

The Death of a Nation

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[0:00] Follow along as I read from Hosea 13, I'll read the entire chapter in your hearing. When Ephraim spoke, men trembled. He was exalted in Israel, but he became guilty of Baal worship and died.

! Now they sin more and more. They make idols for themselves from their silver, cleverly fashioned images, all of them the work of craftsmen. It is said of these people they offer human sacrifice and kiss the calf idols.

Therefore, they will be like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears, like chaff swirling from a threshing floor, like smoke escaping through a window. But I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me.

I cared for you in the desert, in the land of burning heat. When I fed them, they were satisfied. When they were satisfied, they became proud. Then they forgot me.

So I will come upon them like a lion. Like a leopard, I will lurk by the path. Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open. Like a lion, I will devour them. A wild animal will tear them apart.

[1:15] You were destroyed, O Israel, because you are against me, against your helper. Where is your king that he may save you? Where are your rulers in all your towns of whom you said, give me a king and princes?

So in my anger, I gave you a king and in my wrath, I took him away. The guilt of Ephraim is stored up. His sins are kept on record. Pains as of a woman and childbirth come to him, but he is a child without wisdom when the time arrives.

He does not come to the opening of the womb. I will ransom them from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction? I will have no compassion, even though he thrives among his brothers. An east wind from the Lord will come, blowing in from the desert. His spring will fail and his well dry up.

His storehouse will be plundered of all its treasures. The people of Samaria must bear their guilt because they have rebelled against their God. They will fall by the sword.

[2:19] Their little ones will be dashed to the ground. Their pregnant women ripped open. If you have your Bibles, please open them to chapter 13 of Hosea.

And if you're wondering what happened to chapter 12 of Hosea, well, it's still there in your Bible. And it's there for you to read, but this morning we're jumping right over to chapter 13, which is the darkest chapter in the book, the gloomiest prophecy of God's judgment coming upon Israel for her sins.

And it's also the last prophecy of judgment in the book, as it comes just before the brightest chapter, the last chapter, 14.

Now we've noticed a three-step cycle in the book of Hosea. Israel has sinned in her idolatry. And because of it, God's judgment is coming. And yet after God's judgment, there is future restoration and hope. And Hosea has taken us through that three-step cycle, not once, but twice now, as we've come last time to the end of chapter 11.

[3:40] And he takes us through it one last time from chapters 12 through 14. So on this 234th birthday of our nation, we pause to recognize and give thanks to God for his many blessings, past and present, and to be instructed from his word.

A nation standing in the world can change quickly. Some of you will remember when Germany was a great world power feared all over the globe.

She is no longer like she once was. More of us remember the Soviet Union when it was a great world power, which it no longer is.

And all of us have known and have seen our own nation being such a great world power for many, many years.

But the futures of nations are insecure. Things can change and change quickly. The superpowers of one generation can become the weaklings of the next or can even be gone in the next generation.

[5:03] And it was that way with Ephraim, the northern kingdom of Israel. They went from greatness to nothingness and we're not left to guess how or why that happened.

It's clearly spelled out for us here in chapter 13 of Hosea. And there are lessons in it for us as a nation and for us as individuals.

Lessons that we dare not, we cannot afford to miss. Notice the reversal of fortunes for Ephraim in verses 1 to 3.

When Ephraim spoke, men trembled. He was exalted in Israel, but he became guilty of Baal worship and died. Now of the twelve tribes, the tribe of Ephraim was the most numerous, the largest and most powerful.

And it was exalted among the twelve tribes such that it became the name that is often used for the northern kingdom of Israel.

[6:07] Here the northern kingdom takes on the name Ephraim. And Ephraim was once a superpower among the nations. This northern kingdom of Israel once roared and spoke and nations trembled for fear of them.

But it was reduced to a corpse. It died, we're told. And indeed in 722, just a matter of 20 or 30 years after Hosea stops prophesying, the nation, the northern nation of Israel went into extinction.

It ceased to be a nation. You can read of it in 2 Kings 17. This was the death of a nation. And you remember way back in chapter 1 of Hosea, at the birth of Hosea's firstborn son, God said, name him Jezreel because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel.

I'm going to put an end to the kingdom of Israel. It will happen in the valley of Jezreel. So call your son Jezreel. You see, nations that are born can die.

Ours as well. Birth dates are followed by death dates. And that's true not only of individuals but of nations. Oh, where are kings and empires now of old that went and came?

[7:39] Where is Babylon, Assyria, Persia? Where have they gone? Where is Ephraim? The northern kingdom.

Well, now the cause of Ephraim's death is stated in the obituary here of verse 1. He became guilty of Baal worship. And so he died.

It was Baal worship. The pleasures of the sex crazed fertility cult became the poison that killed them. But the more they drank, the more they needed to drink and wanted to drink.

And although the pleasures of sin are only for a season and the wages of sin is death, verse 2 tells us they just kept on sinning more and more. They couldn't stop sinning. They were slaves to their sin.

Now when men throw off the commands of God, they think that they're free. I am not bound by any little rules of God.

[8:42] I'm a free man. But nothing could be more far from the truth. They are then the greatest slaves of all. They're in slavery slavery to their own sins.

And yet they don't even know it. Jesus says in John 8, I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. So if you think you're free this morning and you're just going on and on in your sinful way, you're just kidding yourself.

And you need to wake up to that fact that you are a slave to sin. Let me put you to a test. If you don't think you're a slave of sin, then you just stop sinning.

Right now. Just stop sinning. Don't do it anymore. And you will find out that outside of Christ, you're a slave of sin and only Christ can set you free.

For if the Son shall set you free, you shall be free indeed. Ephraim was a slave to her sin. And her defining sin is idolatry.

[9:54] Verse 2 says, they make idols for themselves with their silver. Cleverly fashioned images, all of them the work of craftsmen. You know what an idol is? It's a pitiful substitute for God.

And it can't come close to doing for you what God can do for you. Anything you put in the place of God is your idol. And it's said of these people, they offer human sacrifice and kiss the calf idols.

Now this shows us the level to which the nation had sunk. Here they are, kissing calf idols, making human sacrifices.

Do you know to worship God is an ennobling thing? It lifts you up. It purifies you. It makes you a better person. It sanctifies you.

But to worship idols dehumanizes you, degrades you, pulls you down. And that's what Ephraim was doing.

[11:08] They were worshiping idols. And so here they are, offering sacrifices, not to the living God, but to metal idols that their hands had fashioned.

And offering flesh and blood sacrifices to them. Their own living offspring being offered to lifeless idols.

In the hope of buying off and manipulating blessing upon their crops and their animals. Men who were made to look up and kiss the Son of God, stooping down and kissing calf idols.

Killing sons and kissing calves. That's what idolatry had brought them to. And America's idols are no less family friendly and no less degrading.

Aborting children and hugging trees. Trashing family in order to satisfy lusts. Loving money and using people.

[12:16] Rich in things but poor in soul. The result? The complete undoing of the nation.

Verse 3 Therefore because of this let no one misunderstand their death as a nation is the result of their idolatry.

Therefore and now he gives us four excuse me four pictures of how quickly and completely they will come to ruin. One would have sufficed.

Why four? because he's wanting us to get the point. They will be like the morning mist. Get up in the morning there's the mist it's just kind of little tiny droplets through the sun that are just kind of dancing around in the morning air but how quickly they're gone.

They will be like the early dew there it is your feet are wet as you walk through the grass but there won't be a trace of it left by noon. Like chaff swirling from a threshing floor.

[13:23] Chaff just the husks from the grain that is so light that just a blast of wind and it's gone you can't find it. Or like smoke escaping through a window as it comes out the window you see the smoke but in a matter of seconds it dissipates into thin air and you don't see it anymore.

Take your pick that's Ephraim she's going to come to complete and quick ruin. So there's Ephraim the powerful nation making others tremble but now she's to be reduced to nothing totally gone they'll disappear without a trace.

So that's all the first point they went from greatness to nothingness because of their idols. Be warned America be warned boys and girls men and women.

The second thing we notice in this chapter is they forgot their God who brought them out of Egypt. At the founding of our nation 234 years ago we adopted our constitution that begins in this way we the people of the United States.

now at the founding of this nation of Israel God wrote the constitution and gave it to the people at Mount Sinai and this is how this constitution began.

[15:03] Not we the people but I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt out of the land of slavery you shall have no other gods besides me.

Now in chapter 13 Hosea is taking them back to their birth date as a nation and is quoting from their constitution. Verse 4 you're worshipping idols he's just said but I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt.

You shall acknowledge no God but me no savior except me. I cared for you in the desert in the land of burning heat. So they were sinning both against God's law and against God's love.

They're sinning against his law. The law clearly forbid them from having any other gods besides him. No savior but Yahweh.

He demanded exclusive loyalty and that should have been a privilege to them because of his love. They sinned against his law. They sinned against his love. The love that had made them his people out of all the nations in the world.

[16:23] God chose this little nation to be his special people and he brought them he made them his people and he brought them out of Egypt.

They were in bondage. They were slaves. They were eking out an existent coming home at night dropping dead in bed and having to get up in the morning and do it again day after day after day.

And God came and saved them out of it. They didn't deserve it. They were idolaters but God saved them by grace. And then they came to the Red Sea and the Egyptians chased them and he opened a way for them.

And the Egyptians started chasing them and he closed them in. And now they're going through the wilderness and they don't know where to camp in this wilderness. Well just follow this cloud by day and pillar of fire by night.

It'll show you where to camp. And oh you're hot here let me move it right over you so you can walk in the shade wherever you go and oh you're hungry. Well let me send some manna down out of heaven.

[17 : 31] You're thirsty here's a rock. Drink from the rock. What does he say at the end of verse 5? I cared for you in the desert in the land of burning heat.

This is God's love in action and all of it was pure undeserved grace to this nation that had become his. And in response Israel forgot God and his many kindnesses to them.

what ingratitude. How can that be? How can a people so privileged as Israel forget their God who lovingly acted on their behalf?

Well folks the shocking thing is that it's all too easy to do to forget God. Here's how it happened verse 6 when I fed them they were satisfied and when they were satisfied they became proud and they forgot me.

You see the three links in this chain of disaster? Three links satisfied became proud forgot me.

[18 : 57] When things are going so good and we're satisfied we easily get puffed up and we start thinking life is going good because of something I did and we pat ourselves on the back and we claim that it's our doing and we start to think that we deserve these blessings and it's a very tiny step from pride to then forgetting God because you know what pride says pride says I can handle it I'm self reliant look what I've produced look what my hands have done so pride quickly leads to I don't need God I don't need him I'm managing quite well without him and so pride leads to forgetfulness of God that's what Ephraim had done God had blessed them he'd satisfied them and they grew proud self reliant and so they had a religion that was self made what they made with their hands they didn't need God they had their gods idols that they could manipulate for blessing upon their crops and land and then they had their king and his armies to protect them they didn't need God and so their pride led on to forgetfulness of God so busy providing for themselves that they didn't need him and you know the scariest thing of all is that it all starts out because God blesses us

I fed them and they were satisfied the whole thing gets started with the blessing of God he satisfies us with his blessings and then the very thing that he blesses us with we turn into another reason to forget him how backward is that so here's the father and he dearly loves his son and his son has had this game on his mind just consuming him he must have this game and so the father the kid doesn't deserve it it's not his birthday besides he wouldn't deserve it if it was his birthday it's not Christmas but the father just out of love buys him the toy and now the son is happy he's satisfied and he's playing with his game and now when dad comes home from work and says let's go out and throw some balls play some catch not now dad

I'm too busy playing with my game and later on let's go to town son not now I'm busy and so it goes on day after day after day forgetting his father in the enjoyment of his gift and I'm asking myself how many times have I said to you heavenly father not now no not now don't have time for you now I'm too busy with my family with my yard my garden my house my lands my friends my freedoms my job all these gifts that you just keep giving me and giving me and I'm too busy for you that's what

Ephraim did are you satisfied to have God's gifts without God himself lost person you are you are you're happy to have his gifts you suck in his air you take in his food you live under his sunshine and you you're happy to have it all without God so before Israel went into the promised land Moses warned them about this very tendency to forget God remember that back in Deuteronomy 8 Moses told them we're going into the land that God has promised you it's a good land it's a land of plenty of water it's a land that flows with milk and honey good crops a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing now as I go on reading from Deuteronomy 8 see if you can hear the three links in Hosea's chain of disaster these are the words of

Moses hundreds of years earlier find the three links Deuteronomy 8 when you have eaten and are satisfied praise the Lord your God for the good land he's given you be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God failing to observe his commands his laws and his decrees that I'm giving you this

day otherwise when you eat and are satisfied and when you build fine houses and settle down and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increases and all you have is multiplied then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt out of the land of slavery did you hear the chain you will grow satisfied and your heart will grow proud and you will forget the Lord that brought you out of Egypt and Moses went on if you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them

[24 : 52] I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed like the nations the Lord destroyed before you so you will be destroyed for not obeying the Lord your God and so it proved Israel could not handle prosperity she couldn't handle the good things all that Moses had warned about had now happened she grew satisfied proud and forgot the Lord Spurgeon says adversity has killed its thousands but prosperity her tens of thousands people can't handle prosperity it's no small thing to be able to say with Paul I know what it is I know how both to suffer want and to be abounding know how to prosper I know how to be in need oh we see how common this chain is we see how prosperity ruins nations and families and people how do we break this chain

God's good gifts making us satisfied and then making us proud and then making us to forget him how do we break that cycle how do we snap those links well let me give you four quick points first of all refuse to enjoy any gift of God without enjoying him in it taste his love in the food you eat taste his kindness in your health as you get up in the morning taste his goodness in all of your possessions make a conscious connection between the gift and the giver and we do that best by giving thanks and praising him upon receiving the gift now we do that don't we with the food that we we we pause and we bow our heads and we thank him for this food it's good stuff these gifts why not do it with everything else so I get a call from my daughter in California yesterday and she shares with me something about the Lord and what he's teaching her it's time to pray dad it's time to pray thank you

Lord thank you for that that's you that's your gift to me enjoy any gift of God without enjoying God himself in it secondly realize that you have nothing that you've not been given it was proud boasting Corinthians who were boasting about the gifts that they had received and about their preachers and their wisdom and Paul writes who makes you different from anyone else what do you have that you did not receive and if you did receive it why do you boast as though you did not what will cut out the feet of pride in God's gifts it's to remember I've just received it how can I be proud about what I'm wearing I just received it it's just been given to me how can I be proud about things that are pure gift and so Moses says in Deuteronomy 8 you may say to yourself my power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me you like my fine house you like my fine things my strength my wisdom and

Moses says no remember the Lord your God for it's he who gives you the ability to produce wealth he could turn you loose and you'd be another babbling Nebuchadnezzar he gives you the ability to think and to make decisions he's the source of every good thing in your life third realize how undeserving you are of any good thing from God you know my sin has forfeited every good thing that I have I'm so selfish I don't deserve a wife I don't deserve children I'm so sinful that everything good in my life has been forfeited by my sin but God gives it to me it's pure grace and so if he gives me anything I should be overwhelmed that I have it overwhelmed with his grace there's

Mephibosheth he's the son of Jonathan and he's lame on both legs and he's living down in Lodibar isn't that a place to live Lodibar and then David the king says send down to Lodibar and get him bring him to the palace he comes into the palace and because of David's love to his father Jonathan he says you must live near me and you must eat at my table all the days of your life and I'm going to restore to you all the lands of your grandfather Saul there's the gifts lavished upon him and you know what Mephibosheth said he went down on his face what is your servant that you should notice a dead dog like me you see his view of himself I don't deserve such treatment and friends that's the way to stay humble under God's blessings that's how to be satisfied with God's goodness and not grow proud which is the prelude to growing forgetful of God we're worse than dead dogs and God in Christ has been so gracious to us and lastly let the goodness of God lead you to repentance especially of any idols that have replaced

[30 : 58] God in your heart God's so good let it lead you to repentance to confess your disobedience and to return to walking with God and loving him above anything else well Ephraim was blessed by God satisfied grew proud and forgot God we must remain thankful to the Lord for his grace you know the alternative is frightening Psalm 9 in verse 7 says the wicked will be turned

into hell and all the nations that forget God do you ever think about that forgetting God deserves hell what do I deserve for forgetting God I deserve to be forgotten by him forever no more mercy no more love no more compassion no more pity forsaken by God

America is trying to forget God as fast as we can we don't want him in our public places we don't want the ten commandments we don't like his laws we don't like anything that has him on it you know it's part of fallen human nature to forget God the fool has said in his heart there is no God you know why he says that he doesn't want there to be a God he likes to live his own way and so he doesn't consider the knowledge of God worth keeping and he throws it and pushes it away from himself and my unconverted friend if you do not know Jesus Christ this morning in one way or another you are trying to forget God this is where he meets you now tell me you are not trying to forget him because you don't want to read this book you don't like to read his commands you don't like to read his threats of judgment because you are not ready to face him there is a forgetfulness of God in our human sinful nature and we have various strategies for doing it his word has no place in our hearts well lesson three they forgot

God lesson three from the chapter forgetters of God come under his ferocious judgment I don't think we realize how hateful it is to God when we're unthankful and when we're forgetful and proudly self-reliant the God who tenderly cared for Ephraim now becomes a pack of ferocious beasts to destroy Ephraim verse seven so I will come upon them like a lion notice this is something I will do Jehovah the one who was so tender with them in the wilderness that he covered them with this cloud I will come upon them like a lion like a leopard I will lurk by the path stalking you as I stalk my prey like a bear robbed of her cubs I will attack them and rip them open like a lion I will devour them a wild animal will tear them apart again take your pick he's just multiplying images it's not a pretty sight wild beasts of prey these beasts tearing their prey apart complete destruction God is not a tame God he is not a defang declawed God as modern theology would tell us that he's nothing but love no the God of the Bible can be a lion to tear people apart can be like a she bear robbed of her cubs behold the kindness and the severity of God if your view of God only has room for his kindness and not his severity you're worshipping a different God you're bowing before an idol this morning and it's not that God has changed and turned from a kind God into a severe God no Israel walked out of the circle of God's covenant blessings and stepped right on over into the curses of the covenant it was they that changed and forsook God and brought the wrath of God upon them and they have nothing to complain about this is the fruit of the fault is all their own verse nine you are destroyed oh

Israel because you are against me against your helper isn't that something you're against me your helper! saw a clip on TV of a dog that had fallen into some icy water and it's about to die it's barely being able to keep afloat and suddenly a deliverer comes into the picture and he's down on the ice and he's flat out reaching over he's got his face right down there and suddenly the frantic dog bites him in the face you're against me your helper he deserves to die two deaths for being against his only savior that's Ephraim she's in need her sins are bringing her to judgment the only one that could help was Jehovah and she fights him she hates him she turns away from him and when the helper becomes the oppressor becomes the lion the bear there's no help at all to be found none to rescue from his claws where's your king that he may save you where are your rulers and all your towns of whom you said give me a king and princes so in my anger

[37:14] I gave you a king not from this she bear not when God's wrath is unleashed lesson number four they remained unrepentant in the face of judgment notice verse 12 the guilt of Ephraim is stored up his sins are kept on record and God keeps a record of you in heaven did you know that every single one of you have a ledger in heaven every one of you your names are written there every one of them he has not missed one sin since you were born there are pages of them and one day in judgment the books will be open and if there is sin on your ledger it will be the second death of eternal condemnation forever!

And ever! The only way to get your sins off the record is through the blood of Jesus Christ it is by repenting of your sin and turning to him to receive his grace that's why he came to take away sin by the pain of the debt himself and so where those sins have been paid in full they're blotted out it's no longer on the ledger you don't owe for them anymore he paid the debt but as long as you refuse to repent of your sins your sins are still kept on record and furthermore you are storing up wrath the guilt you're storing up guilt the guilt of Ephraim is stored up your sins are on record and you're storing up guilt your liability to punishment Romans 2:5 because of your stubborn and

unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself for the day of God's wrath when his righteous judgment shall be revealed so in the face of coming judgment in the face of all the warnings that Hosea and all the prophets brought to Israel she remained unrepentant she was unmoved she was indifferent and that folly of refusing to repent is pictured by the birth a birth that goes fatally wrong verse 13 pains as of a woman in childbirth come to him but he is a child without wisdom when the time arrives he does not come to the opening of the womb there is a woman there is a normal birth those labor pains and contractions that a woman goes through would cause the child to move inch by inch closer to the opening of the womb and then to be born that's normal birth but not Ephraim the labor pains keep coming announcing that time is running out there's a window isn't there between when you go into labor and things start happening there's only a short period of time when you need to get that baby out or his life is threatened and sometimes the mother's life is threatened that's happening but the child isn't moving he's not moving he's complacent he's indifferent he's unmoved there he is over here in this little corner of the womb he's not going over there by the opening of the womb he's stupid that's what Hosea is saying he's senseless he's without wisdom he's foolish and his stubborn complacency will turn his mother's womb into his grave and oh how unnecessary there's the opening there's the way to life but he would not come to the opening to receive life you know what Jesus says I am the door whoever enters through me has life but you would not come to me that you might have life you wouldn't come over to me you stayed right where you were you were comfortable in your sin you were satisfied to have your way you didn't want me to save you from your sin and how in the world will the baby escape death if it doesn't move to the opening of the womb and how will you escape if you neglect so great a salvation as was brought in Jesus Christ so tragic the problem is a lack of wisdom you're without understanding you can't even put two and two together I've sinned against God his judgment says I should suffer eternally in hell because of it the only hope for me is to run to that open door of Jesus and to embrace him and to be saved no no you don't get that some may and his well will dry up.

[42 : 47] Folks, you can't stay in farming. You can't stay on the plain. You can't live without water. You come to complete ruin. And that's what happened and is going to happen under the judgment of God.

And his storehouse will be plundered of all of its treasures. The national cupboards will be left bare. Nothing left. And all of this is the fruit of rebellion. Not repenting.

And now they must bear their guilt. Verse 16. They must pay for their sin. Payday has come. And now all the metaphorical language about bears and lions and leopards, about east winds blowing their hot, withering heat, all of that is pushed aside.

And Hosea just says, let me just tell you plain out how it's going to be. And he speaks in black and white terms of what is going to happen when God judges them.

They will fall by the sword. You see, the east wind, the lion, the bear, the leper, it's a sword. It's the Assyrian sword, the invading nation of Assyria.

[43 : 59] And they were known for their butchery and cruelty and war and Israel would not be spared. He says, their little ones will be dashed to the ground, their pregnant women ripped open.

Those are the last words of judgment in the book. That's what's ringing in the ears of Ephraim as we witness the death of a nation.

It's all that's left for people who refuse to repent. Death. Death. Gruesome, horrific death.

But lastly, death does not have the final word. As chapter 14 will show us next week, God willing. But even here in chapter 13, we see one beam of light shining in the midst of such scathing judgments.

Death and destruction is certain for Israel. It will happen. It's certain, but so is the promise of a following deliverance from death. A resurrection to new life.

[45 : 04] And so the nation of Israel, the northern kingdom, will die just as Hosea has announced. But beyond their death is a bright forecast. There would be a true people of God who would not remain under the power of death, but be ransomed and redeemed from death.

Verse 14, we jumped over it, we return to it now. It's the one bright spot in the whole chapter where God Himself says, I, I will ransom them from the power of the grave.

I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction? Now the New Testament will make clear how it is that God Himself will ransom and redeem them from death.

It would be by He Himself giving His life and dying in their place. And so Jesus says in Mark 10, 45, the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. I will ransom them from the power of the death. And a ransom is a price paid to set someone free. How will these people who are under the clutches of death for their sin, under the clutches of the second death of God's wrath forever and ever, how will they be ransomed?

[46 : 28] Well, I will ransom them, God says. And the New Testament shows us God Himself becomes one of us and goes to the cross and takes our sins upon Himself and God Almighty pours out His infinite wrath upon His own Son that we might be ransomed, redeemed, set free from death.

And so since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

By suffering death, Jesus destroyed death. By His dying for you, you're set free. That's what He does for His people.

And so what a beautiful providence. You know, the remaining southern kingdom of Israel, after the northern kingdom died, the southern kingdom of Israel would go into captivity, but the remaining people of Israel, they too would fight against their helper and only Savior.

And when He came from heaven, what would they do with Him? They'd fight, they'd bite Him as He came to save them. They would crucify Him. But by killing Him, His death would set the many free from death.

[47 : 55] Isn't that wonderful? That's the wisdom and power of the cross of Jesus. So once again, folks, Hosea is pointing us to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I love the way the New Testament uses Hosea. We've been 13 weeks here. Have you got the message? God is saying, you need Jesus.

Because for forgetting God and living as if God is a nobody, you deserve hell forever, the second death. But I'm going to redeem and I'm going to ransom a people for myself who deserved hell.

And there is a Redeemer and He's Jesus, God's own Son. And He redeems us from death by dying Himself, the death under the curse that we deserved so that we might not perish but have everlasting life.

And so the resurrection of a nation will come out of the death and resurrection of Jesus. And who is that new nation? It's you and me who believed in Jesus.

[49 : 10] Jew and Gentile. Doesn't matter. Circumcised, uncircumcised. Male, female. Doesn't matter. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation of people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of Him who's rescued you out of darkness and brought you into His wonderful life.

And then he quotes, Peter quotes Hosea, Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God. Once you hadn't received mercy, but now you have received mercy. And so in a place where it was once said they are not the people of God, it will be said they are the children of the living God.

And here we are. The church of Jesus Christ, the new Israel of God, brought out of the ashes, out of the grave. How? By the resurrection power of Jesus Christ who redeemed and ransomed us by His blood.

And you will recognize these words in verse 14 in 1 Corinthians 15 where Paul's talking about the resurrection. And he uses these very words of Hosea saying, Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin. And the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[50 : 28] And so Paul goes back to Hosea and he pulls these verses out and he uses them to mock mighty death. Death that has wreaked havoc upon mankind.

It's caused men to live out their lives in fear of death. But because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus of which we sang this morning, death is a defeated foe.

Christ has ripped victory right out of the hands of death and he gives us the victory. God gives us the victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ. Are you united to Christ?

Is Jesus yours? Are you in him? If so, then his death, his resurrection, it's all yours. But if not, you're not ransomed from death. You still have the second death.

Your sins are still on record. Your guilt is still to be punished forever and ever. In the lake of fire, which is called the second death, you will suffer the wrath of God.

[51 : 34] A death worse, far worse than being mauled by a bear, far worse than the sword of an enemy. And through Hosea, God has been warning you for thirteen weeks, flee the wrath to come. And through Hosea, he's been pointing you where to flee, come to the opening of the womb. Come to the Christ, the Redeemer, who can save you. Take your sins to Jesus this morning. Oh yes, your sin of forgetting him. Take them all, your idols. Take them to Jesus. Give them to him. Ask him to save you and he'll give you his righteousness and ransom you from eternal damnation. for the wages of sin is death. But the gift, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Sing with me, there is a Redeemer. our Father, these words seem so small when we think of what you've done for us and when we think how that we could even yet forget you and become so enamored with your gifts that we have no time for you.

[52 : 49] So wash us and cleanse us in that blood. thank you for the Redeemer. Thank you that we can leave this place as clean as if we never sinned because of his perfect life and his atoning death and his risenness and his living right now at your right hand.

Look on him and pardon us and cause our very lives to show just how much we owe. We ask for Jesus' praise.
Amen.