

IX. “Wanderers Among the Nations”

01-Feb-04

Hosea 9:1-17

Bentley Chapters 14-15

Theme: The long-term consequences of sin vastly outweigh any perceived short-term benefits.

Key Verses: Hosea 9:10, 17 – ¹⁰I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. But they went to Baal Peor, and separated themselves to that shame; they became an abomination like the thing they loved. ... ¹⁷My God will cast them away, because they did not obey Him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

Review

Last week, we covered Hosea chapter 8. More than anything else, this chapter was a recapitulation of many of the main themes and ideas of Hosea 4-7. Hosea weaves the subject of corrupt religion in with the main themes of chapter 7 on societal decay. He goes back and forth between condemning their corrupt religion and their reliance on politics, pagan culture, foreign alliances, and internal strength. In the area of corrupt religion, Hosea condemns their transgression of the covenant, rebellion against the law, and their rejection of the good. As a result, the trumpet has sounded the alert that the vulture of Assyria is ready to swoop down on the dying carcass of Israel. Hosea also lambastes their idolatry, declaring that the golden calf of Samaria is to be broken into pieces. Furthermore, Hosea decries their sacrificial worship as vain and unacceptable to the Lord. They have built many altars, but they are altars for sinning rather than altars for the removal of sin.

All of these corruptions of their religious practices have led to societal decay. They have established kings and rulers without the approval of God. Their culture has been swallowed up by the pagans around them, so that the distinctive call of Israel to be holy has been lost. They have chased after foreign allies such as Assyria like a wild donkey in heat. And they have built up their own fortresses and palaces, relying on their own strength rather than on the Lord.

Ultimately, the entire message of Hosea 8 – corrupt religion leads to social decay and ultimately judgment by God – is summed up in these six words of verse 14: “*For Israel has forgotten his Maker*” (14a). Because Israel had forgotten his Maker, they transgressed the covenant, rebelled against the law, and rejected the good (1-3). Because Israel had forgotten his Maker, they set up wicked kings that the Lord did not acknowledge (4). Because Israel had forgotten his Maker, they established idolatrous centers of golden calf worship, perverting the true worship of God (4-6). Because Israel had forgotten his Maker, they sowed the wind, reaped the whirlwind, and were swallowed up by pagan culture (7-8). Because Israel had forgotten his Maker, they chased after alliances with Assyria like a wild donkey in heat, instead of remaining faithful to the Lord (8-10). Because Israel had forgotten his Maker, they multiplied altars for sinning, but had no appreciation for God’s law or righteous conduct (11-13). And because Israel had forgotten his Maker, they put their trust in buildings rather than the Builder and Maker of all (14). By sowing the wind, Israel reaped the whirlwind of destruction.

Introduction

Today in Hosea chapter 9, we will be looking at consequences, consequences of the sin of Israel. For the past few weeks we’ve looked at the corrupt religion and the immoral lifestyle of the post-

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Christian culture of Israel. We've seen hints of judgment here and there, but today it will be a long catalogue of lost blessings. The framework for Hosea's presentation is the remembrance of three places and the historical events that occurred there: Gibeah, Baal-Peor, and Gilgal. Like a hall of shame, Hosea names these places to remind the people of past national sins, but more importantly to emphasize that they are as guilty and as worthy of punishment as their ancestors.

Exposition

A. Gibeah (9:1-9)

1. Lost Inheritance (9:1-3)

Hosea starts out by re-reminding us of the harlotry metaphor that he has used extensively earlier in the book. "Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like other peoples, for you have played the harlot against your God. You have made love for hire on every threshing floor. The threshing floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail her" (1-2). The fertility cult of Baal taught that Baal was the lord of the harvest. By engaging in ritual acts of harlotry, one could "show" Baal what was needed and "induce" Baal to prove a bountiful harvest. This harlotry metaphor thus does double duty by describing both the physical infidelity of the people as well as their spiritual infidelity to the Lord. The things they desired – grain from the threshing floor and new wine – were the same material blessings sought by Gomer (and Israel) way back in chapter 2: "For she did not know that I gave her *grain, new wine*, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold—which they prepared for Baal. Therefore I will return and take away My *grain* in its time and My *new wine* in its season" (2:8-9a). The problem, of course, is that they are seeking these blessings from the wrong source – from Baal – rather than from the Lord. And just like in chapter 2, God here says that because they are seeking these blessings from the wrong place, He will withhold them from the people. But then God takes it up a notch. Bam!

In addition to losing material blessings, God says that the people are going to *lose their inheritance*: "They shall not dwell in the Lord's land, but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and shall eat unclean things in Assyria" (3). The book of Deuteronomy makes it perfectly clear that the land of Canaan is their inheritance ("inherit" and "inheritance" are used 29 times in the book). For example, "For the Lord will greatly bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an *inheritance*—only if you carefully obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today" (Dt. 15:4b-5). Notice that the inheritance of the land is a *conditional inheritance* – it depends upon their obedience. I believe that Hosea has amply demonstrated that Israel has failed to comply with the conditions of their inheritance. And now the Lord is invoking the disinheritance clause of the covenant ratified back in Deuteronomy: "If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD ... then the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone ... and the Lord will take you back to Egypt in ships" (Dt. 28:58, 64, 68a).

You will notice the pairing of Egypt and Assyria again here in Hosea 9:3: "But Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and shall eat unclean things in Assyria" (3). As we have indicated previously, although these two countries are in opposite directions, they are teaching the same thing. Theologically, captivity in Assyria is the same as bondage in Egypt – both are places of sin and uncleanness, symbolic of separation from God. The same principle still remains for us. The apostle Paul warns the Church in Corinth: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not *inherit*

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the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will *inherit the kingdom of God*" (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Sinners are separated from God – they have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. They are trapped in exile in Egypt or Assyria – the kingdom of sin. Is there any hope for Israel? Is there any hope for us? Yes. Paul continues: "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). Thanks be to God that Jesus Christ leads the exodus out of the kingdom of sin into our heavenly inheritance.

2. Lost Worship (9:4-6)

When Israel is scattered in Assyria, they will have lost more than just their inheritance; they will have *lost the true worship of God*. "They shall not offer wine offerings to the Lord, nor shall their sacrifices be pleasing to Him. It shall be like bread of mourners to them; all who eat it shall be defiled. For their bread shall be for their own life; it shall not come into the house of the Lord. What will you do in the appointed day, and in the day of the feast of the Lord?" (4-5). They have already corrupted the true worship of God – that has been one of Hosea's biggest themes in his prophecy. But there will come a day when Israel longs to return to God and worship Him rightly – and they will not be able to do so.

In the land of Assyria, they will be unclean – they are no longer separate and holy. The image of the *bread of mourners* emphasizes this. In the Law, death was associated with uncleanness, and anyone who has contact with death is considered ceremonially unclean until they can be purified. Thus, food in a house of mourning will be unclean because of its association with death. The unclean person is unable to come in the presence of God to worship. While they are in Assyria, they will be in a perpetual state of mourning, of uncleanness. While they will be able to eat this food in order to sustain their physical life, their state of uncleanness will prevent them from coming to worship God in the house of the Lord.

Verse 6 again emphasizes the disaster that awaits Israel: "For indeed they are gone because of destruction. Egypt shall gather them up; Memphis shall bury them. Nettles shall possess their valuables of silver; thorns shall be in their tents" (6). Remember, for Hosea, Egypt is not the physical place of exile for Israel, but it is the theological realm of sin and slavery. The reference to Memphis (not Tennessee), a city in northern Egypt just 15 miles south of the Delta), calls to mind the pyramids of the Egyptians, burial grounds for the pharaohs of the Fourth Dynasty (c. 2700-2000 B.C.). "In other words, then, death was all they could hope for" (Bentley).

So, "the people will lose the privilege of worshipping Yahweh in the way He wanted. Whereas once they had indulged in pagan worship, when Israel will be overtaken by the invading forces, in their distress they will want to worship Yahweh, but they will not be able to do so. Their old idols will let them down but, by the time they realize it, it will no longer be possible for them to turn back to the system of worship in the law" (Eaton). They will be as good as dead, buried deep within Assyria like the Pharaohs in their Egyptian pyramids. There comes a time when it is too late to repent, too late to return and obey God, to call upon Him and worship Him as He requires.

Christ's parable of the rich man and Lazarus emphasizes this in Luke 16. Remember the parable: A rich man and a poor beggar named Lazarus both die. Lazarus who suffered in life, is comforted in heaven upon Abraham's bosom, but the rich man, who led a luxuriant life, is suffering the torment of Hell. The rich man asks for relief, but he is given none – he received

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comfort in life and now that he's dead it is too late for him. So the rich man asks for Lazarus to testify to his five brothers who are still alive that they might repent. But no special word will be sent – they have Moses and the prophets to warn them already. Israel also had Moses and the prophets – especially Hosea! – but they failed to listen. And when it was too late, when they were as good as dead and buried, they finally realized what they had lost – the true worship of God.

3. Lost Word (9:7-9)

The third blessing the people of Israel will *lose is insight into God's Word*. “The days of punishment have come; the days of recompense have come. Israel knows! The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is insane, because of the greatness of your iniquity and great enmity” (7). Israel may not know much – they may not know the Lord (4:1), they may not even know that the day of punishment and recompense is nearly upon them. But they do know one thing – the spiritual man, the prophet (likely Hosea himself!) is an insane fool! Only in the depths of their depravity and sin could they come up with this judgment. The people have “exchanged the truth of God for the lie” (Rom 1:21). They have accepted the lie that they know best, that their wisdom is better than the wisdom of God's word. But Paul says that “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Cor. 3:19a).

By calling the prophet a fool, they are saying that the words of God spoken by the prophet are worthless, useless, meaningless. This is what a post-Christian society does – they reject the Word of God. Let there be no religion in the public arena – God has no place in the marketplace of ideas. And sad to say, there is also no place for God or God's word in many liberal churches today. In many churches, members don't bring Bibles to services – because they are not needed. There is a famine of hearing God's Word – not only in society, but even within the Church itself.

Hosea defends the proper position of the prophet in verse 8: “The watchman of Ephraim is with my God; but the prophet is a fowler's snare in all his ways—enmity in the house of his God” (8). Ezekiel 33:1-9 describes the duties of a watchman in detail: “So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel: therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me” (Ez. 33:7). The prophet is a watchman – the one who stands alert to warn the people of impending trouble. As long as the watchman is faithful in warning the people, those who hear the watchman have the responsibility to listen and respond to protect themselves against the coming danger. This is what Hosea has faithfully been doing, warning Israel of the coming disaster if they don't return to the Lord, their loving Husband. And so, according to Ezekiel, because they have not listened to Hosea, but instead have harried Hosea like a bird into a fowler's snare, their blood will be upon their own heads (cp. Ez. 33:4).

Why have the people lost insight into God's Word? Why have they lost access to true worship? Why have they lost the land of their inheritance? Hosea answers this by a historical comparison to Gibeah: “They are deeply corrupted, as in the days of Gibeah” (9a). Gibeah is one of the deep dark stains on the history of Israel. It refers to the incident of the Levite's concubine recorded in Judges 19. The story is reminiscent of the behavior of the Sodomites in Genesis 19. A Levite and his concubine were traveling and spent the night at an old man's house at Gibeah, because it was not safe to spend the night in the open square. A crowd of perverted men from Gibeah demands the Levite leave the house so they can know him carnally. For whatever reason, the Levite does not go out, but he gives the crowd his concubine. They “knew her and abused her all night until morning” (Jdg. 19:25), leaving her dead. The Levite then dismembered the

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concubine's body (shades of Robert Durst) and sent pieces of it along with a message to the other tribes of Israel to avenge this behavior of the men of Gibeah. What followed in Judges 20-21 is a civil war against Benjamin, home tribe of Gibeah.

What Hosea is saying is that the "present spiritual chaos" of Israel is comparable to what happened at Gibeah, which "may be the most sordid scene in the Old Testament" (Hubbard). As a result, God has no point but to bring judgment down upon Israel, just as it came down on Gibeah of Benjamin. "He will remember their iniquity; He will punish their sins" (9b). This is the inverse of the New Covenant formula found in Jeremiah 31:34 – "'For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jer. 31:34b). Like the men of Gibeah, who lost everything because of their appalling conduct, the nation of Israel has been found guilty and will lose the land of their inheritance, the true worship of God, and insight into God's Word.

B. Baal Peor (9:10-14)

1. Lost Glory (9:10-13)

Having taken us back in time to the wretched Gibeah incident, Hosea takes us back further to a seemingly better time, the founding of the nation. It started out so well: "I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season" (10a). Imagine the delight of God in His people. It was like finding juicy grapes in a desert; it was like the first tasty figs from the fig tree. But even more than this image of delight, there is a definite picture of peace and security portrayed by the combination of the (grape) vine and fig tree. For example: "'In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'Everyone will invite his neighbor *under his vine and under his fig tree*'" (Zech. 3:10). "But everyone shall sit *under his vine and under his fig tree*, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken" (Mi. 4:4). "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man *under his vine and his fig tree*, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon" (1 Kgs. 4:25). So, the early days, the "honeymoon" period of Israel's relationship with God is characterized here as full of peace and security (glossing over that whole 40 years of death in the wilderness thing!).

So what happened to upset the "grape and fig" cart? What happened to upset this idyllic scene of peace and security amidst the grapes and figs? Hosea reminds us: "But they went to Baal Peor, and separated themselves to that shame; they became an abomination like the thing they loved" (10b). The story of Baal Peor is found in Numbers 25:1-5. It was at Baal Peor that Moabite and Midianite women seduced the men of Israel and invited them to make sacrifices to their gods. Because of the physical and spiritual infidelity at Baal Peor, a plague killed 24,000 people until Phinehas the grandson of Aaron stopped it by skewing a defiant Israelite man and a Midianite woman with a javelin. Kidner says that this historical reminder "is very apt, since it combined the two kinds of unchastity which Hosea had to fight: the physical and the spiritual. It was not only the Moabite women but their local Baal that had seduced the men of the exodus." The contemporary conduct of Israel that Hosea condemns is exactly the same conduct that ancient Israel was guilty of at Baal Peor.

The results of Israel's conduct is spelled out in the next three verses: "As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird—no birth, no pregnancy, no conception! Though they bring up their children, yet I will bereave them to the last man. Yes, woe to them when I depart from them! Just as I saw Ephraim like Tyre, planted in a pleasant place, so Ephraim will bring out his children to the murderer" (11-13). Ephraim has *lost their glory* like a bird flying away. Hosea had already warned Israel that God would "turn their glory into shame" (4:7b). The glory of

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Israel had departed before: “Then she named the child Ichabod [lit. “No glory”], saying ‘The glory has departed from Israel!’ because the ark of God had been captured” (1 Sam. 4:21a). Later on, Ezekiel would see a vision of the glory of God departing from the Temple in Jerusalem: “Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the Temple” (Ez. 10:18a).

What does it mean that Ephraim has lost their glory? It means that they have lost the presence and care of the Lord God. It means that He is no longer present in the midst of His people. It means that the covenant relationship (“I will be their God and they will be my people”) has been broken. Without God, without the glory of His presence, the future is grim. There is no birth, no pregnancy, even no conception! This list runs “in inverse order to the facts of life” (Hubbard). Without God’s glory, Ephraim has become sterile, fruitless, lifeless – as good as dead. There is nothing but bereavement, woe, and death to follow the loss of God’s glory. This is the true meaning of Baal Peor.

Eaton gives us a contemporary exhortation from Baal Peor: “The Christian’s ‘first love’ must keep burning. We need to learn to chop down savagely the modern equivalents of Baal. As God’s law given through Moses required that the utensils of Baal be cut down (Ex. 23:24) or burned (Dt. 12:3), so the modern forms of Baal — the self-indulgence, the loose and freelance sexuality, the violence, the cult of self-centered money-worshipping — need to be cut down and burnt out of the lives of those who walk in the Holy Spirit. Otherwise there soon comes a decline. Love for God decays. Enjoyment of His presence takes second place. Prayerlessness becomes habitual. Bitterness towards others creeps into our hearts. There is secret departure from the living God, which eventually becomes public and open. The ‘delicious fig’ goes sour. It takes only a little bit of flirtation with the idols of the world, and the distinctiveness of God’s people is lost.”

2. Lost Prayer (9:14)

At this point in the prophecy, Hosea is so overcome that he begins to pray. But given the circumstances, he barely knows how to pray. In that, he is like many of us – we often know we *should* pray, but the *how* is often more difficult to voice. Boice comments on this prayer: “It is interesting because it is broken off after the first phrase due to the fact that although Hosea earnestly wants to pray for the people, he finds that he does not know what to ask. He begins his prayer well: “Give them, O LORD—” (14a), but he breaks off because he does not know what God should give them. He even asks, “What will you give them?” (14b). At last the only thing he can think of is childlessness in order that the miseries of the day of judgment be as limited as possible. So he concludes: “Give them wombs that miscarry and breasts that are dry” (14c, NIV).

Such is Hosea’s *prayer for the lost*. The word of the Lord has spoken. Hosea knows that God has decreed the judgment to come, and so his prayer has little hope in it. On the other hand, we do not have God’s audible voice telling us the future, and so we should continue to earnestly pray for those who are lost. We have no guarantee that our unsaved friends and loved ones will ever repent, but we also don’t know if in God’s mercy He will convert them at some point in the future. And so we should continue to pray, asking that the Lord have mercy upon them for His glory’s sake.

C. Gilgal (9:15-17)

1. Lost Love (9:15-16)

The third historical reference is to Gilgal in verse 15: “All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them” (15a). We’ve already seen Hosea refer to Gilgal in 4:15. Remember, Gilgal was base camp for Joshua (Jos. 4:19-20); an early sanctuary of worship (Jos. 9; 1 Sam. 10:8); a center of judgment under Samuel (1 Sam. 7:16); and a place of royal coronation (1 Sam. 11:14-15). Gilgal had been the place where the reproach of Egypt had been rolled away. Gilgal literally means “rolling.” But by the time of Hosea, Gilgal had become an idolatrous place of worship. Look at what Hosea says in 12:11 – “Though they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal, indeed their altars shall be heaps in the furrows of the field.” Although the disgrace of Egypt had been rolled away at Gilgal, the people of Israel brought new disgrace upon themselves by their corrupt worship at this ancient site.

Unlike Gibeah and Baal Peor, there are multiple historical incidents that Hosea may be referring to. However, in the context of his argument, it is likely that Hosea is thinking of the incident in 1 Samuel where the kingship of Saul was rejected at Gilgal. Remember the story? Samuel told Saul to completely wipe out king Agag and the Amalekites in battle. But Saul captured Agag alive and kept some of the best plunder. I pick up the reading in 1 Samuel 15:20 – “And Saul said to Samuel, ‘But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.’ So Samuel said: ‘Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king’” (1 Sam. 15:20-23).

Why do I suggest that the rejection of Saul at Gilgal is the historical reference here in Hosea 9? Because that is exactly the same thing that is happening to the house of Ephraim. They have *lost the love of God*. God is rejecting them just as He rejected Saul: “All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there *I hated them*. Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them from My house; *I will love them no more*. All their princes are rebellious [just like king Saul]. Ephraim is stricken, their root is dried up; they shall bear no fruit. Yes, were they to bear children, I would kill the darlings of their womb” (15-16). “The horticultural language of verses 10 [grapes & figs] and 13 [planted] is brought to its fateful climax in the picture of *Ephraim* as a tree struck with an axe which has severed its *root* and thus made bearing *fruit* impossible” (Hubbard). This picture of fruitlessness is especially ironic when you consider that Joseph named his second son Ephraim, meaning “fruitfulness,” because “God has caused me [Joseph] to be fruitful in the land of my affliction” (Gen. 41:52). God says He has “hated them” and “will love them no more.” How tragic is it to hear the Lord God speak these words! “This language is announcing a break-off of relations which amounts to the suspension of the marriage” (Kidner). In other words, God is divorcing his wayward wife. They have lost the love of God.

2. Lost Nation (9:17)

The final verse of chapter 9 is a commentary by the prophet Hosea on what God has just declared: “My God will cast them away, because they did not obey Him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations” (17). How could Hosea come to any other conclusion? In verses

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1-3, God had declared that Israel would “not dwell in the Lord’s land” but go into captivity. They had lost their *inheritance*. In verses 4-6, God had declared that Israel would “not come into the house of the Lord.” Because they were in the land of captivity, they would be perpetually unclean and could not properly worship God. They had lost the *true worship of God*. In verses 7-9, the people had declared that “the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is insane.” Because they have rejected Hosea and his message, they had lost *insight into God’s Word*. In verses 10-13, God had declared that His glory had departed Ephraim “like a bird” flying away. “Ichabod” – the glory of the Lord has departed. Because of their spiritual and physical adultery, they had lost the *glory of God*. In verse 14, Hosea attempts to pray for the people, but he scarcely knows how to pray a *prayer for the lost*. In verses 15-16, God declared that “I will love them no more.” Because of their wickedness and rejection of Him, God is rejecting the people. They have lost *the love of God*. The sins of the past at Gibeah, Baal-Peor, and Gilgal symbolize the current moral state of the country. And so, Hosea sums it all up in verse 17 – the people have lost *the nation*: “They shall be wanderers among the nations.”

Conclusion

The nation of Israel had everything – they had God’s word and worship, they had His glory and love, they had his inheritance and blessing. And yet, because they chose to chase after other gods, because they desired to be like the nations around them, they lost everything. In the short-term it must have made sense to them. Just a little compromise here, just a little shortcut there. No one would be hurt. Everyone would have a lot of fun. And yet the price they paid was much too high for whatever enjoyment they gained. They lost their inheritance and everything that went with it. This is the fate of the post-Christian society when they reject God for other pursuits. The long-term consequences of sin vastly outweigh any perceived short-term benefits.

The message for the Church is clear. In a post-Christian society, the Church must remain faithful despite pressures to adapt, compromise, or give in. Eaton puts it this way: “When God’s people lean on him, believe his Word, and trust Him despite the pressures that come on them, He gives them an experience of Himself as the living God. In Him they find an inheritance, they discover true worship, they are given spiritual insight” into the Word, and they are comforted by the glory of God’s presence and love. Anything less than full obedience leads to the slippery slope of accommodation with the post-Christian world around us. Let us continue to pray that the Church remains fixed upon its “foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10). Because once the Church has lost its spiritual foundations, it is nothing more than another wanderer among the nations.

Next week: Lesson 10 – “Break Up Your Fallow Ground” – Hosea 10:1-15 – Bentley chapters 16-17

Close in Prayer.