

The Minor Profits

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[0 : 0 0] If you would open your Bibles, please, to the minor prophet Hosea, we will get underway with chapter 2. This is one of the most dramatic accounts in all of Scripture. It is perhaps the greatest love story that is found in the Old Testament. And a little later on, I will share something with you from the pen of Donald Gray Barnhouse, which I think is extraordinary, and will add to the understanding of the text that is at hand. In Hosea, we have a familiar theme whereby a prophet is raised up of God to deliver a message of judgment to the nation of Israel or Judah, whichever the case may be. And that judgment can always be forestalled if repentance is forthcoming, because repentance is God's magic bullet, if you will, for he delights in repentance, and repentance means nothing more than changing your mind about your sin and the pursuit of whatever it is you are after, as opposed to the things of God. And this is a common malady to humanity.

It is a common malady to an entire nation, because a nation is nothing more than an aggregation of human beings. And what we're dealing with here is the kind of problem that afflicts us all, and that is, like the songwriter said, prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love. And we all have that tendency. That is what the story of Hosea is all about. It is about God having called the nation of Israel to his own position of blessing and favor, and he likens his relationship to the nation of Israel as a husband to a wife. But then the wife turns adulterous and is unfaithful to her husband. And there is going to be a time of divorce, separation. Then there's going to be reconciliation and reunification, and long story short, they will live happily ever after. But right now, we are not there. And Hosea is used of God to depict this kind of situation to the nation of

Israel. He is living in the midst of people who are very familiar with his situation, and they are going to be very much aware that Hosea has willingly attached himself by marriage to a woman whom everyone in the community knew was a woman who had prostituted herself. How in the world could a guy do that?

How could God call him to do that? And that is the theme in the story of Hosea. So let us jump in, if we may, with chapter 2 of this remarkable book and see what develops with Hosea and Gomer. Say to your brothers, Ami, and to your sisters, Ruama, contend with your mother, contend, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. And this Ami and Ruama, and later we're going to see Loami. These are the three children that Hosea has by this unfaithful wife. He continues saying, let her put away her harlotry from her face. Now remember, he's talking about a woman, a flesh and blood living woman, the one to whom he is married. And she is being used as a typical kind object lesson for the nation of Israel. And Hosea, of course, is the faithful God. So the picture gives real humanness to the whole thing. Let her put away her harlotry from her face and her adultery from between her breasts. Pretty plain language, isn't it? Lest I strip her naked and expose her as on the day when she was born. I will also make her like a wilderness, make her like desert land, and slay her with thirst. Also, I will have no compassion on her children, because they are children of harlotry, for their mother has played the harlot. Who's he talking about? He's talking about Gomer, and he's talking about Israel, because Gomer is an illustration of Israel. She is a perfect picture of what's taking place. Their mother has played the harlot. She who conceived them has acted shamefully, for she said, I will go after my lovers who give me my bread and my water. These are lovers. These are human lovers who were paying Gomer for her sexual favors. But it was also a picture of the nation of Israel and the harlotry that the nation was carrying out in going after foreign and strange gods. Israel as a nation was becoming spiritually adulterous, betraying the husband who called them to himself. So we've got a parallel here between the human and the national. It's imperative that you keep that in mind. Therefore, verse 6, behold, I will hedge her up, I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her so that she cannot find her paths. And she will pursue her lovers, but she will not overtake them. And she will seek them, but will not find them. In other words, she's looking for johns. She's looking for income. She's looking for men with whom she can have sex.

And this is the nation of Israel looking to false gods with whom they can be associated. They are the Baals, the fertility gods, and so on. They are the gods that will cause the northern ten tribes to be carried off into Assyrian captivity under the judgment of God. They are the same gods that are later going to be causing the two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin, to be carried into Babylonian captivity for the same reason, idolatry. So continuing on. And she will say, I will go back to my first husband, for it was better for me then than now. For she does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine, and the oil, and lavished on her silver and gold, which they used for Baal.

[6 : 58] In other words, he is charging Israel here as a nation with gross ignorance. Israel was unaware that it was God, Israel's husband, if you will, that had provided her with all of the sustenance and everything she needed. And she was completely ignorant of that and actually thought that these benefits and blessings came from the heathen deities that they worshiped and to whom they made offerings.

Absolutely absurd. And remember what Amos said in chapter 3 and verse 2, you only, addressing the nation of Israel, you only have I known of all the nations of the earth.

Therefore, I will judge you for your iniquity. That simply is an indication that God had a peculiar relationship with the nation of Israel that he did not have with any other nation. And because of that, they had insight, they had advantage, they had blessing, they had provision, they turned her back on it all. What a pathetic picture. She does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine, and the oil, and lavished on her silver and gold, which they used for Baal. Therefore, I will take back my grain at harvest time and my new wine in its season. I will also take away my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness. And then I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one will rescue her out of my hand. This is God saying, I'm going to bring judgment and deprivation upon the nation for their sin and their evil. And I, verse 11, I will also put an end to all her gaiety, her feasts, her new moons, her sabbaths, and all her festal assemblies. These were the celebrations that they would engage in and set up in sacrifice and worship of these false deities.

It was literally thumbing their nose at the God who brought them out of Egypt, saved them, called them, blessed them, provided for them, and they become unfaithful to him. I will destroy her vines and trees, fig trees, of which she said, these are my wages, which my lovers have given me.

Gomer's lovers, physical flesh and blood men, paying for her sexual services, and at the same time, the nation of Israel, favoring the gods of Baal and giving them credit for the provision that they enjoyed. It's as much an insult to a holy God as could be sustained. I will punish her for the days of her bales, which she used to offer sacrifice to them, and adorn herself with her earrings and jewelry, and allow her lovers so that she forgot me, declares the Lord. Well, this is the Lord, and it's also Hosea. There is that parallel there. Therefore, look at this, the tide is going to turn, and is it ever dramatic? Therefore, behold, I will allure her. Allure her. Who in the world would want to allure someone that was as unfaithful as Gomer and Israel? This is the love of God that is absolutely incredible. I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness, and speak kindly to her. You know what that's the equivalent of? That's whispering sweet nothings in her ear, like a man would to his wife when he loves her. Then I will give her vineyards from there, and the valley of Achor as the door of hope, and she will sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. And here, he's talking about she, using this feminine pronoun, she, but he's also referring to Israel, whom he called out of Egypt when she was just a young bride, as it were, betrothed to her husband, Jehovah. And it will come about in that day, declares the Lord, that you will call me

[11 : 45] Ishi. Ishi. Ishi is a Hebrew word for a sweet name of endearment, the kind of tender, affectionate words that a husband and wife give to each other, kind of nicknames, honey, sweetie, whatever yours may be.

And most everybody has some favorite name that they call their spouse or that their spouse calls them, and I will call her Ishi. This is a term of affection, devotion, and love. You will call me Ishi, and no longer call me Bailey. That is obvious. For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, so that they will be mentioned by their names no more. In that day, I will also make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, the birds of the sky, and the creeping things of the ground, and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land. What is this? This is peace. This is peace. This is tranquility. I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and will make them lie down in safety. You know, if there is anything that Israel has strived for since their rebirth in 1948, it has been for safety, for peace, for secure borders.

Yes, I will betroth you to me forever. Yes, I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in loving kindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord, and it will come about in that day. And fellas, that day's never arrived. It's on the way, but it is not here. This day that he's speaking of is the day of millennial blessing. It is the day when Israel is not only back in the land, but Israel is back in the land in worship of the one true God.

And as I pointed out to you before, probably a huge percentage of the people now, of the Jews now living in the land of Israel, are not observant Jews at all. They are not even practicing Judaism.

They are Jews primarily by birth and by tradition, but not by worship or religion. And the time is coming when that's all going to change. It will come about in that day that I will respond, declares the Lord. I will respond to the heavens and they will respond to the earth. And the earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine and to the oil. They will respond to Jezreel and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I also will have compassion on her who has not obtained compassion.

[14 : 57] And I will say to those who were not my people, you are my people. And they will say, thou art my God. This is a time of restoration and blessing that is yet in store for the nation of Israel. And it is all predicated upon one thing and one thing alone. And that is the incredible love and devotion of God. I want to share with you from the pen of Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse.

Actually, this is in a volume written by James Montgomery Boyce on the Minor Prophets. And Dr. Boyce succeeded Donald Gray Barnhouse years after he passed away at the historic Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. And I have never to this day heard anyone express the English language with such elocution and diction and preciseness as Donald Gray Barnhouse. And he is with the Lord now. But this is from his pen. And Dr. Boyce, who succeeded Dr. Barnhouse, is quoting him from this passage. And I want you to bear in mind the pathos and the devotion that is being expressed herein. It's quite remarkable. Listen up, if you would. Dr. Barnhouse writes, the pursuing love of God is the greatest wonder of the spiritual universe. We leave God in the heat of our own self-desire and run from his will because we want so much to have our own way.

We get to a crossroads and look back in pride, thinking that we have outdistanced him. Just as we are about to congratulate ourselves on our achievement of self-enthronement, we feel a touch on our arm and turn in that direction to find him there. My child, he says in great tenderness, I love you. And when I saw you running away from all that is good, I pursued you through a shortcut that love knows well and awaited you here at the crossroads. We've torn ourselves free from his grasp and rushed off again through deepest woods and farthest swamp. And as we look back again, we are sure this time that we have succeeded in escaping from him. But once more, the touch of love is on our other sleeve. And when we turn quickly, we find that he is there pleading with the eyes of love and showing himself once more to be the tender and faithful one loving to the end. He will always say, my child, my name and nature are love, and I must act according to that which I am.

So it is that I have pursued you to tell you that when you are tired of your running and your wandering, I will be there to draw you to myself once more. When we see this love at work through the heart of Hosea, we may wonder if God is really like that. But everything in the word and in experience shows us that he is. He will give man the trees of the forest and the iron in the ground. Then he will give to man the brains to make an axe from the iron to cut down a tree and fashion it into a cross. He will give man the ability to make a hammer and nails. And when man has the cross and the hammer and the nails, the Lord will allow man to take hold of him and bring him to that cross. He will stretch out his hands upon it and allow man to nail him to that cross. And in so doing, we'll take the sins of man upon himself and make it possible for those who have despised and rejected him to come unto him and know the joy of sins removed and forgiven, to know the assurance of pardon and eternal life and to enter into the prospect of the hope of glory with him forever. This is even our God and there is none like unto him. Wow, what an expression, the unrelenting, the unrelenting, undying, pursuing love of God, all in pursuit of those who would reject him and would willingly flee from him. Yet this is the kind of stick-to-itiveness that our God has. He has an insatiable love affair with the human race, so much so that he went to the extreme end to reunite humanity.

With himself. Remarkable. Absolutely remarkable. This is the love of God of which Hosea speaks. Then I will say to those who were not my people, you are my people. And they will say, thou art my God. Well, they're not saying that now.

[20 : 35] Not only is Israel now not practicing Judaism, but by the way, as we pointed out to you in the past, Israel is a nation, religiously, spiritually. Israel, the Jewish people, are in an absolute state of spiritual limbo right now. They do not have... You realize that Judaism is a defunct religion?

Judaism is a defunct religion. It became defunct. When? When God reached down and tore the veil in the temple in two, making a way of access for all to come unto him. And this is what Ephesians 3 is all about, that God has broken down the middle barrier, that middle wall of partition that separated Jew from Gentile and has made the two into one new man. And that's called the body of Christ.

And it is Jew and Gentile. And Judaism is, as I've said, defunct. It is a defunct religion. There are some Jews that practice it still, but they have no essence for it because the essence of Judaism is sacrifice, animal sacrifice. But they have no altar. They have no temple. They can't even practice Judaism if they wanted to. So they are virtually in limbo. And God is going to one day bring them back. This is a great controversy among Christians as to whether or not there is such a future for Israel. But the time we have left, I'd like to turn to some of the other prophets. We're dealing with the minor prophets, but I want you to look at the major prophets now. And of course, Moses is considered a prophet. So let's look first at Deuteronomy chapter 28, the last book of the writings of Moses, Deuteronomy chapter 28. And if you read those last few chapters, you will see that it's Moses' swan song. And he utters predictions regarding the nation of Israel in chapter 28.

And let's just look at the last couple of verses, if we may. Verses 64, beginning with verse 64 of Deuteronomy 28. Moreover, remember, Moses is about to die. He's about to turn the reins over to Joshua.

And the last couple of chapters of Deuteronomy consists of Moses' final words to the nation of Israel before God takes him off the scene. And we read in verse 64, Moreover, the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, and from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth. And there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. Who are these? These are the very things that Hosea was talking about. These are the Baals, the false gods. And Moses here is offering a prediction of what Israel is going to do in the future. And bear in mind that this is probably 800 years before Hosea is going to write.

[24 : 03] And this is the prediction that Moses is leaving with the people. You shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. And among those nations you shall find no rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot. Do you know how the Jew has been historically described throughout the world? The wandering Jew. That's the nickname that's been given to him. The wandering Jew. No sooner are they accepted in one country, and they set up shop, and they begin making lives for themselves, and having children, and engaging in work, and so on, and anti-Semitism sets in. And they are forced out of the country. And oftentimes stripped of their possessions, sometimes even have their lives taken in persecution. And what do they do? They flee to another land, and they are received there until eventually persecution will build up, and they go all over the world. You will find Jews everywhere all over the world. And it is all a result of this. Reading on. Your heart. Verse 65.

Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot. But there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul.

Boy, the Holocaust is really going to accelerate that, isn't it? So your life shall hang in doubt before you, and you shall be in dread night and day, and shall have no assurance of your life. In the morning you shall say, would that it were evening, and that in the evening you shall say, would that it were morning, because of the dread of your heart, which you dread, and for the sight of your eyes, which you shall see?

Boy, you've all seen footage of emaciated bodies, some of them being swept into common graves, naked, men and women thrown in, piled on top of each other, shot in the back of the head by Gestapo German Lugers, and shoveled over in a mass grave where there may be two or three hundred of them buried.

This is what Moses is talking about. And at the time, of course, they had no idea that this was going to transpire. This is one of the major prophets, but there are others, and Isaiah is considered a major prophet too.

[26 : 43] And if you would look at Isaiah, what we're talking about is a time of restoration and future blessing for the nation of Israel. And as you look at Isaiah chapter 11, there are so many references, and I have to be selective here because there are just too many.

But Isaiah chapter 11 and verse 11, and bear in mind, if you will, Isaiah was written six to seven hundred years before Jesus was even born.

And in verse 11, then it will happen on that day. That's an expression we see many, many times in the prophets. In that day, and on that day, in that day, in that day, in that day.

And it's always speaking of a time that is yet to come in the future. It will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand, the remnant of His people who will remain.

And as I pointed out to you from our prophetic studies, that when this time of great tribulation comes, two-thirds of the Jews in all of the world are going to be eliminated by the Antichrist.

[28 : 00] Adolf Hitler succeeded in eliminating one-third of all the Jews in Europe. During the 1940s, the Antichrist will rid the world of two-thirds of the Jews living throughout the world.

And there will remain a remnant. And that remnant, we told you, is going to be holed up in Petra in southern Jordan.

And the Antichrist will simply not be able to do away with them. They will be the ones of whom Paul is speaking when he says, so all Israel will be saved.

And these Jews who are hiding out and holding up there in Petra, the rose-red city of Petra, they are going to be soundly, wonderfully converted, and they will cry out to God to send the Messiah back.

And Yeshua HaMashiach will return. That's Revelation 19. And these will be the ones who will welcome him. And happen on that day, the Lord will again recover the second time with his hand, the remnant, that's a remnant, of his people who will remain from Assyria, Egypt, Petras, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

[29 : 31] And he will lift up a standard for the nations, and will assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Wow. This is all coming. And while we're in the major prophets, let us go to Isaiah chapter 60. Same book, if you will.

Isaiah 60 and verse 21. Then, then, then, then, it could be another way of saying, and in that day, then, all your people will be righteous.

They will possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

And Jeremiah, while we're on a roll, we'll just come over to the next chapter, next, next minor, or major prophet, to Jeremiah chapter 16. And look, if you would, at verse 14.

[30 : 43] Jeremiah 16 and verse 14. Behold, days are coming. Here we are again. Days are coming, declares the Lord, when it will no longer be said, as the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

But, as the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the countries where he had banished them, for I will restore them to their own land, which I gave to their fathers.

Behold, I am going to send for many fishermen, declares the Lord, and they will fish for them. Who are these fishermen? They are the 144,000, 12,000 from each of the tribes of Israel.

And they will be fishing for men. They will be fishing for Jews. And they will win numbers of Jews to faith in Yeshua HaMashiach.

These are the 144,000 referred to in Revelation chapter 7, and again in chapter 14 of Revelation. And I shall send for many hunters, and they will hunt them from every mountain and every hill, from the clefts of the rock.

[31 : 58] For my eyes are on all their ways. They are not hidden from my face, nor is their iniquity concealed from my eyes. And I will first doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted my land.

They have filled my inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable idols and with their abominations. And we won't have time to consider the other references, but if you're making notes, I would suggest that you consider Ezekiel chapter 36, verses 24 through 32, and Amos chapter 9, verses 14 and 15.

And there you will find mere repetitions of what we have been giving you from these other prophets. All of this is simply to say there is a bright future for Israel.

And it will not have anything to do with the faithfulness of Israel, because they have not been faithful. It will have everything to do with the all-pervasive love of God and His making good on the covenants that He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Well, so enjoy your breakfast, and we will consider chapter 2 completed, and Lord willing, we'll embark on the third chapter and next get-together.

[33 : 20] Thank you all for being here.