the waters or the Spirit of God **hovered** over the face of the waters. That moving or hovering is a fluttering motion of a bird as it covers its eggs in the art of hatching; that protection, God was actually protecting those 7 days of creation. He wasn't obligated to it, He was hovering over it, and now we're under that shadow, you and I are under that shadow tonight, b&s, under the shadow of the everlasting arms that are reaching out and protecting us in this night of trouble! 'They that dwell under His shadow shall return', we think of the 91st Psalm, don't we? the Targum reads, 'They shall be gathered together

from the midst of their captivity, they shall dwell under the shadow of His Christ and the dead shall revive! Then he says, **they shall revive as the corn**, the beauty of this metaphor is not generally perceived, for after the corn has been a short time above the earth, in a single spike, the blades begin to separate and the stalk to spring out of the centre. The side leaves turn back to make room for the protruding stalk and falls bending down to the earth, assuming a withered appearance while still attached to the plant. To look at the corn in this state when unacquainted with the circumstances, one could not have any hope of a copious harvest; but in a short time, other leaves spring out, the former leaves begin to stand erect and the whole thing seems to revive from a vegetative death. This has been another example that God is giving the children of Israel, something that they would be very familiar with in nature, to show that the resurrection is the gospel hope.

So in verse 8 he says, **'Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found'**. What have I to do any more with idols? when Israel, the 12 tribes, spoken of in the 39th chapter of Ezekiel, when the 12 tribes are at last purified and redeemed, they with the world will see the utter futility of worshipping anyone but Yahweh. I am like a green fir tree, no longer will Israel be dead, but they shall reflect that life which is to be given to the dry bones spoken of in Ezekiel 37. They shall experience a joy spoken of in Psalm 1, that he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters. They shall say, from me is thy fruit found, Israel will be at last, the fruit bearing vine that God originally intended them to be, b&s, they will not only be bearing leaves and shoots as spoken of in Luke 21 and Matthew 24, as we see today, but then they will be bearing fruit because they will be purified, they will be redeemed, they will be the nucleus of God's kingdom on earth! **from me is thy fruit found**. They're showing life today but they're not bearing fruit! remember, b&s, that we **cannot** project God, as long as we are filled with flesh, and this is Israel's trouble today. It's that simple, 'out of the abundance of the heart, the man speaketh'. If your heart is ruled by God, we project God! if our heart is ruled by flesh, we project flesh! This is as basic and fundamental as night and day.

Now in verse 9, b&s, verse 9, what a beautiful picture we have! But once again, before we come to the glorious conclusion, I want to for just a moment, to go back to the 15th chapter of Exodus, where God originally stated that He would **heal Israel**. But He also stated, b&s, that He would **heal all those** who come to God by Him. Now this is nothing new, every Christadelphian knows this, but it's well to remind ourselves of it, b&s. When the apostle Paul says that 'these things are written aforetime for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the scripture might have hope', he means exactly what he says! We read in verse 25 of an instance that we're all familiar with, that after the children of Israel had come to the waters of Marah, they found them bitter and they cried unto Yahweh, and Yahweh showed them a tree, which when He had cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet, and there He made for them a statute, and there He proved them! That tree was a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, wasn't it? and it healed those waters and God said, 'If thou wilt **diligently** hearken', now note that word 'diligently' (3966) again, b&s, this is so important in our lives! It is so

important that we do our daily readings, it's so important that we come to the classes and study the word of God; that word 'diligently' means '**to concentrate on the word of God**', not to come here night after night or to participate in our daily readings with our minds filled and clogged with the things of this life. We cannot diligently seek the God of Israel if such is the case, but to cleanse our hearts, to cleanse our minds and to come with a sincere desire to let these things infiltrate every phase of our life. **If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Yahweh thy Elohim and will do that which is right in His sight**, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee'.

Now this was the botch of Egypt, this was a disease that was incurable! It was a very fitting example of leprosy; it was a very fitting example of cancer, it was a terminal disease and it represents the body which we have in a natural state today! In that body spoken of in Ephesians 2, where 'there is no hope, and without God in the world', but now we're in Christ Jesus and if we keep these commandments diligently, He says, '**He is Yahweh that healeth thee**' - Yahweh Ropheka, I am the LORD that healeth thee; the great Healer! It's pointing forward to the great Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who has the power to heal! Verse 27, '**And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water**', which speaks of that healing coming only through the commonwealth of Israel, the covenants of promise! '**and threescore and ten palm trees**, which speaks of the days, b&s, when the nations of the world will know Yahweh from the least unto the greatest. When 10 men out of every nation shall take hold of the skirt of him that is Jew; saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you! Now we should enlarge on this considerably tonight, b&s, but I want to go back, once again, to Hosea 14, for here this word is picked up and here Yahweh Ropheka comes to our aid again!

God has been telling them that He's the One that can **heal**; He's been telling them that He can **save**, I demonstrated this in Egypt, He says. In verse 4 He says, 'I will heal their backsliding; the great Physician, Yahweh Ropheka will heal; the healing is the work of Yahweh Ropheka, it's fulfilment is predicated completely, b&s, upon the obedience of that first command, that 'thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and all thy strength and all thy mind'. In other words, it is incorporated in the words

'**trust and obey**', Yahweh Ropheka came into your life and mine the day we went through the waters of baptism. This is the reason we are told as a community in Romans 8 verse 1, 'there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus; who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit'. What's he saying? The great Physician realizes that the cause of death is sin, but in the Lord Jesus Christ there is forgiveness of that sin! Yahweh Ropheka has step into our lives and through His position as mediator at the right hand of God tonight, we come before Him, begging and pleading before the throne of grace, with hearts that are **diligently** tuned to Him, b&s. This is something to remember, and as our brother comes before the throne of grace, in a few moments, when pleading our cause before the God of Israel, let not one fleshly thought enter into our hearts and minds. Let us concentrate on every word that he says,

let us make his prayer our prayer; and we will leave this place, b&s, if our heart is right, if we diligently consider these things, if He has a place in our hearts, we will leave this place tonight, my dear brethren and sisters, with robes of white. God says this, 'I want to come to you but I want you to come to Me, and I want you to come to me with your heart. **I am Yahweh Ropheka that healeth thee**'. This is the message that He tried to drive home to Israel through Hosea, b&s. It is the central message of this book, and it's a message that comes ringing down to spiritual Israel in these closing days of Gentile darkness! and it can be that which will give us eternal life in the kingdom of God.

With this He says, '**Who is wise and he shall understand these things? who is prudent and he shall know them**'; for the ways of Yahweh are right; the just shall walk in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein'. Who is wise and he shall understand these things? the things which relate to the backsliding, the iniquity and the punishment of Israel! The things that relate to the mercy, the forgiveness and the promised restoration, promised by Almighty God. Not the things that belong to the works of sin, but the things that are in contrast which belong to the mercy which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. He says, 'the prudent shall know them', he who seeks to understand, he who seeks diligently, b&s, he who is not willingly ignorant, as Peter says, he who seeks to understand them, he who puts his whole energy into seeking them out! Such a person shall obtain wisdom, and the words of James come ringing to us, 'if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God which giveth to all men liberally; but let him ask, how? in faith nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed', and He warns us, b&s, that that man shall receive absolutely nothing of the Lord'. 'For the ways of Yahweh are right', this is the grand conclusion of the prophet; all God's conduct both in the dispensation of judgment and mercy is **right**; all as it should be, all as it must be, why? because He is too wise to err. Too good to be unkind! The same sun that softens the wax, b&s, also hardens the clay, and never forget it!

Then He says, 'the just shall walk in them', in other words, those who are called according to His purpose will do their utmost to walk uprightly at the present time, and in the age to come, they shall be a part of that glorious memorial name! Then He says, 'but the transgressors (or those who follow the pattern that is laid down here by Ephraim in this prophecy) they shall fall therein', however good they might have been before, if they do not consider the necessity of complete dependence on God, of receiving all their life, their power and their love from Him, ever exhibiting that faith which worketh by love, maintaining an obedient conduct and having respect to all God's precepts; **if they do not do these things**, in other words, if they do not seek Me **diligently** they shall fall even in the way of righteousness. They shall be like Ephraim, once delivered from Egypt, but misled by Baal with the ultimate goal of suffering in death.

Oh, b&s, how instructive, how convincing, how awakening and yet how conciliatory are the words of this prophecy! He who is well instructed will make a proper application of this prophecy, he will tremble at His threatenings, but he will rejoice in the hope and

mercy that is extended therein by the God of Israel.

As I leave you, my dear brethren and sisters, it will be my fervent prayer, as I cross over the sea back to America, that these glorious principles may be so well founded in your life and mine, that we may continue the sweet fellowship that we have known, one with the other in Australia, throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. I'm sure that we cry out together, as we conclude this prophecy of Hosea, **this is all our salvation and all our desire**. May we remember those words of Joshua, as he looked out upon the world of the ungodly, and in a very free translation, b&s, he said, 'you can serve who you want to; if you want Caesar, take Caesar! if you want flesh, take flesh; if you want death, then death is yours. But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh!