

Hosea 9

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Date: 11 November 2015

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[0 : 00] Now as we continue through this latter part of the prophecy of Hosea, we have what is not really a terribly cheery chapter here. It is all about Israel, that is northern Israel based in Samaria, the breakaway northern kingdom, all about their unfaithfulness to the Lord and the consequences of that.

If we could say there was a key verse to this chapter, then I would suggest to you that it is the latter part of verse 12. Woe also to them when I depart from them.

And I would suggest the emphasis be on the I and the them, as opposed to woe also to them when I depart from them. All through the prophecy of Hosea, the theme has been the faithless departure of the people of northern Israel from the Lord, from God, Jehovah.

And yet, as we've mentioned in previous weeks, there's always a kind of assumption when people do that, that everything is going to carry on as before. That there's going to be just the same level of blessing and provision and everything will continue.

There will just be this wee bit extra rebelliousness and this wee sort of fun breakaway in how daring we are to say, Oh well, we don't have to worship Jehovah the whole time, who aren't we brave?

[1 : 22] And so as though there's not going to be consequence to that. And to this day, of course, people still think they're brave and clever, thumbing their nose at the sort of establishment, as they call it, or defying the living God, who's worshipped ostensibly in the churches of our land.

Notice that they're not quite so keen to mock certain other religions, given what the retaliation might be. But there's no real courage or bravery in defying the Lord and thinking everything is going to continue as it was.

Because it's one thing to be a wee bit chafing and kicking against the tricks, as it were, when we're still under the Lord's household and protection. It's quite another to take ourselves out of that protection, or for the Lord to say, That's fine, if you want, just go.

Woe to them when I depart from them. May have recounted this incident before, but when I was a very small boy, I got annoyed with my parents about something or other.

Can't remember what it was about now. And I decided I was going to get my own back on them, and I was going to run away. And if I ran away, then they would be all so worried and all so fearful. And when I came back in my own sweet time, oh, they would be so glad to see me.

[2 : 34] And oh, they would forgive me for everything I'd done. And of course, I would magnanimously forgive them for all the things they had done to upset me. But I would just teach them a wee lesson. So I sneaked out the house, where they were all busy watching something on television.

And I started walking along the road. The main road, quite a busy road. And I walked much farther than I'd ever done before. I mean, I'd seen the road in the car, of course. That's where it went.

So I wasn't lost or anything like that. But, you know, it was getting dark. And it was getting a bit cold. And then a wee bit of drizzle. And I had my coat on. But, you know.

And then I thought, well, where am I going to sleep tonight? What am I going to do? What am I going to eat? Where am I going to go? How am I going to get warm? Because it's getting pretty cold.

And then I thought, well, I suppose, you know, doing for myself isn't really quite so much fun. So I turned around and started walking back again. And I thought, at least when I come in, they'll say, oh, where have you been?

[3 : 29] Oh, we're so sorry and everything. But when I came back in, I looked about nobody about. So I went into the sitting room. They were still watching TV. Nobody had noticed that I was gone in all that time.

But the point was, they were none the worse. But I started to feel cold and anxious. And I didn't have a roof over my head. And warmth and food. And all the things that were part and parcel of the life that I was chafing against.

Suddenly it's not so funny when all this kind of support structure and comfort is removed. We think of our rebellion and our daring sin in a context of we will stamp our own little fruit.

We will do what we want. And God will have to listen. Provided, of course, everything else is still in place and still provided. But the fact of the matter is, when we depart from God, he may allow us a certain amount of leeway.

But woe also to them when I depart from them. Supposing my parents had turned down and said, Oh, that's like fine. Off you go.

[4 : 35] Right, we'll lock the door behind you. You can take your jacket. You can take a wee bit from the bread. Tenage, a couple of biscuits. And then you're on your own. Any pocket money you've got, you can keep that. But that's it. And then I know where to go.

I'd have no room for my head. I'd be sleeping in a ditch or under a bush or somewhere. I'd be freezing cold. I wouldn't have any bed clothes. I wouldn't have any extra comfort or protection or warmth or anything.

I would soon know what side my bread was buttered on. But you see, so often we think everything will continue as it was. And we'll still be able to flex our muscles and to do what we want.

And to defy the living God and all that he provides. This is what Israel is doing here. They are going their own sweet way. They are doing their own thing. They are worshipping other gods.

I'm thinking that God will still carry on as before. He'll never get fed up with them. He'll always keep on providing. But they can dabble with other gods whilst they're at it.

[5 : 32] Now, why would Israel desire to worship other gods? What is the attraction? If God is providing everything, what is the attraction?

Well, same as for me. The assumption is everything will still be provided. When we have, for example, disaffection amongst the youth or teenagers or whatever.

And you hear this, say, in a time of stories. I mean, I don't know, a few years ago. And you say, well, you know, what's wrong with the young people? Why are they turning to crime or getting fed up or hanging around the streets or whatever?

And people say, oh, because there's nothing for them to do. There's nothing for them to do to entertain themselves. But the fact of the matter is they've all, you know, homes and food and shelter and warmth and a certain amount of money and so on.

But they're bored or there's nothing for them to do. Bored and such, you know, deviancy or crime or whatever usually arises in such situations where there is already a baseline that's being met.

[6 : 31] There's already a provision of anything. People aren't hungry. They're not starving. They're not out of work. They're not in real need. That's why they then start to think about how do I entertain myself?

When it says elsewhere in Scripture, I haven't got the passage here, but I should have looked it up before. Sodom and Gomorrah, their sin. What was their sin? Well, it says elsewhere in Scripture, fullness of bread was part of their sin.

Now, that doesn't mean, oh, their actual sodomy and depravity didn't matter. But why did they go down that route? Because they had a sufficiency of everything they needed, so now they wanted to be entertained.

When people often say that this country is sort of paralleling the decline of the Roman Empire, as it were, because Rome in its AD had already brought, you know, a sufficiency of land and political power and had all the wealth and all the provisions.

And it's people who had plenty of food and drink and shelter and everything they could want. So now they wanted entertainment. And when you've exhausted all the normal channels of entertainment, they don't satisfy anymore.

[7 : 38] So you have to go for things that are a wee bit more deviant. You have to go for things that are a wee bit more daring, pushing at the boundaries. So all manner of debauchery and depravity then begins to enter in, in order to keep people entertained, to keep them on the edge, as it were.

Now, what do we find in our own country now? We find things that have been considered, even in the days of my youth, absolutely abhorrent. And now are considered to be the norm.

And people keep on pushing the boundaries of what is to be considered acceptable. But the reason for that is because we are comparatively affluent. We have everything we need. We have all the necessities of life.

We have those for the comforts of life. Now we're looking to be entertained. And the old ways of entertainment don't cut it. We want to be like those who don't have any restraints.

Now, if we take Israel as a case in point here, Israel has been provided for by the Lord all the way down through their history. He looked after them in the desert. He looked after them in Egypt.

[8 : 39] He looked after them once they came into the promised land. Now, they decide, oh, well, everything's fine. We can sort of dabble in these other gods. We can worship other gods. We can do these other things.

What is the attraction of these other gods? Why, if you've got your own god, Jehovah, who provides everything for you, and looks at you and so on, what's the attraction of these other gods?

Why do you want to be like these nations around you about? Well, we have a clue here as well when it talks about in Gilgal, where they first sinned, verse 15.

All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them, the wickedness of their dream. What happened in Gilgal? In Gilgal, the people came together and decided, they said to Samuel, we want a king.

We want a king to rule over us. They go out and fight our battles. And the key thing was not, we've all decided to become fervent monarchists, but rather, we want to be like the nations round about.

[9 : 37] Everybody else has got a king. Why can't we have one too? Is this not the kind of pressure that is so often on somebody trying to lead a Christian life? I look around and they want to, they get to do this, they get to do that, they get to do that.

Why can't I do that too? They've got this. I want that too. They've got a king. I want a king too. They get to worship their gods and they make statues. They can see the gods that they worship.

They burn some crannels. They offer a sacrifice. They get to engage in various acts that are forbidden by our God, except with your husband or your wife. And they get to do all these things.

They get all the license. They get all the feasts. They get all the fun. And then they get to forget about their gods and get on with their lives. Until they go and do their worship and their religion and their wee package and their wee sort of pigeonhole, then they get to get on with their lives.

Our God wants to own our whole life. He wants every aspect of it. He regulates all with his law and with his commandments and so on. They just get to worship their gods in the temple, have a feast, a wee bit of license and do what they like.

[10 : 36] And then they just get on with their lives. Their gods don't interfere in their lives. We want to be like these other nations. We want those kind of gods. But the assumption is that the Lord Jehovah will just keep on providing all this time and keep on helping them and there won't be any consequence.

It's like those who maybe get themselves inebriated and then maybe decide to go joyriding and crash a car and they think it's hilarious. And the next morning they wake up and there's the wrecked car and there's them all injured and bleeding and cut and so on.

They wonder what on earth happened. There's always consequences. It may be outrageously fun at the time but there's going to be consequences. And this is what the Lord says here at verse 12.

Woe also the men when I depart from them. This is the thing which Israel has been warned and warned and warned about by Hosea and the other prophets.

And they haven't heeded and eventually get to the stage where it's too late. So we see at verse 1. Now when it says don't rejoice, well what have they got to rejoice about?

[11 : 52] It's likely what's being talked about is what we made reference to last week. 2 Kings 15 at verse 19. Paul the king of Assyria came against the land and Menahem, that's 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.

So pay off the Assyrians and now they'll recognize my kingship. We'll be left in peace. We've paid them off. Now we've got peace. Yay! Let's rejoice. Rejoice not, O Israel.

O joy, as other people. Thou hast gone a holding for my God. You've now bowed down to the Assyrians. You're acknowledging their gods. Thou hast loved a reward upon every corn floor.

In chapter 2, verse 12 we have reference here. I will destroy her vines and her fig trees with all she had said. These are my rewards that my lovers, the false gods, have given me.

And I will make them a forest and the beasts of the field. They shall eat them. So in other words, not only was Israel contentedly accepting all that Jehovah gave them and then worshipping other gods, but now began to ascribe to these other gods the very blessings that the Lord, the true God, had given them.

[13 : 04] The flour and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new one shall fail in her. They shall not dwell in the Lord's land, but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.

In other words, if you like bondage, if you like suffering, if you like not having the Lord rule over you, that's fine. You go back to Egypt. Now, almost certainly it's not physical Egypt that's being spoken about here.

It's a metaphorical Egypt in the sense of bondage, of being ruled over by foreigners and being in exile. But the eating of unclean things is literal. So there's a metaphorical and there's a literal in verse 3.

The metaphorical is referenced to Egypt, because in Deuteronomy 28, verse 36, it says that, you know, if they would go away from him, the Lord shall bring thee and thy king, which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known.

There shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. Now, you couldn't say about Egypt, their fathers hadn't known it, because they had. But they could say about Assyria. And Assyria is the contemporary threat here.

[14:13] Assyria is the ones who seem to be all conquering. So Israel has said, fine, let's worship their gods. Let's do what they do. And they will be successful too. No, you won't.

Because the Lord is your only protection. The Lord is your only help. You'll want to do what they do. Fine. They'll take you into their land. They'll take you in exile. All the stuff that your law and your God's religion didn't allow you to eat.

All the unclean and defiled stuff. You'll end up having to eat that. Because you won't have any option. The things you don't want. Fine. You won't end up being allowed.

You don't want me, says the Lord. That's fine. I'll depart from you. Woe also to them. When I depart from them. You see what's happening here. God is not throwing a tantrum on Spike.

But rather he is accepting their decision. He is accepting their departure. Saying, that's fine. If you want to go, you go. Let's see how well you manage that.

[15:14] It's me walking along the main road as a wee boy. Thinking, ah, I'll show that. And not realising that everything that is dear to me is back there in the house. The warmth. The shelter.

All my possessions. All my toys at that age. The money that kept me in food and clothing and so on. That's all there. I walk away from that. I do nothing. Now, I realised it after not too long.

Israel is not realising it. Not yet. They shall not offer wine to the Lord. Neither shall they be pleasing unto him. Their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners.

All that eat it all shall be polluted. For the bread for their souls shall not come into the house of the Lord. Now, it was one of the statutes of the Lord that went Israel as sacrifice.

They shouldn't offer it on every high hill and under every green tree and the high places that weren't taken away and so on. They should bring it to the tabernacle. Bring it to the temple. Offer it there in the right manner through the appropriate priests so it would be a true sacrifice to the Lord.

[16:17] They weren't just to do it all themselves as they saw fit. Worship was to be as God had prescribed in his word. Now, he says that you'll be eating all these things in foreign lands.

You'll be doing it at false altars and so on. So, it'll be polluted. Won't do you the least bit of good. Bread for your soul, it'll be like the bread of mourners. It won't come into the house of the Lord.

It won't do you any good. It is polluted because it is being consumed and offered in a foreign land. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? More to the point. How shall we make any kind of sacrifice to the Lord in polluted heathen lands?

The answer is, in their dispensation, you can't. Everything they do will be polluted. They think, oh, well, if they're trying to be sincere, they're trying to be diligent, you know, surely the Lord would accept that.

Okay, let's think of the case of a young man who, let's say, in the way of the world, he moves in with his girlfriend, mistress, however you like to describe it, starts raising a family with her, not married, not doing anything in that respect.

[17 : 18] And he thinks, I'm a good guy. You know, I don't beat my girlfriend. I'm not bad to the kids. I try and provide them and so on. So I should be good in God's sight. But the fact is that everything that he is doing is in the context of what used to be called, until a few years ago, living in sin.

So every action of his daily life is, by definition, sinful. Every aspect of his relationship, all the product of his relationship is conceived and born in sin.

It is a sinful relationship. Therefore, his entire life is bathed and continue in sin. It is polluted. So likewise, it is right when they're not in exile and living among heathenism and everything they do, even if they think they're trying to come back to the Lord, trying to be good, is polluted.

It's in sin. People, if we're in exile and nothing we do is acceptable, how could we possibly ever be right with God? How could we ever come back? Well, we ourselves might ask, now under the gospel dispensation, if we are born into sin and we are in a fallen world which is separated from God by sin, how can anything that we ever do ever get us right with God?

That's the answer, of course. It can't. Nothing that we do can ever put us right with God. Nothing that Israel could do in exile would ever put them right with God.

[18 : 49] It was only when the Lord would finally intervene and bring them back from their exile by means of his anointed. In the case as Isaiah spells it out, Silas the Persian was used of the Lord to bring Israel back again, his anointed.

So it is only the anointed of God who enables us to be reconciled, not to be physical land, but to the Lord's glory and to his mercy.

It is the sacrifice of Christ which ultimately reunites us to the Lord of ourselves. We are in an ongoing state of pollution. We are in a foreign exile.

We are in a fallen world. In a living in sin, literally, until such time as we are reconciled to the Lord. What will ye do in the solemn day?

And in the day of the feast of the Lord? Verse 5. How will we ever be right with God when it comes to celebrating the feast, the sacrifice to the Lord?

[19 : 54] How will we do that? Chapter 2, verse 11 says, I will also cause all her mouth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, her Sabbath, all her solemn feasts. The things that were meant to be celebrations of the Lord.

How are you going to celebrate them when you have abandoned the Lord? You know, I would really love to ask, although these are not scriptural feasts anyway, so we probably shouldn't be observing them strictly anyway, certainly not in a religious way.

You know, I'd love to ask the likes of Richard Dawkins, you know, do you celebrate Christmas or do you celebrate Easter? You know, and if so, what are you celebrating? And if, you know, if he gives presents and sticks up a tree and rolls chestnuts by the fire or has any kind of celebration, what are you celebrating?

It's meant to be about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why would you celebrate that if you're an atheist? Why would you celebrate Easter in any way, shape or form, which is meant to be about the resurrection of the Lord?

Why would you do that? And he would probably just shrug and smirk and say, oh, well, he's just having a wee party anyway and he doesn't really care what it's about. But how do you return to the solemn feasts of the Lord?

[21 : 01] How do you, in all conscience, take a holiday on the first day of the week if it's not the Sabbath, if it's not meant to be a day of rest, meant to be the Lord's day?

Yes, you may get the benefit of it, even if you reject the reason for it. But how can you ever get the good of it? What will you do, verse 5, in the solemn day and in the day of the feast of the Lord?

For though they are gone, they have departed from the land of Israel because of destruction, Egypt shall gather them up. Those who would go as refugees, if not into exile in a city or refugees into Egypt, shall gather them up.

Memphis shall bury them. Memphis was a great centre in ancient Egypt and famous as a sort of necropolis, a great place of burying of the dead. They have gathered up their dead bones.

Memphis shall bury them. The pleasant places for thy silver nettles shall possess them. Thorns shall be in their tabernacles. In other words, symptoms of neglect and decay.

[22 : 02] Where once the Israelites were rich and blessed in their own land, there's nothing where they were but nettles and thorns. Symptoms of decay, of abandonment. The days of visitation are come.

The days of recompense are come. Israel shall know it. The prophet is a fool. The spiritual man is mad for the multitude of man in equity and the great hatred. Now the word translated hatred there means apostasy or provocation.

When it says the prophet is a fool, it doesn't mean prophets like Hosea and Isaiah and all these others. It means the false prophets. Those who consistently said that everything's okay.

God loves you. You know, nothing bad's going to happen to you. You're going to win. You'll be fine. God will bless you and everything will continue as it was before. Speaking peace where there is no peace.

And now the prophet is seen to be wrong. The false prophets are seen to be false. The prophet is a fool. The spiritual man, the man who claims to be inspired by the Lord, is mad.

[23 : 03] For the multitude of thine iniquity and the great hatred of apostasy. The watchman of Ephraim was with my God. Now this is in the sense of the watchman who is meant to warn the people about the Lord's decision, the Lord's coming.

Such as Ezekiel was told, son of man, chapter 3, verse 17 of Ezekiel. I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel. Therefore hear the word at my mouth and give them warning from me.

When I say unto the wicked thou shalt surely die. And thou givest him not warning. Nor speakest thou on the wicked from his wicked way to save his life. The same wicked man shall die in his iniquity.

But his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way. He shall die in his iniquity. But thou hast delivered thy soul.

Again, when a righteous man hath turned from his righteousness and committed iniquity. And he hath stumbling not before him, he shall die. Because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin. And his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered.

[24 : 07] But his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the righteous man that the righteous sin not. And if he doth not sin, he shall surely live. Because he is warned.

Also thou hast delivered thy soul. See, isn't that just basically the gospel message? If you go and tell people and warn them the truth of God. That the Lord wants them to repent and be saved.

And if they don't repent and be saved, but they've heard the message. Well, then at least their blood will only be on their own head. And not on the head of the messengers and the witnesses or the watchmen. But likewise, if we have this message and we don't spread it, we don't live it.

Then it's not a case of God will say, just as in Ezekiel or under the gospel. The Lord is not going to say, well, it's okay. You know, you never had a chance to hear. So it's not fair. You know, I can't possibly send you to hell.

Because you never knew any different. They should have told you. But they did. So hey, come on in heaven anyway. No, they will die in their sin. But their blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

[25 : 12] If we were all going to go to heaven until and unless we heard the gospel. What would be the incentive for spreading? Just sit in our hands. And let everybody die in their heathenism.

Because hey, they're all going to go to heaven anyway. If it's all the same. Then all those who worship the Hindu gods and worship Allah and Muhammad and all these others. They're all going to go the same way. Take many paths to God.

Then what possible incentive is there for us to tell them the gospel? Because if we tell them the gospel. And some of them believe, well, they're going to heaven. But they're going to heaven anyway. So where's the advantage?

And some of them that don't believe. And if they were going to heaven before. With all these false gods. But when they heard the gospel and rejected it. And how they're going to hell. We're better off not to tell them in the first place, aren't we?

So it's not exactly good news, is it? But the watchman of Ephraim was with my God. But the prophet, that is the false prophet, is a snare of the fowl in all his ways.

[26 : 08] And hatred, apostasy. In the hearts, that is, in the people of his God. They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah. Now this is a reference to what we find in Judges chapter 19.

Which is the case of the man of Bethlehem, Judah. And his concubine. One of the most horrific episodes in the entire Old Testament. Certainly, certainly in the book of Judges.

It is just about the worst incident in the entire book. And it's blood curdling and chilling. And all that follows from it. And all the slaughter and all the warfare and all the destruction that follows because of that sin.

Is symptomatic. Sin brings destruction with it. It's not just an isolated thing. It's never just about me and my choices. There's all the ongoing results.

If we think, for example, of the slaughter of the unborn that there has been in our land. Since the passing of the Abortion Act in the 60s. They estimate about 7 million unborn children have been aborted in that way.

[27 : 17] Now if we think about that. That means that it came into effect in 1968. That means that there would be at least some 47 year olds going about just now.

Who would be alive. And 46 and 45 and 44. People in their 40s. People in their 30s. People in their 20s. People in their teens. And little children. 7 million people in our country who would be around now.

Some of them would have children of their own. Some of them would have grandchildren by now perhaps. And all of these lives that simply will never happen.

And proportionately somewhere along the line. It's logical to assume proportionately. Some of them would have become Christians. Some of them might have been with the Lord. I know God's sovereign.

And he won't allow anything that won't overrule his will. But at the end of the day. All these lives that just never happened. All these people that weren't able to make the impact.

[28 : 15] Or do the thing that perhaps they were destined or intended to do. Because they never lived. They never got to that stage. There's always consequences. With everything that we do.

And with every sin. And the prophet is a snare to the father. The snare of the father in all his ways. And hatred in the house of his God. They have deeply corrupted themselves. As in the days of Gibeah.

Therefore will I remember their iniquity. He will remember their iniquity. He will visit their sins. I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness. I saw your fathers as the first wife of the fig tree.

In her first time. Now the sense here is of a needy traveller. Going across the desert lands or whatever. And then coming across grapes that are ripe. Now grapes of course on the right.

They're fresh. They're sweet. They're moist. And they refresh you. If you take a bump. You're allowed under the law. To take as many as you could in your hand and in your mouth. You weren't allowed to put any in your bag.

[29 : 12] Or carry them away. But you could eat as many as you liked. In your hand. And to your mouth straight away. But you weren't allowed to carry any away. But if you come across fresh grapes.

When you've been travelling dry and dusty lands. It's going to be so sweet. So refreshing. Or the first light figs. Which were considered a real delicacy.

In Israel at the time. This is what Israel was like in our youth. This is the nation. In its first long devotion to the Lord. In its first desire to the Lord.

Keen to be a nation. Dedicated to Jehovah. Were keen to observe the laws and the commandments. As they stood in Mount Gerizim. And Mount Ebal. And said yes. We swear to all these commands.

And they read all the threats. And all the curses. And they said amen. To it all. And they all affirmed. Their devotion to the Lord. And when Joshua had said to them. No you can't serve the Lord.

[30 : 09] No me and my husband will serve the Lord. But you guys. No you want other gods. No no. Serve the Lord. And they were determined. And they were devoted. And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua.

And all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua. And in all that generation it rose and passed away. And then. Declenching. Then dissatisfaction.

The first right grapes are long since gone. The first right grapes have passed away. Israel is no longer in its first flush of devoted youth. Our own land.

Once known as the land of the people of the book. Now degenerated. Into multi-faith idolatry. Worshipping of other gods. Anything and everything goes.

Except the truth of the gospel. As for Ephraim. They their glory shall fly away like a bird. From the birth. They went after Baal to the earth.

[31 : 07] We saw the previous verse. And we read about that in Numbers 25. Verses 1 to 3. From a bird and from the womb and from the conception. Notice that stage of gradation. Their glory is gone from the birth.

Even further back. From the womb. Even further back. From the conception. They're not even going to be allowed. To become a nation anymore. Though they bring up their children. Yet will I bereave them.

That there shall not be a man left. Yea. Woe also to them. When I depart from them. You see the Lord is the giver of life. The Lord is the one who brings life.

In all its fullness. He gives us all our lives here. And he promises us life here after. If the Lord departs from us. We no more have life. We have only death.

If we are living our lives without Christ. Then we just have existence here. But we are like the living dead. We are those who are simply counting down. Until we breathe our last.

[32 : 08] Until we cease our mortal existence here. But that's not the end of it. Then we have an eternity. Without him. But it is. As we have chosen.

God in his goodness and severity. Gives us exactly. As we desire. What he is saying to Israel. He is not. Oh how bad the hell you are.

I am really going to punish you. Rather what he is saying is. Okay. If you want to go. Go. If you don't want me. Go from me. Go. Worship your other gods. See how you get on.

Go. Ask them for the help. Go. Ask them for provision. And vineyards. And wheat. And corn. And flour. Ask them to provide you. Go to the Assyrians. Woe to you. And I depart from you.

And this is what the Lord allows. You don't want anything to do with me. That's fine. On you go. You want to enjoy the good world. I've made it. I've given you. Okay. That's fine. But it's not going to last. It's going to pass away.

[33 : 07] And when this world passes away. Or we pass away from it. Without God. When we have turned our back. On all life. And all its fullness. There is only death.

Death. In all its awfulness. Death. Is a state of separation. From God. It's why if we were living. We are living.

Without faith in Christ. We are in a state of death. Just now. Just as Adam and Eve. Entered into that state of death. When they sinned. Separated from God.

That Adam didn't actually. Physically die. For another 900 and something years. But he was already in a state of death. As soon as he was separated from God. From which he needed to be redeemed.

From which we all need to be redeemed. And the prophet cries out. We saw. Ephraim as Tyrus has planted their present place. Ephraim shall bring forth his children. To the murderer.

[34 : 01] It's just going to get worse and worse. You play with fire. You play with these heathen nations. They will visit you with their version of mercy. Give them oh Lord. What will I give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breast.

And the prophet is here pleading. He tells you it is pleading Lord. Mitigate it somewhat. At least miscarriage. As traumatic as it is. It's not as bad as seeing your children murdered. So let them not at least have the start.

Let them not at least bring forth children. It's better not to bring forth children. Into this kind of misery and sorrow and suffering. Jesus himself of course says. When the day of the Lord comes.

There will be woe to those who are with child in those days. Woe to those. Who are getting sucked at the time. It will be worse. To have the additional burden and responsibility.

Of little children. When all these things come upon you. But the only way for us to avoid. Such judgment is to turn. To the Lord. All their wickedness is in Gildo.

[35 : 02] For they are I hated them. For the wickedness of their doings. I will drive them out of my house. I will love them no more. All their princes are revolted. Now this is a pun.

In the original Hebrew. Because the Hebrew word for princes. Is the word sarim. And the word for revolters. Is sorerim. So you've got sarim and sorerim.

So it's a play on words. For emphasis. It's like it's being repeated. The pun is being driven home. Not as a source of wit. But as a source of reinforcement. Sarim, sorerim.

Princes or revolters. It's being worked in the Hebrew. We don't really get that in the English. But it's there in the Hebrew. Ephraim is spoken. Their roots is dried up. They shall bear no fruit.

Though they bring forth yet by a slave. Even the beloved fruit of their womb. My God will cast them away. Because they did not hearken unto them. And they shall be wanderers among the nations.

[35 : 58] Of course for years and years and years. That was the situation of the Jewish people. Wasn't it? Throughout all the nations of the world. They were scattered. Often they did very well.

The nations where they went. But they didn't have a home of their own. Now I am not about to say. Ah yes. The nation state of Israel. Which is a secular state. It's not a God on round state.

A purely secular state. I'm not saying. Oh that's the chosen people of the Lord. But there has to be some significance. In eternal things. There has to be some significance.

In the fact. That in the 1940s. After all these thousands of years. Wanderers amongst the nations. Israel came home. And had a land again of their own.

Now I don't know what all the final. Spiritual and spiritual significance. Of it will be. But I know there must be. Some significance in it. I know that there must be.

[36 : 54] Some sense of beginning to fulfill. Some of the prophecies. I know that it means. However we interpret the details. The Lord is nearer now. To coming back. Than he was before.

Because that is a piece of the jigsaw. That is now back in place. And there is a place. For the Lord's people. According to the flesh. At least to return. That flesh will do them no good at all.

If they do not accept. And acknowledge their own Messiah. But it means. That they are able to see. If they will look. The pieces being put back into place. There is nothing.

To be gained. From turning away. From the Lord. And if he should depart from us. We are lost in beat. The definition of hell.

Is a place. Without God. Of course the Lord. The Lord fills all the heavens and the earth. There is no no way. It is for the Lord. But his comfortable presence. Is removed.

[37 : 55] It will be. As our Lord experienced on the cross. My God. My God. Why has thou forsaken me? Because he felt. The absence. Of his father's comfortable presence.

And if. We ever. God forbid. But if we ever. Should end up in hell. That is what we will experience. The absence. Of the living God.

Only a state of ongoing death. Woe to them. When I depart. From them. It is not the chi. As a chapter. In scripture. But it is a necessary lesson.

For Israel. And for us. That we must learn. That it is not all. Simply come to the Lord. And all will be well. But the flip side of that coin. Is depart from the Lord.

And he will depart from us. There are consequences. To everything we do. For good. Or ill. How much more urgent.

[38 : 53] Is the need for us. Each one. To repent. And believe. The gospel. Let us pray. Amen.
Amen.