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C1006 – February 10, 2010 – Hosea 10:9-15 – The Fifth Degree

We'll continue with the accusation and judgment cycles tonight in Hos 10. The accusation and judgment cycles come in the *rib* format. r-i-b but the 'b' sounds like a 'v', so it's pronounced *reev*. This is a lawsuit; this is case in a court of law. You always want to remember this because it's teaching us about how the Holy Spirit convicts of sin. The Holy Spirit doesn't convict on the basis of vague generalities. He convicts very specifically. And that's why we read over and over the specifics of sin in Hosea. This is a court of law and in a court of law you don't present vague generalities to get a conviction. You present very specific detailed violations of the law code. So that's a truth you want to pick up from these pages. All of us have felt a vague sense of guilt but that vagueness is not the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit convicts He is extremely specific. What did Jesus say in the NT Gospel of John about what would happen when He sent the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit would convict of what? Three very specific things: of sin, because they believe not in Me, very specific, the sin is not believing in Jesus Christ; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, again, very specific, the ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father is a historical, public revelation that the Father is satisfied with Jesus Christ; and third conviction of judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged, again, very specific. That's the role of the Holy Spirit in the present age to convert people to Christ. It's not going to be vague feelings that lead someone to Christ. Vague feelings don't do that. Specifics of God's word do that. So now we have a tool of discernment in our own lives. Isn't it nice that the Holy Spirit is so specific? I personally find it very comforting. Now I can distinguish between my vague feelings and the objective truth. And if you'll apply this in your own life I assure you, you can avoid hours of grief and depression. People get so hung up on how I feel and I just don't understand why I am feeling this way. Who is the author of that? I don't know, maybe it's your flesh, maybe it's the devil, maybe it's the world,

but what I can tell you is it's not the Holy Spirit. So now we have this tool of discernment.

Last week we had two cycles of accusation and judgment. We said this is the 11th hour of the nation; judgment is imminent. Verses 1-3 describe cycle one, verses 4-8 cycle two. In cycle one the accusation is in verse 1, the judgment is in verses 2-3. The accusation of verse 1 is that God has given them wealth but they have not properly utilized the wealth. God has given and they have received but they have not given thanks, they have not given credit where credit was due and so they have stolen from God. The judgment of vv 2-3 is that now God is going to destroy the wealth, the economy is going to go into recession. So we have the destruction of wealth and God's very legitimate concern over how wealth is used. In cycle two we have a different accusation described in verse 4 and the judgment in verses 5-8. The accusation is they were covenant breakers. Society was full of people who had no integrity and therefore they broke business contracts, they broke marriage contracts, they broke all kinds of contracts. Always a sign that character has not been developed. And we can see this abundantly in our culture as well. So we have all had some relationship to the problem of covenant breaking. The judgment for this was they would go into exile to those with whom they broke the contract. There's an irony and a sarcasm to how God handles the problem. So they're going to go into Exile to the very nation that they broke contract with. 722BC is the date the northern kingdom will go into Exile to Assyria. Now we've said before that Exile is the fifth degree of divine discipline and it's been awhile since we've reviewed the cycles of discipline so let's review and make application.

Turn to Leviticus 26 and look at that, because Hosea presupposes you understand it; he's referring to this in code words, if you want to put it that way, or the symbols, symbolic words that would connect and communicate to his generation, and his generation had been schooled to recall Leviticus 26. The five degrees of discipline begin at Leviticus 26:14. Now these five degrees apply only to the nation Israel directly. But they give you an idea of how God judges nations and how you can take what is contained in Leviticus 26 and look upon America today and figure out what degree of discipline we are in. Now it's only an approximation because there's a delay in this when God pours it out on the Gentile nations. The reason is because we're not locked into covenant with God. It worked very clearly with Israel and the connection

could be easily seen between spiritual cause-effect. With Gentile nations the connection is not easily seen because God delays the spiritual effect. The cause may be thirty years earlier and God didn't do anything at the time and then boom, the economy takes a hit. The cause-effect is still there It's just much more difficult to detect. Now if you look at Leviticus 26:14-17, there's the first degree. "But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, ¹⁵if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, *and* so break My covenant,

When a nation gets the first degree, as for example in verse 16, "I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up. ¹⁷I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you." Now one of the characteristics of the first degree of discipline upon a national entity is the fact that you have mass neurosis. You have people very anxious, very afraid, and very disturbed mentally; that is a characteristic that is not normal for a nation. And when you see, even a vocal minority that is fearful and neurotic you are watching God and His first degree of discipline function for that nation. "I will appoint over you a sudden terror." You will notice that "they shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart," that is psychosomatic illness. There will be a maximum number of people visiting the doctor's office with psychosomatic illnesses. Notice also it says "you will be struck down before your enemies," these are minor wars; the country will begin to lose minor military engagements; that is another sign of discipline upon the national entity. "And those who hate you will rule over you," it doesn't mean they'll lose their sovereignty, it means the key areas of international diplomacy will be dictated by nations other than that nation; the diplomatic initiatives will go to other nations and it will not be that nation.

The second degree of discipline, suppose the nation continues on negative volition; Leviticus 26:18-20, suppose the nation continues to rebel against the word of God, then God has more in store. "If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. ¹⁹I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and

your earth like bronze. ²⁰Your strength will be spent uselessly, for your land will not yield its produce and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit.” In the second degree of discipline how can we summarize that in words that communicate to the modern man? “the trees of the land will not yield their fruit,” now what would the trees be? They would be orchard trees; orchard trees represent a capital investment, so therefore we can generalize in an economic sign of the second degree of discipline, there will be a major loss of capital investment. You will have the situation where a large number of people in a national entity have invested their funds to capitalize, to have great assets in corporations and these will begin to dry up, there’ll be no production. Notice also in verse 19, “I will punish also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze,” there will be adverse weather conditions that will strike at harvest time, which will upset continually the farmer and his production schedule. There will be this kind of thing begin to happen, second degree of discipline. So you have an economic loss here; you have besides economic losses you begin to have odd type weather. And also, verse 19, “I will also break down your pride of power;” with loss of capital and adverse conditions national pride begins to break down, patriotism begins to wane.

The third degree of discipline, Leviticus 26:21-22, “If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins. ²²I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted.” Now when this happens it would mean that there would be disturbances in the animal kingdom that would cause abnormal behavior such that wild animals would prey on children, they would prey on cattle, which are capital assets. So we can generalize the principle of the third cycle of discipline or the third degree as that there will be an ecological imbalance, that nature will be upset, there will be an imbalance that causes problems in human population growth and problems in protecting capital assets. So here you have violence in nature, catastrophes caused in nature. So by the time you get a nation in the third degree you are watching God operate on the national entity through nature.

Now the fourth degree of discipline, Lev 26:23-26, “And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, ²⁴then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins.

²⁵I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands.

²⁶When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied.” So we will have an outbreak of mass disease, epidemics; particularly in the urban cultures. So this is a sign of the fourth degree of discipline, serious epidemics. You will have also a deterioration of the military establishment, “you shall be delivered into enemy hands.” The military will go down; it’s always a sign of deterioration in a nation when the citizens refuse to support the armed services. Even to the point of hatred of those who protect them. That is God’s judgment on a nation. Another feature of the fourth degree, verse 26, is food shortages and malnourishment; that sets in; that’s another sign of this sort of discipline. So the fourth degree of discipline you have epidemics in the urban areas, food shortage and consequent malnourishment, decline of the military, those kinds of things.

Now the fifth degree or the fifty cycle, Leviticus 26:27, ²⁷Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, ²⁸then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins. ²⁹Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat.” which was fulfilled in the fall of Samaria in 722, it was fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem in AD70 when Jewish women ate their babies. They not only had to eat their babies but Josephus reports that as the women start to eat their babies (after they had starved to death and they roasted the child), someone else would come along and pry their mouth open and take the meat out and eat it themselves; there were gangs going through the streets tearing food out of people’s mouths; they had no food, they were desperate; they did this because of the tremendous pain of hunger. Verse 30, ³⁰I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, for My soul shall abhor you.” What did we read last week in Hosea? I gave you fruit, I gave you riches and what did you do? You turned it around and made more altars. What does God say He’s going to do in the fifth degree of discipline? I’m going to tear them down. Verse 31, “I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas. ³²I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it. ³³You, however, I will scatter among the nations...” and so the by the fifth

degree of discipline God has had it, He deports them, He sends an enemy invasion and they destroy, and that's the end of the national entity. Now that's what we're watching in Hosea 10. He's outlining this very thing. Assyria is right on the verge of coming in and wrecking the whole place. Now you could never argue that you didn't know all this was coming. This was all outlined centuries before very clearly in Lev 26 and Deut 28. All the material was right there, all you had to do was go read this text. And if it's true that these cycles hold true for other Gentile nations in a weaker form then we have the responsibility as bible believing Christians to go into these texts, analyze what God said, then go out and scan the horizon economically, agriculturally, socially and militarily in our own country. We better be paying attention to where we are on this thermometer. And unfortunately we can't say things are too cool right now, things are heating up.

Today we come to the third cycle, again, accusation and judgment, Hos 10:9-15. The accusation is found in verse 9, **From the days of Gibeah you have sinned, O Israel; There they stand! Will not the battle against the sons of iniquity overtake them in Gibeah?** Now what's this talking about? We have to go back to the accusation. Hosea 10:1, the accusation about being parasitic, this is one way the Holy Spirit has of convicting us of our carnality, pointing out areas of parasitic-ness, where we are living off of blessing and not giving God due credit. Another way we saw in verse 4 was accusing us at the point of violating covenant and producing a misrepresentation of Christ to the unbelieving world. That's another way the Holy Spirit has of convicting us of our sins.

In verse 9 we have a third way the Holy Spirit has of convicting us of sin, and that is to show how gracious God has been to us. Now often times this will melt a person more than the other two approaches. So Hosea is using all three approaches; he uses the hard-nosed line in verse 1, he has a somewhat softer line in verse 4, and now he comes at verse 9 and he has a very, very soft and delicate line. And he goes back to the days of Gibeah, which was the incident we discussed a time or two ago in the book of Judges, Judges 19-20, the story of a Levitical priest and his concubine. He had gone to retrieve her from Bethlehem and on his way back home he stopped at a Jewish village to stay for the night, had deliberately tried to separate himself from the Gentile village and against the advice of his servant, he travelled a bit further that day just to stay in a Jewish village. And what happens? They take the

concubine and rape her all night to the point of death, of all places where you might suspect this kind of thing would occur it occurs in a Jewish village, not some Gentile village. And there it happens, a Jewish Sodom and Gomorrah. Right in the heart of the tribe of Benjamin. So the tribe of Benjamin is depraved at that point, deeply depraved. So this Levitical priest picks up the corpse of his concubine, takes her home and cuts her body up and sends it around to the other tribes. The tribes gather, they say, what is the meaning of this? He tells them what happened and they muster 400,000 armed soldiers to go down to Benjamin and fix this little problem. The tribe of Benjamin decides they're going to back their boys, they're not going to turn them over and so you have three bloody assaults in one of the most disturbing events of the whole OT. Anyone remember why there had to be three assaults? Because the first two assaults Benjamin won. What is that telling you? Were the other tribes innocent? No, they were not. You have to be careful because you could get the idea that only Benjamin was depraved, but the fact that the other tribes lose about 45,000 soldiers in those first two conflicts is telling you, oh, no, that's not the case at all, the whole of Israel is depraved at that point, deeply depraved. The tribe of Benjamin was almost eliminated from history at that point but the fact that God let the nation survive at all past that event of Gibeah is a tremendous extension of His grace. They've been living solely on His grace since the days of Gibeah, 500 years God has put up with them.

Well, what he's saying is **From the days of Gibeah you have sinned, O Israel**, see, it's not just Benjamin, it's the whole kingdom, **There they stand**, in other words, your forefathers were at **Gibeah**, they stood in danger of being annihilated, of receiving the judgment of God, **Will not the battle against the sons of iniquity overtake them in Gibeah?** In other words, the battle did not overtake them at Gibeah, God had been tremendously gracious not only in that day but God was gracious all the way from that day to the present day but now the battle will overtake them. This time the judgment will fall. What truth have we gone over ad nauseum that is captured here? What always comes before judgment? Grace. God always gives grace before judgment. And He had been gracious from the days of Gibeah to the days of Hosea, but now that grace had come to an end and it was time for judgment.

Now in verses 10-13 you have God speaking. And this is one of the most interesting pieces on the heart of God. This gives us insight right into the heart of God. If you ever wondered the kind of thing that's in there, this section reveals tremendous things about what's in the heart of God.

So in Hos 10:10 we have a phrase that to my knowledge is not used anywhere else in Scripture, **When it is My desire**, the word **my desire** used just precisely this way, it's a combination of will and emotion, in this particular word you can't really sort it out. **When it is My desire I will chastise them**; and here we have a revelation of God's attitude. All this time, God says, I have waited, I have waited and waited and waited and been gracious, and gracious and gracious, since the days of **Gibeah**, so many times Israel merited nothing but destruction but I was gracious; now **it is My desire to chastise** you, I have got to do this. So this represents a decision in the heart of God Himself, that I must do this, you have given Me no other option, you have ignored all My warnings, so I have decided I must do this. Now again the way to apply this to your own life spiritually is to think about your life, how it measures against the word, and just visualize God acting in this way toward you. He gives us grace, grace, grace, some believers you watch them and they just continue in their rebellion and you wonder, is God ever going to lower the boom on this person, and sure enough, sooner or later He does. But it can often be a long time. When it comes you know what's gone on the heart of God, this verse, He has gotten to the point with this believer that that's it, **His desire is to chastise them.**

And that's what's in His heart with respect to Israel, **It is My desire to chastise them;** **And the peoples will be gathered against them**, that's the nation Assyria. Just as the eleven tribes had been gathered against Benjamin in the days of Gibeah, so now the Assyrians are going to be gathered against all Israel. **When they are bound for their double guilt.** And it's not the word **guilt**, it's the word "eyes" and what he means by their double eyes is there are two things they look at. What is it they are looking at? They're looking at the two calves, the two idols they had set up. What did we say about idolatry? We said it's all in the mind's eye, you project this image in your mind of all this glory attached to something you see. And that's what they'd done with these two calves. With a double eye they had attached all this glory to the calves. And so he says I'm going to gather the Assyrians around you, they're going to hem you in and no one is going to be there to

save you. I have removed My protection. That's our sixth step down. Someone asked me last week what is the sixth step down in the doctrine of deep carnality, here it is, God removes His protection and so the wolves come in and destroy.

Hos 10:11, **Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh.** Now why would a heifer love **to thresh**? Because of the animal rights under the Torah; in Deut 25:4 an animal that treaded out the grain had a privilege the other animals didn't have; it's the privilege that he wasn't muzzled while he threshed, he was allowed to eat the grain as he threshed it. Now other animals that had the muzzle were not permitted to do this. They were restrained. And Hosea presumes you're aware of this, an agricultural society would be aware of this, so when he comes to verse 11 and he says, **Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh** - he's saying you've enjoyed maximum freedom, you've had it easy, you've enjoyed prosperity. All this time for hundreds of years God had made it easy. Now by application, Christians in America, in large part, have enjoyed one of the greatest seasons of prosperity and freedom the world has ever known. We will probably never understand how great we've had it. It's been easy and we've enjoyed prosperity, but that can all come to an end. **But** He says, **I will come over her fair neck with a yoke; I will harness Ephraim** and this means there's going to be a change, there's going to be an exchange of freedom for constraint, a exchange of enjoyment in life for bitterness.

This heifer that was previously allowed to thresh out the grain and eat at the same time has now got to plow with a yoke around her neck. And the concept is that as the heifer plows she's not going to be able to eat any of the produce, she's out plowing for the sowing of the seed. But the harvest isn't until much later and so there's a delay between when the work of sowing is done and when the harvest comes and she's not going to enjoy any of the fruits of her labor until the harvest. So there's a time delay between the work and the enjoyment of the fruits of the work. Before, she got it immediately. Now this is portraying the future history of the nation Israel in the dispersion the whole idea is that the Jew in the fifth cycle of discipline is going to go into Exile, the north in 722BC, the south in 586BC and there they will be living in a bitter, constrained situations for a long period of time. She's in a long sequence of plowing and the harvest is far in the future and so she's not going to enjoy the fruits of her labors until in the far distant future. So that's the

point, Israel is removed, she's kicked out, and no longer is the blessing going to be immediate. It is going to be a long time before she enjoys blessing again. And in fact, the Jews as a nation still haven't enjoyed the blessing in store for them. And they won't until they get right with the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a final note at the end of the verse, **Judah will plow, Jacob will harrow for himself**, and in other words, the judgment will come on the south too. Their judgment is delayed until 586BC but nevertheless they're time is coming. They too will plow in the muzzle for a long time.

Hos 10:12, these are instructions to the Jew as he is out in Exile and he's plowing the ground. Out there God has some instructions for him. So verses 12 and following, all this has to do with grace. God says all right, now I'm going to tell you what to do. I'm going to give you a different job assignment, it's going to be outside of the land, and here are some things you can do about it. You **Sow with a view to righteousness, Reap in accordance with kindness; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the Lord Until He comes to rain righteousness on you.** Literally "until He comes to teach righteousness to you." So there's going to be a delay, on the plowing ground you are going to sow, sow, sow, sow, and what should the believer's attitude be in the north as of 722BC? You know you are not going to receive the result of your work for a while, you are now to develop a new mental attitude that is added to the repertoire of believers, and it is something called patience. That is the quality that is developed during the Exile. Before there wasn't this period of waiting, you obeyed the Lord, you got the blessing, you disobeyed the Lord, and you got the cursing. Now we've got this big long time gap, we obey the Lord over here but we don't get much blessing; we obey some more, we still don't get any blessing, we obey some more and we still don't get any blessing, tremendous time delay, until way off in the future, then they'll get the blessing. Here's where the concept originates.

These people are being prepared to suffer for a long period of time and God in His grace, though He is administering justice and He is disciplining them for their sin, he is saying at the same time I do this I still love you and I want to prepare you for My discipline; I'm going to kick you out of here and you're going to have to live out in the world system, it's going to be a very different existence under pagan Gentile dominion, so while you're out there here's

what I want to develop with you: I want to develop patience in you, **seeking the Lord Until He comes**. It's going to be a long period of seeking and not finding, seeking and not finding, generation after generation, but the Lord hasn't forgotten about them, the Lord will eventually **come**. This verse proves that the ten tribes are not lost; the ten tribes are out there, we may not know who they are, where their genes are, but God does. God knows perfectly where every member of one of the tribes is, to the point that in the future tribulation he can take 12,000 from each of the ten tribes and make them witnesses. So there is no such thing as the lost tribes, maybe lost to man but not lost to God. And finally the Lord will come to them. And He will **teach righteousness to them**. He's going to eventually give them further instruction, but for the time being they are to take the word of God that they know and apply it, over and over and over, use the word, develop patience until the Lord comes with further instruction, until the Lord comes.

It's the same concept today; we have a closed canon of Scripture. It was closed in 96AD when John the apostle wrote the Revelation, there has not been a true prophet since John the apostle and there will not be until the Church is raptured and Elijah returns on the scene. And as long as we have no true prophets we have no true revelation coming. And therefore we live in an era of the closed canon, the closed canon of Scripture. And we are to operate in exactly the same way. We are supposed to remember what the Lord has instructed us in the OT and NT and trust it, practice, over and over using the faith-rest drill, training to trust him and we are not always getting immediate blessings; there are rewards that will be issued at the judgment seat of Christ, so there's a harvest awaiting. In the meantime we plow and plow and plow. There's no guarantee of immediate blessing. Do you think that in the 2nd century those Christians that died in the Coliseum had immediate blessing? The only thing those Christians got was devoured by lions. The only blessing Christians in the 16th century got in the time of the Reformation was burned at the stake. That's what they did to people who loved Christ more than the State. None of those Christians received much earthly blessing as a result of their obedience to Jesus Christ. They died very violent deaths. Their blessing lies in the future at the judgment seat of Christ, along with ours. So you continue to seek the Lord and keep doing it and keep doing it and keep doing it until He comes.

Hos 10:13, **You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped injustice, You have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your way, in your numerous warriors,** a perfect statement of autonomous man, **you have trusted...in your numerous warriors.** Always basing your security on something other than the word of God. And when you base your security on something other than the word of God you're going to pay a price. In this case they put their trust in the military. Don't ever put your trust in the military. We support the military. You know we are strong supports of the military and we are patriots. But never let the military take the place of God. They said, we have the best weapons, we've got the best training and therefore we're unbeatable. God said, verse 14, now that you've put your trust over there in your military, I'm going to destroy your military. **Therefore a tumult will arise among your people,** that's the invasion, **And all your fortresses will be destroyed,** what's the cause of the military defeat? Is it poor training? No, it's misplaced faith. **And all your fortresses will be destroyed As Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel on the day of battle,** "Shalman," is a shortened name for Shalmaneser." We don't have this uncovered in archaeology yet, but we do know that Shalmaneser came in and worked on the outer fortresses as he moved toward Samaria so he didn't have any opposition behind him, that was his tactic. But he describes what happened at **Beth-arbel** in very graphic terms, **When mothers were dashed in pieces with their children.** Turn to Psalm 137. What they would do is come in and they'd kill the children. They'd kill the children because they didn't want another army to fight, and then after you get through killing the children in front of the mothers then you kill the mother on top of the children. That's the way you teach people a lesson, and that's how the Assyrian army taught people a lesson. So you didn't cross the Assyrians. Not too many dared to play games with the Assyrians. Psalm 137 recounts the same thing happened to the southern kingdom at the hands of Babylon. And here they are in Exile. And they're vindictive, and you might get tempted to think in an evil way. But it's simply in the context of justice. They want justice served. So they say in verse 7, "Remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom The day of Jerusalem, Who said, "Raze it, raze it To its very foundation." 8 O daughter of Babylon, you Devastator, not devastated one, but devastator. "How blessed will be the one who repays you With the recompense with which you have repaid us. 9How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones Against the rock." This is what we call an imprecatory Psalm. The imprecatory Psalms you can always detect by this

very fierce, vindictive tone, dash their little ones against the rock. It's scary language and a lot of Christians get scared off by this tone. C. S. Lewis even said these were not inspired Scripture. But the answer is that this is written by the Holy Spirit. And the point is simply we want justice. We want God to return and finally judge evil and destroy it forever. So that's the idea and we can pray similar type prayers against our enemies? Who are our enemies? The princes and principalities of darkness, we don't pray for Satan to be saved. We don't pray for Satan to be successful in devouring people. So that's the application for us, this kind of mentality that we want to be successful over the hindrances of sanctification.

Hosea 10:15, **Thus it will be done to you at Bethel**, again, this is the prophetic perfect, it's as good as done, it's going to happen, in God's eyes it's already happened. **it will be done to you at Bethel because of your great wickedness.** Bethel was the place of wickedness, what was at Bethel was the idol. So look what the idol has done. The final statement, look at this, **At dawn**, not some dawn, **At dawn**, it's imminent, the day of grace is over, the judgment has come. This apparently was Hosea's last sermon. People didn't pay any attention to it of course, they were too busy sleeping, they've got other things to do and so obviously they go down and they become the victim. Many of the women who heard Hosea are going to be ripped up and thrown in a pile with their own children. There are going to be young children who are cast into stone walls because their parents rejected the word of God over and over and over, they had declined through all six steps of deep depravity and finally God had had it, He removed His divine protection and sent the fifth degree.

Alright, tonight we've reviewed the five degrees of divine discipline the OT nation Israel faced. We've reviewed the specificity of conviction. When God the Holy Spirit convicts He doesn't do it by way of vague guilt feelings, He does it by very specific accusations in the word of God. In particular we've seen the accusations involved in the fifth degree of discipline. And we'll conclude with this point. For the northern kingdom there's a moment of horror lurking on the horizon. The Assyrians were big boys, they were nasty and some very frightening things were going to happen. But don't get the idea that when God turns them over to the Assyrians, that somehow now the situation is totally out of control. There's always a temptation when our life goes into chaos to think that chaos reigns. But the chaos-makers, the

Assyrians, as mighty as they were, as ferocious as they were, were under the sovereign hand of God. Ultimately they were putty in the hands of the God of the universe. So things are not out of control. What the Assyrians do when they go in there will not exceed one inch beyond what God allows. It's a surgical operation God is pulling off here. You know what that does for you? Because we have enemies too, it's not the Assyrians, it's the princes and principalities of darkness, Eph 6. Satan roars like a lion seeking someone to devour. These are some big boys in the universe. And God can turn us over to these big boys. What did Paul say; I turn him over to Satan so that he may be devoured in the flesh. So this kind of discipline has a parallel in the Christian life. But you always want to remember that though big they are and though fierce they can be and though we can be turned over to them for discipline, as scary a situation as that is, never is the situation out of God's sovereign control. So what does that do for you? It cuts our enemies down to size, it impotizes the temptation we have to think of them as greater and more powerful than they really are.

Alright, so the fifth degree of divine discipline was coming and we've made the parallel to nations, there's a disciplinary link but it's weaker with nations in general because they're not in covenant with the Lord. But still there are consequences to sin on an individual level, on a national level. So just as an exercise take the five degrees we went through tonight, print out the notes or something, and when you sit there watching Fox News or whatever you watch, just categorize the big stories, where does this fit in the scheme, you won't have any problem finding them, there's no news but bad news these days, so if you do this it will sharpen your ability to read history through the lens of Scripture. A nation that sows wickedness will reap destruction. Whatsoever a man reaps, this shall he also sow.

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