

The Minor Profits

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[0 : 00] Well, in order to get Hosea underway, the first place we have to stop is in Romans chapter 11 for just a couple of verses and some explanatory remarks that I think need to be made before we engage Hosea.

And the reason I say that is because the prophecy that God reveals through Hosea and the love and devotion that is behind it is perhaps the greatest example of divine love that is expressed anywhere in the Old Testament.

And the only way it is exceeded in the New is that it culminates in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And there is, of course, no greater love that God could demonstrate than that which he did through the sacrifice of his Son.

But if we have something that wonderfully expresses the love of God in the Old Testament, long before Jesus ever came on the scene, it is this incredible, incredible prophecy and acting out, if you will, on the part of Hosea that is found in this book that bears his name.

I do not think there is any place in all of the Old Testament that so vividly sets forth the love of God as the prophecy of Hosea and what he is called upon to do.

[1 : 31] Most of us will look at the demands that were made of Hosea. And I know exactly what the response of the typical human would be. And sad to say, even that of some Christian humans, and that is what God asked Hosea to do, is not fair.

Not fair. God shouldn't expect that of anybody. And that is a typical human response, and it is arrived at because we have our own perspective, our estimation, which is severely limited about everything, including our understanding and comprehension.

God has a perspective that is full, entire, complete. God and God alone is able to see everything in reality, everything as it really is, and whatever he decides to do is the thing to do.

There is an expression that I hope will stick in your minds because it is a very powerful one and a very biblical one, although it doesn't sound right on the surface, and it is this.

God does not do what is right. But, even though God does not do what is right, what God does is right.

[3 : 03] Big difference. Big difference. When we look at right and wrong, we have some kind of a standard or gauge by which to measure it. And we can look at a situation and say, that's wrong or that's right.

Because we are accustomed to a standard of right and wrong that is severely limited by our perspective and our comprehension. But when you understand that God does not do what is right, but what God does is right, then you come to grips with the reality that God is the standard.

He sets the standard. When we say what is wrong or what is right, we always have some basis of comparing it with to determine what is right or what is wrong.

We have a sense of right and wrong, and we use that to compare it. But we do so by using a standard. We have a standard of right and wrong. And what I'm telling you is, God is the standard.

He himself is the standard. He sets the standard. And all that matters is what is right or wrong in his estimation as opposed to ours. Because we see as man sees, God looks on the heart.

[4 : 23] And here in Romans chapter 11, just to set the stage for what is coming, because we're going to need this to reinforce it, Hosea is going to be involved in some very, very extraordinary circumstances.

Verse 33, down near the end of the chapter of Romans 11. Oh, the depth. This is a conclusion. This is a conclusion that the Apostle Paul is reaching based on the information that he has just given.

And the wrap-up to this conclusion is what he is saying is, Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and unfathomable his ways.

For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who became his counselor? Or who has first given to him that it might be paid back to him again?

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen. And here in verse 34, he is quoting, if you've got a New American Standard, which happens to be the translation that I have, you'll see that verses 34 and 35 are in capital letters.

[5 : 53] And that is an indication that this is a quote that Paul is inserting here from the Old Testament. And it is taken from Isaiah chapter 40. And he is asking a couple of rhetorical questions.

And the issue has to do with man's wisdom as opposed to God's wisdom. And here Paul is using Isaiah to establish a comparison. And he says, who has known the mind of the Lord?

Rhetorical question demands a negative answer. And the answer is, of course, no one. No one. No human being knows the mind of the Lord. Because the mind of the Lord is omniscient.

That means he's all-knowing. Nothing escapes him. Or who became his counselor? Can you imagine God sitting down at a table with a mere human being or even an angel?

And saying, I'm facing a real dilemma here. And I would like some advice. Can you help me? Well, of course, that is absurd. Because we're talking about the infinite difference that exists between deity and humanity.

[7 : 00] And he's asking these questions to set forth a ridiculous kind of scene. Or who has first given to him that it might be paid back to him again?

In other words, who do you know to whom God owes anything? Is there anyone who has given to God in such a way that God has incurred a debt?

And that God looks at that individual who has given so much and say, I must repay him. Absurd. Ridiculous. That's the whole point that is being made.

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen. So, with that introductory thought in mind, let us go back now to Hosea, Hosea, which happens to be the first in the traditional order of the minor prophets.

But it is not the first. He is not the first in connection with the chronology. And we are rather taking the chronological approach to the minor prophets because I want you to see these events as history develop them.

[8 : 18] Bear in mind, if you will, that in the very first verse we are given the chronology because it is established based on who the kings were and who was reigning at the time.

And that way we can, in a very effective way, plug in the time frame in which Hosea ministered. And the very first verse reads this way.

The word of the Lord, which came to Hosea, the son of Berai, during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Now remember, this is dealing with the situation wherein the nation of Israel has become two nations. The division has already taken place, and it did so under Rehoboam.

So we've got ten tribes to the north and two tribes to the south. The north seceded from the Union. And instead of there being a minority seceding from the Union, they were the majority.

[9 : 32] They were ten tribes that pulled out of the Union, leaving the two tribes in the south, that is Judah and Benjamin. And Hosea is one of the prophets, one of the prophets, as we saw with Amos, raised up of God to deliver his message to the northern ten tribes.

And it is during the reigns of these kings, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah. That's the two tribes in the south.

And during the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel. So I want you to note there, we've got a distinction between the kings of Judah and the king of Israel.

It is the king of Israel who will be on the throne during the time that Amos is prophesying to the northern ten tribes. This Jeroboam is actually Jeroboam II.

The first Jeroboam was the one who originally came to the throne, was the first king of the northern ten tribes. He is referred to as Jeroboam I, the son of Nebat, that made Israel to sin.

[10 : 42] This is the guy who had been exiled to Egypt, this Jeroboam, had been exiled to Egypt by Solomon. And when Solomon died, Rehoboam came to the throne.

They seceded from the union, and then they called Jeroboam, this guy that Solomon had run out of the country.

They called him back from Egypt, and he came and established the new city in Samaria, which became the capital of the northern ten tribes. So this Jeroboam is not to be confused with the first Jeroboam.

And then we've got in verse 2, when the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, boy, this is getting right down to business.

This very second verse, this incredible commission is laid upon this man that I think any normal married man would look at it and say, whoa, that is really heavy.

[11 : 45] Is this an unreasonable demand that God is making of Hosea, or what? When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry, and have children of harlotry, for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord.

And that little word for could very well be translated, especially in connection with meaning, because, or in light of the fact.

So reading it, go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry, and have children of harlotry, because the land, and of course he's talking about these northern ten tribes, commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord.

And what is going to be depicted here is a very bizarre marriage relationship. And it is going to be between Hosea and Gomer, the wife he is taking, and that relationship is to depict the greater relationship that exists between God and Israel.

This is a human, a very human, earthly picture, describing the counterpart, which is going to take place on a much greater scene between God, who had established himself as the husband of Israel, and Israel that had been established as his wife.

[13 : 32] And when did that begin? That began way back in Egypt, when God called the children of Israel out of Egypt, he took the position of being married, if you will, to the nation of Israel.

And Israel was his wife, and he was the husband. And as such, it was his responsibility to provide for her, and to protect her. And that is precisely what he did, all the way through the wilderness wandering, and everything in connection with that.

But now, Israel has prostituted herself as a nation. She has gone a-whoring after other strange gods.

She has engaged in despicable idolatry, particularly in connection with the Baal worship and the fertility cults.

These were pagan religious worships that were carried out in the temple that involved prostitutes, male and female, every kind of sexual immorality and impurity that you can imagine.

[14 : 43] This is what was going on in the north. It's also what will be going on in the south, because both of these, in the divided nation of Israel, both of these are going to be judged by God Almighty for the simple reason that they have forsaken him and have gone after other gods.

And these other gods were those deities that the neighbors surrounding them worshipped, and they had fallen into this same old pit. They had turned their back on the Lord.

In other words, Israel, as a nation, had been unfaithful to the God who cared for them, protected them, delivered them, and loved them.

And he is going to use a human object lesson to display the vices and the sin of the nation of Israel, and he's going to use a flesh and blood human being who lived among these people to call them out for their evil.

And it's going to be quite a soap opera, to say the least. It's going to be very dramatic. Now, one can only wonder that these things probably, in a nation that had gone so far down morally and spiritually, that Hosea's activity might not be all that distressing to a lot of people, because after all, the whole nation was pretty much given over to this.

[16 : 08] But you've got to remember that Hosea also had family. He had friends. He had neighbors. He had people who were going to be witnessing this thing. And it was going to be a very bold object lesson.

And long story short, what all of this is going to prove to be in the end, we want to talk a little bit about the end before we get there, it's going to be a justifiable and explanatory demonstration of absolutely incredible love on the part of the God of Israel for a wayward nation.

It is just going to be so dramatic and so powerful that you are going to get the impression, I think is inevitable, is that God is hooked on humanity.

God has a thing about those that he has created in his image and in his likeness that he cannot let go. It is an incomparable love.

And fellas, we can be most grateful for that. God demonstrated his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

[17 : 27] While we were thumbing our nose at him, he died for us. For scarcely for a good man would one dare to die, yet for a righteous man one would even dare to die.

But God, but God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners. In other words, Jesus didn't die for his friends, he died for his enemies.

Isn't that amazing? That is amazing. That is amazing. So, in verse 2, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry, because each of these children are going to be given a name that will illustrate what's going on in this corrupt nation.

Have children of harlotry because the land, and he talks about the land, of course, he's talking about the inhabitants. The land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord.

So, he went. Wow. How much of this did he struggle with before he went? You know, this is an exact opposite of Jonah.

[18 : 40] Remember Jonah? God says, go to Nineveh. And Jonah says, nothing doing. And he headed in the opposite direction. Now, I don't know what, because we're not told, but when God revealed to Hosea that this is what he wanted him to do, don't you think in his humanity that Hosea had some second thoughts about this?

Did God really say that? Did he really mean that? Or was I dreaming? Or actually, it wouldn't have been a dream.

It would have been a nightmare. Was that what it was? Am I imagining things? Could God actually expect me to do that? And do you know what?

Interesting thing is going to take place here. In that, God is going to ask Hosea to do something that he had already forbidden others to do.

And that is, when you marry a wife, we'll look at this in Deuteronomy later, but we probably won't get there this point. When you marry a wife, and you obtain a divorce from her for whatever reason, and then she goes and marries somebody else, and should she be divorced from that second husband, you are not permitted to take her back again as your wife.

[20 : 13] And yet, that is precisely what he is telling Hosea to do. So, we'll look at the conundrum that develops between God having established the law, and then, apparently, violating his own law.

Think about that. And I have some comments that I'll share with you from another commentator that I think are very insightful, and we'll look at that in our next week together. So, he went.

We aren't given any indication of a transaction in between. We aren't given any indication that Hosea is saying, Now, Lord, I think I heard what you said, but it is so bizarre and so different, I'm sure that I've got it wrong.

Would you please run that by me again, what it is you want me to do? I cannot help but believe some kind of an exchange took place, some kind of reservations. I mean, after all, Hosea is a man.

He's a human being. What would you think if someone of authority came to you and told you that's what they expected you to do? And what would you think if you knew it was God? So, he went.

[21 : 25] And he took Gomer, the daughter of Deblame. Now, all we know is that was her father's name. And she conceived and bore him a son.

Now, he already had to know that this woman had sold herself probably in the temple of Baal where these cult worships were taking place.

And she may very well have been a prostitute with a price on her head. So, Hosea secures this woman. And she, of course, is ready to be sold to the highest bidder, whatever.

And he took Gomer, the daughter of Deblame. And he obviously went in unto her. He impregnated her. And she conceived and bore him a son. And the Lord said to him, Name him Jezreel.

Now, that doesn't mean a thing to us, but it meant a lot to them. Because Jezreel just happened to be the place where enormous bloodshed had been experienced not too long before this.

[22 : 35] It was a place of catastrophe. It would be almost like someone having a baby today. And they named the baby Watergate.

Or some infamous name that would immediately strike a chord with everyone who heard it. And it would be the name associated with something that was not good.

It was bad. And who in the world wants to name their child after something that is bad? Like, name him Jezreel.

That would be, what are you going to call your baby? I'm going to name him Massacre. What? Massacre? Yeah, Massacre. Because that's what took place at Jezreel.

That would have been an historical thing that was uppermost in the minds. And when he told people that his baby, his son's going to be named Jezreel, you may be sure that people's eyebrows popped up.

[23 : 40] Jezreel? What are you going to call him that for? Well, let's read on. For yet a little while, I will punish the house of Jehu. And Jehu was the king of the northern kingdom at the time.

For the bloodshed of Jezreel. The massacre that took place there. And I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.

Think of that. This kingdom was established in 931 B.C. 931 years before Christ was born, this kingdom of Israel, northern ten tribes, with its new capital of Samaria, and a new throne and a new priesthood, neither of which were legitimate, that was their time of origin.

And in 722 B.C., about what? 200? Maybe 209 years after Samaria was established as the capital, after the northern ten tribes had pulled away from the Union, about 209 years later, it's all going to come crashing down.

The city of Samaria is going to be under siege. People are going to be starving to death. They are going to resort to cannibalism. The Assyrians are going to come in and decimate the city of Samaria.

[25 : 08] And they are going to carry a huge number of Israelites off to Assyria in captivity. Now this is long before the two southern tribes fall to Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar.

This is much earlier. Okay? This is 722 B.C. And this is what he means when he says, I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.

And it will come about on that day, that is, the day that I put an end to the kingdom, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

Breaking the bow means they are going to be defenseless. They will have bows that are worthless. They cannot defend themselves with the typical bow and arrow that existed at that time.

I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. And then she conceived again. Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter.

[26 : 13] And the Lord said to him, Name her Loruamah. Well, what does Loruamah mean? It means, no longer my people.

No longer my people. What God is going to do is dissociate himself as a husband from Israel. There is an official kind of divorce that is going to take place here.

And these northern ten tribes that are carried into Assyrian captivity are not going to return to the land. Like Judah will, when they are taken to Babylonian captivity, they'll be there for 70 years, and then they'll return to the land under Nehemiah the wall builder and Zerubbabel, and they will reestablish and rebuild the temple and everything.

There isn't going to be any return for the northern ten tribes. And this is, by the way, why they have throughout history been referred to as the lost ten tribes. But in fact, they were not lost at all.

They were carried into Assyrian captivity, and there they intermarried with their captors. And those Jews, those Israelites, who remained behind, that the Assyrians, that the Assyrians typically and purposely left in the land, didn't take them away, they left them in the land, to maintain and to farm the soil, and to produce goods and services that would be shipped then to Assyria.

[27 : 43] And they used them literally as slaves, and guess who intermarried with these Israelites that were left behind? Those who had conquered them, the Assyrians.

The Assyrians were there as an occupational force, and they were there to continue to rule over the Jews that were left behind in the northern kingdom.

And as often happens in the case of boy meets girl, our GIs did it when we occupied Germany. How many boys came home with a German war bride?

And how many boys came home from Japan and Korea with Asian war brides? Because boy meets girl works everywhere. You know, they fall in love and they meet, and the next thing you know, and that's exactly what happened in these northern ten tribes.

With the Jews that were left behind, they intermarried with their captors, and produce what is going to be known as a whole new race of people, and they will be called the Samaritans.

[28 : 48] And the Samaritans and the Jews are going to have a running kind of conflict, because the Jews in the south, where Jerusalem is, the capital, southern kingdom, they are going to hold in contempt those Jews from the north.

They aren't even going to consider them legitimate Jews, because they're Samaritans, and they're going to call them half-breeds, you know, and they have no dealings with it. And if anybody was going from the south up to the north, rather than go through, rather than go through Samaria, they would cross over the Jordan River, go up the other side, and come back in, just so they wouldn't have to set foot in Samaria.

And it's the most amazing thing that happened in John's Gospel, chapter 10, when Jesus met what kind of a woman at the well? Jael, a Samaritan woman.

And the text says he must need to go through Samaria. And wow, and a number of the Samaritans there became believers in Jesus as the Messiah, and that was just his demonstration that Jesus did not respect and did not adhere to the standard prejudices of his day, but he was reaching out to everyone, even to the Samaritans.

And you remember the parable of the good Samaritan? The only one that stopped to help this guy? In that story that Jesus gave in Luke, the thing that made it so dramatic was it was the religious authorities, it was the priests, who walked on by, didn't have room for them.

[30 : 28] These were the religious element. And who was it that stopped to help the poor guy? A Samaritan. Can you beat that? That's the whole point of the parable, the dramatic aspect of it.

So, when she conceives, again, she names her, Lo-ru-am-i, I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel, that I should ever forgive them. And, he won't.

He won't, and he doesn't. And they are carried off into captivity, because there was never any repentance on their part. But the children of Israel in the south, carried off to Babylon, guess what?

They are going to see the error of their way, they are going to repent big time, and God will re-establish them back in the homeland. But I will have compassion, look at this, but I will have compassion on the house of Judah.

Do you see the distinction between Israel and Judah? I will have compassion on the house of Judah, and deliver them by the Lord their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses, or horsemen.

[31 : 31] And when she had reined Loruamah, she conceived, and gave birth to a son. And the Lord said, Name him Loemi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.

And here he effectively divorces himself from the north, and he's going to maintain his connection with the south. So, the beat goes on, and it is going to be, like I said, an Old Testament soap opera of the greatest magnitude that you can imagine.

And this is something that is a highlight of the Old Testament. We'll get into it further as time goes on. Hey guys, thanks for being here. Enjoy your breakfast and the rest of the day.