

# Hosea 8

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[ 0 : 00 ] Some of you will recollect that, as I mentioned earlier, previously in this year, we looked at the first half of the prophet Hosea, chapters 1 to 7. And if we can just recap at the beginning, Hosea was called by the Lord to be a living witness and example of what happens when there is unfaithfulness.

He was himself instructed to take a wife of Horems, chapter 1, verse 2, and children of Horems for the land of committed great Horems, departing from the Lord.

So he went into Domer, the daughter of Diblia, which conceived and bare him a son, and so on.

And every name is loaded with meaning. Hosea himself, the name means salvation.

It's the same as the part of Joshua's name in the book of Judges and so on. Jehoshua, Jehovah is salvation. So Hosea is the Hoshua bit of that.

It means salvation. Gomer means completion, as though the sin of Israel is being completed with their unfaithfulness. Her father's name, Diblia, meant great cakes, indicative of the fruitfulness of the land, but likewise the barrenness of their relationship with the Lord.

[ 1 : 15 ] And so the names of his children all meant different things and they all indicated the state through which Israel, and this is mostly northern Israel, remember, were passing.

Northern Israel, if you may recollect, had broken away from southern Judah after the reign of Solomon, when Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, was told by God that he would be given the northern kingdom, ten tribes, and that he was to serve the Lord with those ten tribes.

So he was no sooner received the kingdom than he decided, oh well, political, you know, independence is one thing, but if the people all go off to Jerusalem to worship at the temple, then they'll return to the king of Judah as well as the god of Judah.

So we can't have that. So he set up two golden calves, one in Dan, which was at the opposite, far extreme northern end of his kingdom, and one in Bethel, which was just over the border from Judah.

And the king went to worship at the calf of Bethel, that was the king's shrine, and the people were sent away up to the far north to Dan, in other words, as far from Judah as they could possibly be sent.

[ 2 : 23 ] So there wouldn't be any clash or any temptation to go back to Jerusalem. But in going away from Jerusalem and the temple and the true priesthood and the sacrifices of the Lord, he was, of course, leading them astray into idolatry.

Initially pretending that these calves represented the true God, but of course, eventually, he just came to represent the idols that they were. And what happens when there is spiritual adultery? Well, Hosea himself was to be a living example of that. When his wife played the harlot against him, as he knew that she would, everybody, no doubt, watched and were amazed to see why didn't he just publicly divorce her and separate himself from her and say, well, that's that.

I'm not having anything more to do with this harlot of a wife. But instead, he waits patiently for her. He goes seeking her. He seeks to bring her back with gentleness from the lovers and from the men she'd been with, who treated her, no doubt, not very well.

And he brought her back again. And this kind of patience, this kind of self-giving and taking the shame, as it were, upon oneself, which Hosea was called upon to do, which, of course, didn't come naturally to him as a normal sort of male with his ordinary kind of pride and having been cheated against and so on.

[ 3 : 44 ] It wouldn't come easily, but he was called upon to do this as an example of God's patience with Israel. But, of course, before he brought his wife, Gomer, back out, away from her lovers and abusers and so on, she was with them.

And while she was with them, of course, once they had got what they wanted from her, they weren't really bothered about her. This is part of the difficulty and the danger of such relations out with the sanctity of marriage itself.

Because inevitably, as two people give themselves to one another, there is an intimacy, not only physically, but also in terms of uncovering of themselves, the person that they are, the character, the secrets, if you like, of their lives, gradually become known more and more to one another.

And so that a husband and a wife will know things about each other when nobody else knows. That's without getting said, you know, anything kind of creepy about that. They will know things about their other half that nobody else knows.

So when there is a betrayal, it's not merely a physical betrayal. It is likewise a betrayal of everything that has been built up.

[ 4 : 57 ] And inevitably, there are consequences for that. And in the modern context, of course, as well, there will usually be breakdown, lawyers, all the pain and all the financial costs and so on that would go with that.

A Christian counsellor was explaining a year or two back on the television about how somebody had been meeting with this person after he had just left his wife of 20-something years for this new mistress or whatever.

It's always brilliant. He felt 20 years younger. He was just enjoying life so much. He'd got a new lease of life and it was brilliant. And he said, well, what about your wife? And she'll, oh, it was tying me down.

It was weighing me down. I just had to get free and so on. And so he did. And the counsellor met up with him a year and a half later. And he was just absolutely in the pits saying, oh, it's awful.

It's terrible. You know, the new mistress or girlfriend or whatever he had, you know, we broke up and we were bored with each other sort of thing. And now my wife's left and taken the case. We had to sell the house.

[ 6 : 01 ] And now the lawyers are pursuing this, that and the next thing, going through the courts for divorce. And everything was just a wreck after that. But there are always consequences. However brilliant in the short term such a rush of seeming joy and excitement might be, there are always consequences.

Now Israel, northern Israel, was in the process of abandoning their relationship with the Lord. What was meant to be a unique relationship with the Lord.

They were his family in a way that no other nation wants. This is what is meant here in verse 1 when it talks about against the house of the Lord. It doesn't mean the temple, because that was in Jerusalem, remember, and this is northern Israel we're talking about.

The house of the Lord in the same way as they talk about the house of David. Or we might talk about the house of Windsor, our own royal family. Or the house of Stuart who used to rule Scotland in that sense.

So it's the house of the Lord in the sense of the family, the people of the Lord. And the trumpet is that which warns of an alarm that suddenly he shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord.

[ 7 : 11 ] Now this is the sense of God's judgment. When an eagle comes for its prey, it doesn't come along with a sign saying, actually you little rabbit, I'm coming to get you, or you little lamb, or whatever, I'm swooping down for you.

No, it's at a huge great height and can spot its prey away down on the ground, but it's obviously going along around the ground, not knowing what's coming, and then descend in silence down almost vertical and snatch it up in its talons.

It doesn't even know what hits it until it is too late. And once in the talons of the eagle, there is no escape. If it's a big, heavy piece of prey, it will probably lift it to a great height and then drop it in order to kill it.

If it's a smaller creature, it will be able to kill it with its talons. But one way or another, it literally will not know what has hit it. Now Jesus, of course, speaks about a similar situation in the New Testament, about when the day of the Lord comes.

It will be as lightning that shines from the east even onto the west. If you've ever observed lightning at night, you know it's instantaneous. It's sudden. It lights up the whole landscape, but it's in an instant.

[ 8 : 20 ] You can't watch and say, oh, yep, here's a little lightning coming. No, it's a flash in an instant. And you witness it, but you can't say, oh, look, come and watch this piece of lightning. Because by the time you get to the window, it's gone.

It's in an instant. And so it is, he shall come as an eagle against his own family, his own people, because they have transgressed my covenant and trespassed against my law.

What you have in this chapter is not the stage now where Hosea is going after his unfaithful wife and seeking to bring her back. What you have now is what the illustration of his own domestic life is meant to be pointing to.

The reality of the nation that has gone away from the Lord and the reality of what happens. The reality of the consequences. And this is the consequences that are being described in this chapter. Israel shall cry unto me, my God, we know thee. In the midst of their difficulties, they will say, oh, yes, Lord, come and help us, because we know you. Honestly, we do.

[ 9 : 26 ] In Titus chapter 1, verse 16, we read the same thing. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobates.

Could be a description of so much of the professing church nowadays, couldn't it? But Titus is talking about the apostolic types, the first century church. Likewise, Jesus said in Matthew chapter 7, verse 22, Jesus said, It's not enough to go after idolatry and then say, Oh, well, the Lord will save us.

The Lord will turn back to him now. Israel hath cast off the thing that is good. The enemy shall pursue him. Because he has cast off his own protection, when the enemy comes, as the enemy will certainly come, there is no longer any defence.

It's like, you know, when people do all these kind of Ouija boards and sort of occult-y things that are, you know, I won't say they're harmless, they're not harmless, but they have no power in themselves.

But often when people begin to meddle in these things, there are serious spiritual consequences. Not because I think the devil is at the beck and call of anybody who chooses to engage in these seances and other sort of stupid, dark practices, but rather it is an indication when somebody engages in these things that they are wide open and defenceless.

[ 11 : 11 ] It is like somebody in a really crime-ridden, run-down part of a city getting out of his jag and leaving the keys in it with the engine running and the door open while he nips into a shop.

And all the unemployed, you know, young criminals or whatever are standing around looking at this, this flash car that's been left there with the engine running and the keys in the ignition and the door open and it's no surprise at all that when he comes out the car's gone.

And it's not that he said, hey, hey, come and make my car. You know, please tell yourselves. He wasn't wanting them to, but in leaving himself wide open in full view of everybody else, he is effectively inviting that his car be stolen.

And what we do when we engage in stupid occult-y practices is not summon the devil as though he was somehow at Arabic and call. But we are saying, look, we've abandoned the Lord.

We're turning to darkness. Look, and the evil demons round about that see all that's a evil. Wide open there. There's a chance to just come in and make somebody's protection and control them that we can take what was theirs.

[ 12 : 18 ] When they were driving it and the doors were locked and they kept it safe in their own property, we couldn't get near them. When this particular soul was seeking the Lord and the Lord was their protection and their strength and their safety, we couldn't get near them.

But look at them now. They're practically inviting us to have them, and all this stuff. It means they're defenseless. It means the Lord is not their protection anymore. Oh, boys, let's go in and see what we can do with these idiot souls who are prepared to invite us into their lives.

This is what is happening with Israel. If cast off the thing that is good, the enemy shall pursue them because they've engaged in idolatry, the Assyrians and their other pagan neighbors.

They've got no help. This God of Israel used to protect them in the days of Elisha, in the days of Elijah, when they were faithful to the Lord or when they at least obeyed his prophets. Now, they're just like us.

They worship our gods just as we do. Fine. Then it's just down to brute strength now. And little Israel, you ever look at Israel on a map, even the modern state of Israel, and compare it with the size of the countries round about?

[ 13 : 27 ] It's tiny. And if it's tiny, now it was even tinier. Then, in comparison to the Assyrian Empire or the Babylonians or the Persians or whatever, it was like minnows.

If it's just a question of military strength, it'd be like a fly that could be squatted with their thumb. The defense of Israel was not their armies and chariots and powers and military strength.

It was the Lord. It was because the Lord surrounded them and protected them that they weren't overcome much sooner than they were. But Israel have passed off from Elisha.

The enemy shall pursue and they've set up kings but not by me. Now, this is true, of course.

Jeroboam was given the kingdom by the Lord but it was on the understanding that he would serve the Lord.

He would be faithful to the Lord. And as soon as he disposed of his relationship with the Lord and set up the golden calves, this became the sin of Israel, the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

[ 14 : 27 ] Which, when you read about through the books of the kings and the chronicles, then you'll come across the lists of the kings of Israel and Judah interspersed.

And some of the kings of Judah, you'll find they did evil in the sight of the Lord and some of them did good in the sight of the Lord like David their fathers had done. But every single one of the kings of northern Israel is described as one who did evil in the sight of the Lord for one reason if none other.

That is that they departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin.

And that means that no matter how good they tried to be or no matter how wisely they tried to govern their people as long as they continued in that institutionalized idolatry then their nation was at war with God.

Their nation was always at odds with the Lord. It was always in a sight of spiritual adultery. there could be no reconciliation whilst they continued in that state.

They were always in a state of sin against God. False religion will always leave you in a state of enmity against God. Idolatry will always leave you in a state of enmity against God.

[ 15 : 49 ] And after Jeroboam of course any other kings that were set up they just did it on their own but the number of times the royal house of Israel was murdered and wiped out and then replaced by another strong man dictator who within a couple of generations his family would be murdered and wiped out he just kept on recycling itself.

They have set up kings but not by me. They have made princes and I knew it not had nothing to do with it. Of their silver and their gold have they made their idols that they may be cut off.

They are sinking their own ship by piling so much idolatry into it. Thy calf O Samaria this is reference to the golden calves have cast thee off and notice how this verse 5 is almost like a mirror image or reflection of verse 3.

Israel hath cast off the thing that is good the enemy shall pursue him. Thy calf O Samaria hath cast thee off you see if you entertain false gods and you dabble in false religion you think oh it's exciting it's new it's different so much more interesting than the dry old dusty Christianity we used to have this is much more new and exciting yes but it will do you no good it's like a leg weight life jacket it will drag you down to the bottom of the ocean it will do no good for you anything that seems exciting it's all purely superficial it's like having an exciting present at your birthday or something all bright and rampant and you unwrap it and there's a tarantula outside it's finding that the thing you thought was exciting is in fact deadly thy calf O Samaria hath cast thee off my anger is kindled against them how long will it be ere they attain to innocency when will they come back far from Israel was it also the work were made all their idolatry it's not a god they make it themselves the calf

O Samaria shall be broken in pieces now we've got this verse 7 from which of course the proverb is drawn they have sown the wind and they shall reap the whirlwind you've all heard that phrase well this is where it comes from it comes from the bible they have sown the wind and they shall reap the whirlwind now what a man saw that also shall he reap of course we know that that's in scripture in the new testament as well if we think about it for example in 2nd Corinthians chapter 9 we read how Paul writes about the giving to the Lord in verse 6 this I say he which soweth sparingly he's talking about giving to the Lord shall reap also sparingly and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully every man according as he purposeth in his heart soweth whom give not grudgingly or of necessity for God love and God is able to make all grace abound toward you that he always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work what you sow that will reap now if you were simply to receive back what you yourself had sowed nobody would sow anything you know if you're planting grain or crops and you plant a single seed in the earth and then another single seed

in the earth and then another single seed in the earth and the three stalks that come up in harvest time only have one grain of seed on them then you haven't increased your outlay at all you planted three seeds and you've got three seeds back it's no help at all what you plant you expect what you sow you expect to reap far more every stalk you expect to have a stack of grain on it every stalk should do when you sow something you plant potatoes you don't expect to get one potato back for every one that you stick in the ground you expect a potato plant full of potatoes so likewise what you sow you're going to get back in far more abundance so likewise we read here at Galatians 6 verse 7 be not deceived

[19:50] God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap doesn't mean he'll get back just what he put in it means he'll get back what he put in and then son if it's the wind that you have sown you'll get the wind to the power umpteen coming back again you'll get the whirlwind they have sown the wind and they shall reap the whirlwind they have no stalk the bud shall yield no meal if so be it ye or the strangers shall swallow it up it will do them no good now God uses elsewhere in the New Testament the wind as an image for the spirit the wind bloweth where it must it but God may control the wind and we can't we can't even see it we can't tell how strong it's going to be and where it's going to come from we can predict a wee bit of what we think the weather's going to be like but only because the instruments they have now can see different parts of the planet and where the strong winds are coming from and when they're likely to hit us but we can't control it and likewise they can't control the wind when they saw it they don't know what's going to come back again they are dealing with spiritual things as though they can control them from a physical angle and of course they can't we are dealing with things that we cannot control that we do not understand if we are going to be able to tackle the evil spirits that surround so many people in this world we're going to be able to keep safe from them we need one who is spiritually stronger the devil is not afraid of you and me it doesn't matter how loud we shout or how strongly we sing or how long we spend on our knees he is not afraid of us we are flesh and blood we have no threat to him he is pure spirit he can outlive us he can outlast us he can be stronger than us he can do whatever he likes with us unless we have a stronger protection unless we have a spirit that he himself fears which is the spirit of christ the holy spirit they have sown the wind they shall reap the world wind they have no stock the bad shall yield no mere so be it yield strangers shall swallow it up israel is swallowed up now shall they be among the gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure now god uses this illustration in other places like in jeremiah chapter 48 verse 38 there shall be a lamentation generally upon all the housetops of mow and in the streets thereof for i have broken mow like a vessel wherein is no pleasure i don't take any rawny strength any goodness from it at all it's something disgusting i want to smash it i don't want anything to do with it that's the sense of it here for they are going up to ossyria a wild ass alone by himself every much higher lovers even the sense of direction they've gone up to ossyria now whenever they're talking about jerusalem for example whenever the bible talks about jerusalem it talks about going up to jerusalem jerusalem is seen as the spiritual heart people go up to jerusalem wherever they're coming from in the country and that implies that everything is lower than jerusalem than the presence the symbolic presence of the living god now israel you would think as the lord's people when they go into pagan countries you'd think they're going down they're descending from that relationship they have with the lord down to the pagans but here now israel has sunk so low that they're described as going up to ossyria a wild ass by himself ephraim have hired lovers this is the reverse of harlotry however much people may despise harlots

they discharge a job for payment they provide a service if you can use that term and they get payment for it israel he is doing it's paying for lovers to come to them hired lovers they're making the expense and they're being exploited and abused so they're paying out twice in that sense yea you know they've hired among the nations now will they gather that they won't be able to make anything of it they won't get any protection they won't get any strength and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the kings or princes this is what we read of because when israel was so weak and they couldn't defend themselves against the nations coming against them we read in 2nd kings 15 verse 90 paul the king of assyria came against the land and menahem that was the king of northern israel gave paul a thousand talents of silver that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand and menahem exacted the money of israel even of all the mighty men of wealth of each man 50 shekels of silver to give to the king of assyria so the king of assyria turned back and stayed not there in the land he had to pay him to go away he had to pay him not to attack him like an

extortion back israel getting weaker and weaker and poorer and poorer because they have turned their backs on the lord now we know of course we are not a kingdom like israel we are not worshipping golden calves and so on but it is the same principle we think oh everything will be okay because we've got the lord and sometimes we go to church and we pray to him now and then we can yeah but unless we have him for our protection and the lover of our souls and if we abandon him and think oh well i can take the lord and leave it i can put him down and pick him up again no we can't when anybody has an affair and are unfaithful to their spouse they never imagine well if i go down this road it's going to be a loss of my house and my children and relationship with my wife or husband or whatever and it's all going to wreck my life but hey it's going to be worth it no they think it's going to be everything will continue as it is but they'll just have this extra little bit of spice on the side and that's what history of things god will keep on supporting him god will always have all he's a god of love he's not going to worry he's not going to care we can have this little dabble on the side and nobody's going to mind too much after all he's a god of love and they think everything will be kept just as it is despite their idolatry despite their unfaithfulness they believe him daft enough that they god won't see or won't know or won't care such infidelity will always come out it will always be known they'll be a little bit sorry verse 10 for the burden of the king and the princes that's the levy the tax we've just read about the thousand pounds of silver because if we have made many altars to soon altars shall be unto him to sin in other words what he seeks will become its own punishment let's just go back to the example of the ouija boards and dabbling in the occult and so on the deeper you go into that the more it controls you the more the evil spirits that you toy with they become the ones who toy with you like people who become addicted to so-called recreational drugs they always think they can control it but in the end it becomes that which controls them and people begin to fool themselves and say I can give this up anytime I want to only I don't want to and the illusion of being in control the devil is quite happy to keep that in place oh yeah it's up to you you choose you decide what you do and before we know it we are just addicts helpless slaves in his hands after him hath made

many altars to sin altars shall be under them to sin reminded of what we read in chapter four of Hosea there at verse 17 of chapter four Ephraim is joined to idols let him alone that to me is one of the most terrifying verses in the whole old testament Ephraim is joined to idols let him alone so the lord is saying that's what he wants to do just let him do it they want to worship these other gods and forget about just let him do it that's like what we read in Revelation you know at the end in chapter 22 again in reference to this verse in the past I know that he that is unjust let him be unjust still and he which is filthy let him be filthy still and he that is righteous let him be righteous still and he that is holy let him be holy still and behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be what is it do we think oh there will be plenty of time to put it right there will be plenty of time for me to convert later on or to come back to the lord later on none of us knows how long we've got who can tell when the lightning is going to flash in the sky who can tell when the ego is going to descend on its prey it is now that we have to put our lives right with the lord and we are to god the sweet savor of christ that's what

Paul writes to the Corinthians men that are saved and men that perish to the one who are the savor of death unto death to the other the savor of life unto life and who is sufficient for these things the things of the lord are sweet to those who are called and drawn to him but they are bitter and burdensome to those who want nothing to do with them I have written to them the great things of my law but they were counted as a strange thing he wrote the commandments he wrote the law I wrote the appendages the first five books of the bible they were counted as strange things they sacrificed flesh for the sacrifice of mine offerings and eat it but the lord accepted them not now will be happy to remember their iniquity and visit their sins they shall return to Egypt you see when people made an offering at the lord's altar only some of it burned on the altar and the priest gave some of the rest they had a big feast with now even if you think in terms of modern terms let's say you take one thing one sheep for example and you were to offer up a sheep as a sacrifice remember no refrigeration from those days so you give it up to the priest and it's butchered and it's offered on the altar and the wee bit that goes from the altar that gets burned and the priest takes maybe the shoulder or a wee bit of it and the rest of this whole carcass that's got to be eaten soon that's all yours this huge big chunk of mutton so what are you going to do you've got to have a feast you've got to invite your friends and your family you've got to eat it you've got to pig out quick because it's going to go off otherwise so you're feasting on it now this is not an unpleasant thing to do so people are not too unhappy about saying here I'm offering this sheep as a sacrifice to the lord

and then have a party with it afterwards so they like the physical side of it but you know they're not too bothered at the spiritual side so the lord accepteth them not it's like those who love the idea of a spectacular wedding but they're not so keen on the faithfulness of marriage all the way through for the next 60 years but they love the bigger head and they want to be the centre of attention so the sacrifice that's fine yeah and the feast that's fine you know we're not too bothered about the lord so the lord accepts them not visits their sins they return to egypt not as captivity as they were before but some will be taken captive into egypt and some will flee there remember at the end of the book of jeremiah we read of how they fled into egypt to try and escape the babylonians and so maybe they were safe from the babylonians but here they are back in egypt where the hebrews were before they even began to be a nation they have gone back to before they even began they have regressed far from growing up and being free they have gone back to the babylon of their nation for israel hath forgotten his maker and buildeth temples temples to false gods and judah hath multiplied fenced cities even judah that was meant to be still nominally faithful to the lord god of israel the god of judah still instead of holy still the temple and the priesthood and the sacrifices they are putting their strength in their military strength the fenced cities their defences i will send a fire upon these cities and it shall devour the palaces thereof in other words god is determined to show to judah and to israel there is no strength in these things either jeremiah 5 we read it verse 17 they shall eat up thy harvest for thy bread which thy sons and thy daughters should eat they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees they shall impoverish thy fenced cities wherein thou trustest with the sword and likewise at jeremiah 17 verse 27 if you will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day and not to bear a burden even entering in at the gates of jerusalem on the sabbath day then will i kindle a fire in the gates of hell and it shall revow the palaces of jerusalem and it shall not be quenched all the strong cities in which you trust judah all the false idols in which you trust in northern Israel you trust in anything but the lord it will come on stop it doesn't matter how great your house looks if it is built on sand then it's only a question of time if it's not built on the rock that is the lord himself then it will not stand and this is what the lord is explaining in this chapter he is making clear that there is no strength or protection in anyone but himself doesn't matter how many false gods you appeal to you know in hinduism there's reputedly meant to be one million deities to whom people burn their incense and offer up their worships and their sacrifices and their gardens a million gods and goddesses and not one of them is able to deliver even one soul out of the pit of hell and all the other religions of the world they multiply prophets and holy men and gurus to themselves and still not one of them can save there is none who can redeem us save the lord and there is none who can take control of our lives and begin to make them make sense and come together even in this world because that's the first thing that the christian will notice when he or she becomes converted or gone again it's not that they'll have visions of heaven but they'll begin to see things beginning to come together on earth they'll begin to see things in their own earthly ordinary lives beginning to make sense and join up the dots and connect they'll begin to see things opening up before them in a way that they never did before the sense of protection the sense of grace the sense of god's goodness being shown upon them being revealed to them in this world in this life god begins to make a difference when we turn to him and as we walk away from him away from the light we can only go into the darkness if you move away from the light there's only darkness around the body think about a campfire in the midst of a pitch black countryside and everybody sitting around the campfire and maybe you have to nip off to your tent to get something and as you move away from the campfire there's still light falling you can still see a wee but it's more silhouetted but the further you move away from the light the darker it gets you come back and get into the light everything's well illuminated the further away you move from the lord the more you move off into the darkness the further you move away from the source of warmth the more you go into the cold the further you move away from the strength and protection that he alone can afford the more you leave yourself vulnerable and defenceless and believe you me the devil sees it and he watches he can't be summoned with a click of the fingers he's too powerful for that but he never misses an opportunity he sees that you're vulnerable he sees your defences are down he sees that you have let go of the lord and he will be in there like a shot oh very smooth talking and calm at first that he will be in there and he will have you hooked and once you are hooked you'll be drawn farther and farther away from the lord like when a fish closes its mouth and flies and the hook goes through its jaw and to begin with there's probably just the initial burst of pain but it's still underwater it's still facking about it's still going and it's still in its environment

[ 37:16 ] when it breathes and then the angler reels it in more and more it's getting drawn further and further to the land and eventually he gets it right up onto the shore and now it's flapping in the water and out the water it's desperately trying to breathe because it can't if it gets back onto the water again it can breathe again and he tries to get it out but it's fighting it all the way and eventually he pulls his rod one way and scoops the net the other way and once it's up out of the water that's it it can flap about as much as it likes in the land and it won't matter because it's only going to die and that is what happens when we are caught by the devil when we close our mouth upon what looks so inviting and enticing and it's the hook that he uses to get into our very soul and to draw us from life to death if we abandon the Lord if we move away even from the Lord if we soften our hold upon the true biblical doctrine of the Lord this is the iniquitous stage of so-called liberalism what is it in fact but a refined term for unbelief because a

Christian is defined by what he or she believes and a liberal in Christian terms is defined by how much of it he or she doesn't believe you think about it you'll realise that that's true they are defined by how much of it they don't believe it means that fish is being drawn to the shore it means it is still underwater perhaps so it thinks it's still okay but there is this irresistible tug to go farther and farther away from safety and into death and we can't control it and only the Lord can set us free just as only the Lord can free Israel and only the Lord can bring us back from our state of idolatry to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus let us pray it