

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

C0930 – August 12, 2009 – Hosea 2:2-5 – The Warnings To Stop Prostitutions

We're studying chapters 1-3 of Hosea which are clearly distinct from chapters 4-14. In these chapters we said the theme can be summarized this way, *God establishes a historic parallel between His relationship with Israel and Hosea's relationship with his wife*. We said God puts his prophets in peculiar positions and this is one of the most peculiar. Hosea is commanded to marry a prostitute, Gomer, as a real life example of what it was like for God to be married to the spiritual prostitute Israel. This man is going to suffer publicly because of the whoring of his wife. And this is an illustration of what God suffers because of Israel's spiritual whoring. This is one of the very explicit ways God communicated to the nation Israel; He drew people into real life situations that mirrored the situations He was dealing with.

Now, if we outline chapter 1 it looks like this. In v 1 we get the historical background, what kings were recognized rulers in the northern and southern kingdoms during Hosea's ministry and the general time period, about 760BC. Both kingdoms were in decline but the northern kingdom had declined much more rapidly and Hosea was from the north so his prophecy is primarily directed to the north. In v 2 Hosea gets the prophetic call and the first words God speaks to him are 'go marry a whore and adopt children of whoredom.' I'm sure Hosea thought this was a lovely idea. Why me God? But in vv 3-5 he obeys. So in 1:3-5 they have their first son and the Lord said to name him Jezreel, which is a very strange name because **Jezreel** was a valley that biblical history associates time and again with the place of God's judgment on wicked, wicked people, people like Ahab and Jezebel and so this is a very strange thing to name your kid. But the point is that everywhere this kid went he was a living prophecy to the nation that they had become so wicked that their military would suffer grave defeat in that very valley. So

everywhere the kid walks he's a reminder of that awful doom that's coming. In 1:6-7 they have a daughter born, **Lo-ruhamah**, her name means "No Mercy," another strange thing to name a kid. And she will become a living prophecy to reveal to the nation that when the military is suffering defeat in that valley God will have no mercy on them; it will be a total defeat. So the first kid gives us the place of the defeat, Jezreel, and the second kid gives God's response to the defeat, no mercy. In 1:8-9 they have a third child, his name is **Lo-ammi**, which is probably the strangest name of all, it means "Not My People." And this is the height of God's anger. This is God casting His people off. They're going under the fifth degree of cursing, exile. But just as you think at this point in the text that's it for the northern kingdom the Hebrew shifts in v 10 to a poem describing the four-fold restoration of the nation Israel in the latter times; so there is hope but it's a distant hope. But that distant hope at least means there's a remnant that survives the coming judgment and gives birth to a future nation. So the three children are prophetic signs to the nation Israel.

Tonight we start in chapter 2:2 and we get deeper into the sufferings this man Hosea faced and by parallel, the sufferings God faced. God is a person and He has emotions that mirror in some way human emotions. And we have to remember this or else we get it in our head that God is a statue in heaven totally unconcerned about earthly affairs, just sort of a robot. God is not a robot, God is a person who responds to history in a very personal way and Hosea is going to show us what it's like for God to have to put up with a people in rebellion against His authority. And therefore, what Hosea goes through being married to a woman who is out prostituting herself mirrors what God goes through every time you and I sin. You and I become spiritual prostitutes and the way God feels about that is parallel to what a man would feel like knowing his wife is out whoring with another man. This is a principle the Lord is teaching at this point through Hosea so we see how psychologically terrorizing sin is. Sin causes tremendous emotional turmoil. Very few of us can even imagine the seriousness of sin and what the Lord faces every time we rebel. But once you do you start to realize the magnanimity of His grace in putting up with us. The point of the analogy tonight is to give us a glimpse what this man had to face with how God feels about our sin.

So Hosea is cast into suffering to illustrate to the nation what God was going through. Now, there are eleven reasons we suffer. Let's look at our list again and just pull out the one Hosea and his family are most involved in. Number nine, **Evangelism of Unbelievers** is the clearest reason for the suffering. 1 Tim 1:16 shows that God designs certain sufferings in a believer's life so that an unbeliever stares at that and just marvels. How does he do that? How can he put up with that and not just fly off the handle in a rage? Because Hosea has every reason in the world to fly off the handle, his wife is going to go out and screw other men. Hosea's woman is going to give her response mechanism to men she doesn't belong to. And Hosea knows it's going on. And when we get into this some of you who have coy ears might get a bit embarrassed because the Hebrew is very explicit as to what's going on and it's not a pretty sight. Sin isn't a pretty sight. Sin is gross. But the way Hosea handles the sin of his wife is a testimony to the nation Israel.

Tonight we'll work with vv 2-5 and so let's kind of clarify what this section is about before we go into it. The basic idea in these verses is the children of Hosea are to issue a warning to their mother. She's going to be engaged in prostitutionary acts and the kids are to say, hey mom, stop it. And the parallel is that God is saying to the nation Israel, you're engaged in spiritual prostitution and you better stop it. Now, the very fact there's this warning implies there's still time to repent. And as long as there is still time to repent you're still operating in a period of grace.

Now in later sections of this chapter the time to repent will have expired and so when you see that they've reached 721BC and the Assyrians have taken control. And finally you'll see in the chapter a future opportunity to repent and that's when we've been launched forward in time and the nation Israel does respond to her right Messiah and is restored. So the early part of the chapter, 2:2-13 is dealing with the historic situation of Israel leading up to 721BC. 2:14-23 is dealing with the future situation of Israel.

So in Hos 2:2-5 we have the warning, **Contend with your mother, contend, For she is not my wife, and I am not her husband.** The word **contend** is a technical word. You have to know the background of this word or you'll draw the wrong conclusion about these words, you'll say a divorce just happened. First, who is doing the contending? Remember we said last week v 1 "Say to your brothers...and sisters" that the one's doing the saying

are Hosea's three children. Well they're still the ones being addressed. So Hosea is saying to his three children, **Contend with your mother**. Now why do they have to contend with their mother? Because by this time she's left him. You have to remember that these prophecies are spread out over Hosea's life and so they were married in chapter one, obviously several years passed by because they had three children and now the little boogers are grown up and now she's left him, she's out on the street and she's gone back to her profession as a whore. And so when it says **Contend with your mother, contend**, Hosea is saying to his three children to go to their mother with this message. But the same time Hosea has the experience in his home and family, God is having the spiritual experience with Israel, and so He's addressing the remnant of believers in the nation to go out and contend with the nation Israel. **Contend with** her because of what she's doing.

Now the word **Contend**, used twice here, is *r-i-b*, it's not pronounced rib, but *reev*. It's a legal term that means to bring a lawsuit and that term is very important to understand here. It means they are to bring charges against her. Why is this so important? Because you can't bring charges against someone unless you have a standard of law that's been broken. What are you going to charge someone with if there's no law? So obviously law is involved and it's the Law in the covenant. The only question is what covenant? The nation Israel had several covenants. So we go back to our chart of sanctification. In sanctification we have three phases. (We haven't really got into the third, that's ultimate sanctification; we usually just talk about the first two.) The first is their *position*; this is what God does for the nation Israel. This is what God will do for her no matter what she does. This is guaranteed. The historical illustration is the Abrahamic Covenant, Gen 15 and the three guarantees are a land, a seed, and worldwide blessing. That's a covenant of grace not law so that one's out. The second phase of sanctification is *experience*; this is what God expects the nation to do and out of this comes blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience. If the nation obeys, blessing, if the nation disobeys, discipline. This is a covenant of law, it's a standard and if the standard is broken then charges can be brought. So if the children are to contend with the mother, meaning to bring charges against her in a lawsuit, then which covenant has she violated? The Mosaic Covenant. We said the word covenant just means a contract. Don't get too religious on me, religious words lose their meaning. This is a lawsuit here, think of a contract on your house or something. God and Israel have this

marriage contract and Hosea and Gomer have a marriage contract. And in a marriage contract there are certain terms, one of which is faithfulness, faithfulness to one spouse. So the analogy is building out of divine institution #2, marriage established at Creation. This structure is embedded in v 2 because the two words **wife** and **husband** are *isha* and *ish* and those are the two names of the first married couple, *ish* and *isha*, not Adam and Eve, *ish* and *isha* were their first names, **husband** and **wife**, those were their names, *ish* named his wife Eve after the Fall. So the divine institution of marriage is behind everything in our text tonight. So let's go back and remind ourselves of this key institution. In early Genesis, God established three institutions, #1 responsible labor or dominion, #2 marriage and #3 family. What we mean by calling them divine institutions is that God defined the form of these and if any man on planet earth violates that form, if he distorts it, if he changes it there's a price to pay. The world says, no, we do not accept that, we say they're just conventions, they are malleable, we can twist and change them and there's no heavy price to pay. People might get bent out of shape for awhile but eventually everything will work out. So they treat these like a handshake. A handshake in culture A is the conventional way of greeting someone, in culture B it's a kiss on the cheek, that's what we mean by a convention. It really makes no difference, there are conventions. The issue is whether the labor, marriage and family are conventions. The pagan says yes, the Bible says no. But no matter what the pagan says the evidence shows there is a heavy price to pay and when these structures are violated societies eventually collapse because the truth structures they're designed to communicate are lost and then you have whole generations that can't understand the word of God.

Hosea is a key example of the heavy cost of violating divine institution #2. This man has a wife who is in violation of the marriage contract. The marriage contract says one man and one woman will serve as sexual partners for the rest of their life. There's a boundary built into the contract. And Gomer is his wife and Hosea is her husband. So there is sex but its sex within marriage. There is nothing sinful about sex. God created sex. He created it very good. But He created it to be exercised within the marriage contract. And if it's exercised outside the marriage contract it's a violation of the structure of marriage and there's a price to pay. The obvious price is emotional turmoil for the faithful spouse. People try to make sex a purely physical activity, just a mechanical event but after all is said and done there's

guilt. And that guilt isn't a physical response. It's a spiritual response, you've violated a norm and standard, that's why there's guilt. And so sex is not just a physical activity, it's a spiritual activity and that's why it's reserved for marriage. But this woman is having it with any man that walks through the door and there's a price to pay for that. She'll pay a price, Hosea will pay a price and guess who else pays a price? The family. Because there are kids and other relatives associated with the situation they have to face the emotional turmoil and social stigma of the violation. Those are obvious prices, but there's also economic fallout when you think about other children that may come into the picture; having to support two households rather than one, there's tremendous economic fallout to violating the 2nd divine institution. Hosea's going to have to face all of that. But he's a man of grace and a man of love and he's going to do it marvelously, just like God does it. He's gracious, He's longsuffering and despite what we do He works with us and it's grace, grace, grace until that runs out and only then, judgment. So when it says **contend** with your mother it means in Hosea's relationship that this woman has left and now he's told his children to go to her and tell her she's violated the marriage contract and she needs to come back, come back to the terms of the marriage contract. The parallel with God and the nation is that Israel has violated the Mosaic contract and He's telling the remnant within the nation to go out and call the nation back to the terms of the Mosaic contract. Otherwise, there's going to be a price to pay.

So, **Contend with your mother, contend**, and then the reason is given, **For she is not my wife, and I am not her husband**. Now again let's treat it by the parallel, first Hosea talking to Gomer, then God talking to Israel. In Hosea's personal experience Gomer has left. In Hosea's personal experience he sends his children to start lawsuit proceedings against their mother to tell her that she has violated her contract. And the reason for this is that she is no longer my wife. Now why does he say this? Doesn't this indicate that because she broke the contract now they're divorced? No. The expression **she is not my wife and I am not her husband** does not mean the legal relationship has been destroyed but that the fellowship has been destroyed.

Let's go back to our chart on sanctification and apply this to us in our relationship with Christ. The second phase of this is Israel's experience; they obeyed or disobeyed, they went up or down, the point is it fluctuated, experiential sanctification is a process. But before that they had their

position and their position never changed, their position is secure. Why? Because God said so. God is a God of grace. And they have their position by grace. Now we have the parallel in the Christian life. The moment you trust Christ you're in Him. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. That's your position. But then there's your experience. You can do some pretty nasty sin and still never be out of Christ. How can this be? Because God made certain promises and He's faithful to His word.

Now it's the same thing in Hosea's marriage; positionally he is still married to Gomer, but in experience she is not his wife and he is not her husband. Granted this is a dramatic way of stating it, but it gets the point across. What's going on is a serious breach of contract. Therefore, verse 2 should tell you how God looks upon us when we sin. When we sin we get out of fellowship, we still have the relationship, but when we're out of fellowship God would say, you are not My child and I am not your God. Now that doesn't mean He cut you out of the relationship, it means you are not acting like His child, you don't resemble Him at all, and God would say that. Remember I said when I introduced this book, as we work through these verses you are going to see the God of the universe react to people. Now this is the very personal dimension of God we were talking about. God is a personal being and history is personal. History is not just one economic collapse, followed by a war, followed by a new tyranny. History is the personal handiwork of God. It is not some impersonal, random process. History is where you get to know the person of God. It is precisely why history is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. If this stuff written in the book didn't happen we're believing one of the greatest farces ever perpetrated on the human race. So we're locked into this book as a historical document. Otherwise we can't know who God is. So history is His-story. It's where we learn about Him, it's where we see Him react and here He's reacting to Israel and Hosea is reacting to Gomer because they're out of it. And this is how God would react to you and me when we're out of it. You're not My kid and I'm not your God. Now, how do you like that? It's not loss of salvation, but it shocks, it communicates.

Now in verse 2 is the contract violation. Please notice the context, **And let her put away her harlotry from her face And her adultery from between her breasts, ³Or, I will do this...** and that's the discipline. So it shows you there's still an opportunity for Gomer to repent, she's not going to. And by parallel the nation Israel could repent, but she's not going to either.

Now, let's go through the language because this is very visual, very in your face language and the reason he has to use this is because these people are so far gone. Now the two phrases run in parallel but they have nuances. **And let her put away her harlotries from her face**, that's plural, **And her adulteries from between her breasts**, also plural, harlotries and adulteries. She's returned to her prostitution business but this time it's also adultery because she's doing it inside the marriage contract. So she's gone back to her business and you can see now why the lawsuit is being drawn up against her. These people were to be stoned!

Now, it's a little soft in the translation so let me put it to you straight. The verb **put away** means 'to apply pressure' and the picture you have, very bluntly is she's in the middle of sexual intercourse with a man and she is told to push him off of her, so when it says **put away her harlotries from her face** it means they're in the face to face normal position, she's involved in the sex act and she's supposed to push him off, to stop it right then and there, to leave it unfinished. That's the kind of language God uses to get through to the nation. So in parallel what God is saying to the nation Israel is that she's involved in a face to face sex act with idols. She's committing spiritual fornication, worshipping other gods. Verse 13 tells us who the other gods are. Primarily Baal. There were other Canaanite deities they worshipped.

Now why is sex linked to idolatry in the Bible? Alright, it gets back to the created order. Man is designed by God to worship. Man is made to worship God. You wonder what am I here for? You're here to worship God. But, if man goes negative to God and rebels against him then a vacuum is created in the human soul. And by default a vacuum will turn to some other object as ultimate. So since man is made to worship and he refuses to worship God he begins to worship something else. It's that simple. All men worship either the Creator or the creature, but no man is without worship, all men worship.

Now, to tie in with sex we bring in divine institution #2, marriage. A relationship created by God between one man and one woman. When God did that He made man with a role and He made woman with a role, two distinct roles. Male and female have distinct functions in the plan of God and so together they complement one another. This is why one man + one woman won't work, two men don't complement, they have the same roles and there's no

complement. So, if you distort marriage that way you'll be lopsided. Now the way God designed man: He made him first, He made him the leader, He made man the initiator in the relationship. The woman He took out of the man. He made her the follower, He made her the responder in the relationship. And when these two roles are handled correctly it's a beautiful thing. But in the fallen world here's the problem. The woman is the responder. If she marries her man but she goes negative to her husband then a vacuum is created. She doesn't cease to be who she is, she's still made to respond and what will happen is she'll begin to respond to other men. Now that's what's happened here. In the marriage of Hosea his wife Gomer has gone negative toward him, she's left the house, but she can't be something she's not. She's still a woman and she's still designed to respond to a man and so she begins to respond to other men. In the analog with the nation Israel the nation had gone negative toward God but they can't be something they are not, they cannot become non-man, they are still designed to worship and so they begin to worship Baal. That's the link between sex and idolatry; they both play off the original design at creation. A woman was made to respond to a man and man was made to worship.

So, verse 2 communicates a very graphic picture of what was going on. Gomer was responding to a man in sexual intercourse but it was the wrong man. By parallel the nation Israel was worshipping a god, but it was the wrong God. And they should stop this.

Verse 3 gives the warning. **Or I will 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.** Let's look at this warning of discipline if she doesn't stop this behavior. First, again let's look at Hosea and Gomer and then God and Israel. Hosea has given this message to his children; the children are to deliver this message to their mother; their mother is out some place where she's conducting her business of prostitution. She's in the middle of a sex act and the children show up, and they are to give her this message, that you're to push him off you, lest Hosea come in here and he's going to strip you naked and put you out in the street. That's embarrassing, that exposes you to all kinds of ridicule. That's one side of the analogy.

The other side is that God insists that He's going to strip Israel **naked And expose her as on the day when she was born**. This goes back into Genesis and the doctrine of clothes. You might have never thought of it but there is a doctrine of clothes. Clothes are a theological statement in Scripture. Very seriously, they are a theological statement. Genesis, if you take it literally, which we do, is teaching us something about why the human race wears clothes. Did you ever stop and think if evolution is correct we shouldn't be wearing clothes? No other animal does. Why does man put on clothes? I never saw a bird or a kangaroo put on clothes. Except in children's books. So there's something different about man. Why do all men, everywhere, basically wear clothes? And animals do not? A few tribes don't but usually men wear clothes.

Now why? The Bible gives a reason for this. We don't know all the details but there are some hints at why we wear clothes. Originally God made man naked. It says God made them naked and they were not ashamed. It wasn't a problem at all. After the Fall something happened and they became aware of their nakedness. And their nakedness bothered them to the point they went and made clothes; they took fig leaves and covered up. Now, no animal did that. Animals run around naked all the time and never have a problem with it. So obviously there's a difference there between man and animals. And the Bible points out that the reason man is ashamed is because of his sin. When man sinned it affected the way he looked at the human body. Now it was something he was ashamed of. We don't know what the body looked like before the Fall, but it did look different. The Fall brought about physical changes to the human body. We don't know all that changed but we do know that when they looked at the body they were ashamed of it. It probably was more because of what sin did to distort the way they saw the body. But whatever all the factors were now there was shame whereas before there was not. And they wanted to cover up so they made designer clothes. Now that's physical clothing to cover physical nakedness but the Fall affected spiritually too and there was a spiritual nakedness now due to the sin problem. So there's a deeper problem being shown to us in why man wanted clothes. Man has a sin problem and he's trying to cover that up, he's embarrassed. Remember that the spiritual always finds its analog in the physical. So when we talk about physical circumcision, for example, there's a spiritual parallel in the need for a circumcised heart. Always the spiritual mirrors the physical. It's part of the way God built into creation revelation of spiritual truths. You

may not see them at first but when you do you say, aha, I always knew there was something to that. So man is also embarrassed spiritually in analog to the physical embarrassment and he wants to cover that up. So the clothing he puts on are good works - if I do enough good works God will look down at me and say, I accept you. It's always about man clothing himself. But just as Adam and Eve couldn't clothe their physical bodies properly so they couldn't clothe their spiritual bodies properly. And so the spiritual truth is that because we're sinners we need spiritual clothing and that spiritual clothing can't be supplied by us, it's got to be supplied by God. It's the clothing of God's perfect righteousness. Clothing is a theological statement that man is in need of righteousness. And so what is God saying about Israel? I'm going to strip you naked, I'm going to expose you, that is, I'm going to show the world you're spiritually destitute, I'm going to make you a mockery before the nations. I've protected you so far, I've sheltered you; I've blessed you but no more. I'm going to strip you of all that. And the way I'm going to do that is v 4; I'm going to remove all blessing.

I'm going to make you **like a wilderness**, I'm going to **make you like desert land** And I'm going to **slay you with thirst**. All that is due to the lack of water and in the Bible the lack of water is the lack of life. There's going to be a lack of that which sustains life. I'm going to dry up every resource of Israel's prosperity. Now it's explained why he's using this in verses 4-5 and here I think we're going to be introduced, maybe a little bit clearer, to why God disciplines some of us the way He does. Now it's always been clear that God disciplines us because of our unconfessed sin but now you're going to see why certain kinds of disciplines come into your life and why God allows these disciplines. in other words, what is it that you're doing that brings this stuff on?

Hosea 2:4, He says, **Also, I will have no compassion on her children, Because they are children of harlotry**. Now this means on Hosea's side that he's not going to have compassion on her illegitimate children. They're not his children, he has no obligation to them, the mother is gone and he's taking care of them but that's it. He's threatening to orphan them, send them over to the local orphanage. On God's side, God is saying to the non-remnant of Israel, don't think just because you're a physical descendant of Abraham you're going to get blessing. I'm not going to bless you, when the

Assyrian army comes down and crushes you you're going into exile and you'll no longer be welcome in My house.

Hosea 2:5, the reason is given, **For their mother has played the harlot; She who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said...**and here's the most significant statement: here is idolatry at its very core which shows you why God gets so angry at them. **'I will go after my lovers, Who give me my bread and my water, My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'** First let's look at it as an illustration of Gomer, the simple illustration and then the nation Israel, the complex one. Now, notice what it is she's saying. The **bread** and the **water**, these are the necessities of physical life; the **wool** and the **flax** are the necessities for being clothed. And the **oil** and the **drink** are words for the luxury items, they're very expensive items.

So what this woman is saying is that my man Hosea does not provide what I need. The ones who provide my needs are **my lovers**, my customers. She thinks her needs are being met by them; those things listed in verse 5 are the basics of life and a few luxury items. And she thinks that's what I need and my lovers are providing me with these things and so she's going to them and going to them and going to them to get them. This is the essence of idolatry. This woman is deceived; this woman doesn't understand who is really providing for her. Hosea is really the one who provided all those things. Hosea is the one who really loves her. They don't provide for her, they don't love her, they love her sex. Remember she's a daughter of Diblaim, a perfect daughter of pleasure. They love what they can get out of her, but the one who really provides for and loves her is Hosea. Hosea loves her no matter what she does and she does some pretty nasty things. But she's in rebellion against him, she's rejected him and now she's out on the streets responding to other men.

Now bring it over to Israel. What is God saying about the nation Israel? God is saying to the nation Israel, you have prosperity. During the reign of Jeroboam II, the nation Israel, by a prophecy of Jonah, was able to expand its borders and build tremendous economic wealth, international trade, agricultural prosperity. Economically, this was the hey day for the northern kingdom. Business was great. But who gave them the prosperity? If we're reading this in parallel? If we're to read verse 5 in the analogy, she was

attributing her business boom to Baal. She was attributing the prosperity to Baal. Baal provides all my needs. In the three steps downward the northern kingdom had rejected finally, under Ahab, YHWH Himself. And every time you reject God, just like a vacuum you interpret things under another principle, something your vain imagination has dreamed up. It's the way we're made, there's nothing you or I or anyone can do about it. If you reject the God of the Scriptures you will give the meaning via an alternative principle that you make absolute. It's vain. It doesn't make any sense but that's what the autonomous sin nature does, the sin nature distorts how you interpret reality. You see things funny. The funny way they're seeing things is that Baal provides for us, they're responding to this figment of their imagination, Baal.

Now in reality it was God's grace that had given them that prosperity just as it was Hosea who provided for all Gomer's needs. God is saying all the economic prosperity is due to grace, grace, grace, and the nation said no, it's not the result of grace. It's the result of our works because we've gone to the high places and we did a dance before Baal, we held up a token, we rubbed Baal's lamb and Baal sent a storm, Baal made our corn grow, Baal gave us oil, Baal made my business grow, we are prosperous because we did this song and dance. It's total heresy, we did it, we by our own works, we brought about the prosperity.

Now, you have to be careful here what you attribute to your works. Let's develop this into a principle we can apply in our life. Grace is a dangerous thing at times because it gives the impression that we did it. But if God were to remove His gracious hand we would see that we didn't do a thing. The tendency is to take credit but if we could really see what would happen if God removed His hand of grace we'd be shocked. Sometimes, just for a moment God removes His grace and we see the decay happen right before our eyes. What you're seeing is just a glimpse of what it would be like if He wasn't around. Those are important historical moments because God is saying, hello, are you paying attention to all I'm doing for you? Are you thankful? Are you attributing the blessing to the proper source? Don't forget Me, I'm here and I'm doing all this for you.

Now here's what had happened. God had given grace, grace, grace to the northern kingdom. They had prospered and prospered and prospered and

they began to do something very dangerous. They began to attribute the prosperity not to God's grace but to their works. So there's a problem. Credit is not given where credit is due. How does God solve the problem? He starts to peel off the grace, and as God peels off the grace my production goes down and so I march down to the high place and cry out to Baal and production goes down again and so I march down again and go through my dance and production goes down again and I start to wonder, hey, what happened to all my greatness, I'm not doing anything different than I used to so why am I not getting the production I used to get? Precisely because God is removing His grace. God is trying to wake you up to teach you a lesson; that you didn't do all that, I did that and you didn't give thanks, so now I take it away. It's that simple.

Now this is what He is going to do if they don't stop this spiritual fornication in v 3. He's going to **strip her naked**, meaning He's going to embarrass her, internationally; he's going to make her a joke among the nations. He's going to make her like a wilderness, he's going to start pulling away the rain that makes the land prosperous. And one year they'll have a little less produce and the next year they'll have less and the next year they'll have less. And every year they'll go out and they'll cry out to Baal, Baal give us rain, Baal give us crops and every year they'll cry a little louder and there will be less produce. Now why is God going to do that to them? To show them who really gave them the increase. To show them who really is the one who supplies all their needs and so they'll repent. So they'll turn back to God, so Gomer will turn back to Hosea. But they're not going to do it and that's what we'll see in the next verses.

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