

Albert Sheppelbaum - Amos

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Amos, just turn it back a couple of books and you'll be in Hosea. That's the topic of our next service, and here to discuss Hosea with us and give us lessons from that is Brother Shufflebaum from Los Angeles. So we'll turn it over now to Brother Albert Schoepelbaum.

Brethren, we're very happy to be with you. Sister Anastasia and I have looked forward to this occasion. We want, first of all, bring you the love from the brethren whom we meet with in the Los Angeles area. They voted that their love be conveyed to you here. We've already received a number of beneficial lessons at this convention.

And of course, our theme text that Brother Tim Krupa covered so well speaks of the prophets and the example, the example of suffering, affliction, and of patience. Now, before we get into the lessons of Hosea, particularly, we'd just like to mention briefly along the line that Brother Gene Burns mentioned about the Heavenly Father carrying on his plan, regardless of who cooperates and who doesn't cooperate, whether men understand or they don't understand, God's plan and purpose continues on, and when we come to a consideration of the time of the prophets, really, the Lord was developing a group, a group that will be in charge of the earthly phase of the kingdom. They will be the earthly representatives of the unseen Christ, and the experiences that they went through were necessary for their testing and preparing for that future work as the visible earthly representatives of the kingdom here on earth.

So it wasn't wasted, none of this was wasted upon those who were rightly exercised, even though they were very difficult experiences, and as we progressed with Hosea, we will find that the Lord not only gave him a message that was not acceptable to Israel, but that personally, the Lord had asked him to do something that most of us would be very reluctant to enter into if we realized what was ahead of us. Now, the name Hosea means deliverance or salvation. Now, Hosea's message was just the opposite of that. He didn't deliver a message to Israel of deliverance or salvation, but rather his message was along the same line as that of Amos, that ruin and captivity awaited them, that they would definitely, because of their idolatry, they would go into captivity.

That regardless of what they claimed for themselves, of whatever promises they claimed that the Heavenly Father had made to them, that they would go into captivities among the Gentiles, and yet I think we may speak of Hosea's message showing that after or through the experiences that they would go through as a result of Hosea's, message that they would be eventually delivered, that they would eventually receive the salvation that the Lord had for them.

In considering the messages and the life of the prophets, it's helpful to determine just when they served Israel. You know, it's one thing to think of the prophets and their messages and then try to chronologically put them somewhere in time, and Hosea prophesied according to the first verse of his message, that he prophesied during the days of Usariel, Jotan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, king of Judah, the kings of Judah, and also in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, King of Israel. Now when we turn to Isaiah 1:1, we find that Isaiah prophesied during the reign of Uzziah, Joatan, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, according to that they prophesied at the same time or during the reign of the same kings. Now when we turn to Micah, we find that Micah's prophesying began just a little later.

He did not prophesy during the period of King Uzziah's period, but rather the succeeding kings, and Amos that brother Thomason spoke about, he prophesied during the period of King Uzziah, and I

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think it's a reasonable conclusion to say that Amos prophesied during the period of King Uzziah's reign and that he ceased. We're not told as to why, but his prophesying ceased, and then Micah begins after him.

And when we read the messages, Micah seemingly seems to complete the prophecies that Amos had begun, and it might be helpful to notice also in this connection, that Isaiah's message was mainly to the two tribes, to Judah, referred to as Judah, Judah and Benjamin, whereas the prophecies of Amos, Micah and Hosea were largely to the 10 tribes, and in considering this lesson, we are wondering as to why the Lord would have so many prophets speaking of his coming judgments upon Judah and upon Israel at the same time. We would normally say, well, one prophet is enough. But the Lord chose to have three prophets at the same time.

And we think this is again another evidence of our heavenly Father's love, our heavenly Father's desire to make it so plain, so thoroughly convincing, that only, only their own selfishness, their own idolatry would prevent them from accepting the message. It wasn't just one, it wasn't two, it was three.

And the only reason that we emphasize anything when we're trying to get a point across, if you think something is very important and you want to make sure that you get it, across to the other person. You mention it once, there's still some doubt as to whether you're getting it across. Here's a try again and whether there's still some doubt in your mind, you try the third time, hopefully that by that time, if you're ever going to get it across to them, it should be by that time, and if you can't get it across in three times, they usually say, okay, time to give up, and apparently this is what the Heavenly Father did with Israel.

If he couldn't get his message across to them, if he couldn't convince them that this was his judgment against them, then sending 4 and 5 and 10 prophets wouldn't have helped the matter at all.

Now, Hosea was given a commission. In addition to prophesying against Israel.

The first thing that the LORD gave him was not the message against Israel. The first thing that the LORD gave him was he said in Hosea the first chapter, the second verse, the beginning of the word of the Lord. By Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, take unto thee a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom.

Now I thought of this in connection with our own reaction. We don't mind being the Lord's servants, even though it might be difficult, but try to place yourself in Hosea's position. The Lord said, now you take a wife that won't be faithful to you, and you're going to have children that won't be your own, and this is your that's going to be your marital condition. So we have no record as to whether Hosea paused a moment or not before he went ahead.

But we're told that he went ahead. So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblam, which conceived and bare him a son, and the Lord, you know, this was unusual. The Lord told him what names to give the children, and he called his name Jezreel for a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Judah, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

So the names were significant. The names were to show that the Lord's judgment would be against Israel. So he even used that situation to further accentuate or to show additionally his judgments

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against Israel, and she conceived again and bore a daughter, and God said unto him, call her name Luru Emma, for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away.

And the name means not having obtained mercy. So the Lord again, in naming the daughter, gave the further evidence that he would not have any further mercy upon Israel, that he was withdrawing his mercy, and that they would then experience the wrath of their idolatry.

And then in verses 8 and 9 we read, and when she had weaned, Lo. Ruhamah, she conceived and bare a son. Then said God, call his name. Lo, am I, for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. Again using this name to emphasize his withdrawal of favor from Israel.

But as complete as the God's withdrawal of favor was to them, the Lord in his mercy wanted to show to Israel that this casting of them away, their not receiving any more mercy or favor from him would not be forever, but rather that after. After the trouble, after the difficulty, after the punishment had accomplished its purpose. Then. Then the Lord promised the return of his favor to them, and we like to read this in verses 10 and 11.

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the same sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered nor measured, and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God. Then. Then at that time shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come out of the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

Now we believe that the Lord, through the prophet, was foretelling that after all the trouble and difficulty on Israel, that he would return his favor to them, and we believe that we are now living at the time when favor has partially returned to Israel, and that it will continue on, and we're told here that at that time Israel and Judah would appoint one head over them. They wouldn't have two kings, as they had during the prophesying of Hosea, but they would too have one king, and we believe that that's when they will accept their Messiah, their promised Messiah, whom they rejected at the first advent.

And it also mentions here, and great shall be the day of Jezreel, and it seems that it would that it would fit here to apply this to Jacob's trouble, that at that time Israel would be turned from their own wicked ways, and at that time would the Lord's favor begin to come to them in the full. That would be the turning point of Israel's full return to the Lord, when all of their efforts will have been completely demolished, all their efforts to protect and provide and arrange for their own affairs. Now, the second chapter is a repetition largely of the first.

It has some additional features. But in all of them there is the continual complaint of the idolatrous curse of the nation of Israel, and that she would be completely stripped of her glory, and that even to the extent that she would be deprived of the necessities.

And I think that this describes graphically the experiences of Israel during the 1845 years of disfavor, when they were vagabonds in Europe, chased around from one nation to another without a nation, without favor, but continually in disfavor amongst the Gentiles.

Verses 4 through 15 describe Israel as an unchaste wife, and the prophet speaks of Israel as going after other gods, and because of this the Lord would cast her off from being his wife.

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But beginning in the 15th verse, we're told here that Israel would be converted from her evil course and through repentance to be reinstated as a faithful wife of the Lord. You know, Hosea was told to go, and apparent from the account, I would gather that Hosea's wife finally left him, and she followed her other lovers, and then the Lord said to Hosea, go and buy her back from slavery.

And just taking a natural reaction, most men would have a difficult time doing that. You'd have to twist their arm a while before they would want to go, and by their wife who had been unfaithful, to go and take her back and consider her as his wife again. Well, this is what the Lord asked Hosea to do. So Hosea was really asked to illustrate in his marital conditions the Lord's relationship to Israel, that God was married to Israel and Israel was an unfaithful wife to him.

And he had to cast her off because of her unfaithfulness, and yet he said that he would take her back and that he would bless her, not because she deserved it, because Hosea's wife did not deserve to be taken back and to be considered as a wife in good standing, and yet this is what the Lord wanted Hosea to illustrate in his own relationship to his wife, and if they're in thinking about this lesson, the thought came to my mind continually that this was a very difficult assignment for Hosea. If Hosea reacted in a normal way, and I suppose he would have, that this would be contrary to his natural inclinations, that he wouldn't do this of his own volition at any time.

But since this was the Lord's message for him, the Lord told him to do it. He went ahead and took her back, and when we speak about, consider the prophets, an example of suffering and affliction, and of patience, I would be willing to say that that was really a case of suffering and a case of exercise of a lot of patience to go through these experiences.

And Hosea, by the Lord's grace, did just this.

And so I think that the general lesson we can get from this, that if Hosea was called upon to do that which would be not normal, this would not be a normal reaction of most men.

It wouldn't be the normal reaction of most consecrated brethren either. They wouldn't normally want to resume a relationship after a condition of that kind.

But because the Lord had indicated that this was his will for him, he did it, and so likewise with us, the Lord may in his providences direct us conditions, circumstances that we might not like for ourselves. I'd say, well, you know, if it was left up to me, I'd never do it myself. You know, I just wouldn't select this, and yet the Lord directs us to teach us some lesson to develop in us some quality of character that we would normally refrain from, that we wouldn't let ourselves in for it if we saw it coming.

And Hosea was told in advance exactly what he would experience. So it wasn't done in ignorance, it was done with full knowledge as to what his marital life would be like.

In the 23rd verse of the second chapter, we also read about the God's favor returning. You know, it's a peculiarity. I call it a peculiarity, though that's the way the Lord wanted it, that he would first tell about the punishments that would come upon Israel, and then he would follow it up with the blessings that he would give to them in the future, so that he never left it with a thought, that's it, you're going into captivity, you've deserved it. That is it. Period.

But that he always reminded them that afterward, after these experiences, would accomplish that which he intended in them, he would bless them again, and the 21st verse we read, and I will sow

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her unto me in the earth, and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy, and I will say to them, that are not my people, Thou art my people, and they shall say, thou art my God.

Now in the third chapter, Hosea illustrates in his relationship with his wife God's love for Israel. So Hosea bought back his wife from slavery, and in the fifth verse, the Lord summarizes through the Afterward, afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days. Now I just want to Insert here that sometimes we come across the thought that the even among the brethren that Israel will not receive any special favor from the Lord. They have been unfaithful, and the Lord cast them off rightfully, and they're not deserving of any further blessings.

That's it. But here, over and over, through the prophet Hosea, the Lord mentions that he will bless them, that he will restore the relationship that they had with him before, and so it makes it difficult for us not to accept the thought that the Lord will bless them in the future, not because they're worthy, not because they had earned this favor, but it's because the Lord's love for them, because of the faithfulness of their fathers.

Now the.

In considering this lesson of the heavenly Father's repeated love towards Israel, we have his saying that it would be necessary to bring upon them all this punishment that they would get as going into captivity, and they would be treated as captives. They would have taken away from them their kingdom, their king, their glory, their sacrifices, their feast days. Everything would be taken away from them, and they would be, to a large extent, like the Gentiles, and how much further could Israel be degraded? Couldn't.

And we're considering as to how or why how the Lord in His love could bring upon Israel such tragedies for 1845 years.

Because they were tragedies, human tragedies, and if we have read anything about the way the Jews were treated during that period, I think we would be overcome, at least in measure, by the brutality of the Gentile powers upon Israel, and yet the Lord foresaw all of this, and he in his love permitted this. How could we describe this in words?

How can love permit a condition of that kind? How could love justify Israel going into all of this trouble? Trouble not for a period, a short period, but for 1800 and 45 years, and it appealed to me in this way that God's love was being extended to Israel.

And the Lord wanted to bless them to the full. Now, the promise was that if they kept the law, if they served him, that he would bless them in basket and in store, and so on. He would make of them the outstanding nation in the world. They would be a kingdom of kings and priests unto him. They would receive all the blessings that he could bestow upon them, and his love was extended to them.

And the love just went so far.

The Israelites would not permit God's love to have its full effect on them because of their idolatry, because of their own wickedness, because of their desire for the immoralities of pagan worship, their unbelief and God's love could only go so far, and they would stop it because they weren't able to receive it, and so the Lord said, I will give them experiences that would eliminate all their desire

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for pagan gods, for the teraphims and everything else. That these experiences would completely purge out of them any desire for these things, and that after that, after that his love would be able to go further forth to them and they would receive it and be blessed by it.

But at that time, they were figuratively fighting it because of their own selfishness, their own imperfections, their own evil inclinations.

We'd like to pursue this thought of love a little further. You know, when we mingle with the brethren and listen to the discourses of the various groups of brethren, we do have a variety.

I'm often reminded of what Brother George Wilson said years ago.

Those of you who go back, oh, 30 years or more will remember at the general conventions when Brother George Wilson would speak, he'd say, at that time, you know, the Bible students are like Heinz products. There are 57 varieties, and he mentioned that a number of times, which was true even then. There were a variety of groups. For various reasons, they chose to meet separately.

And we have the same thing today. But one of the things you'll notice in all of them is that each one stresses the need for love, and you can't argue about that because it's true, and yet with all this emphasis on love and the need for love, all these different groups all over the United States and you say, how do you, how do you, how do you do anything with this? Love is important.

And yet you see all this division.

What is really love? How could you define it? If it were possible for you to define what is love? Is it a sympathy for one another? Is love a desire to overlook anything and everything?

What is love? What would be a proper definition of love? And I want to suggest a definition for love that I believe fits in with the Lord's dealing with Israel, and it would also, I believe, help us to understand what love really is, what godlike love is. I believe that love is that which is for one's eternal well being.

Eternal well being. Now, when we think of Lord's dealing with Israel, he was going to put them through difficult experiences for 1845 years, and there would be no question in our minds that the Lord was motivated by love. He wasn't motivated by anger or hatred, but he was motivated by love in the sense that after after this period of punishment and estrangement from him, they would be prepared to receive his blessings, which they weren't at that time. Now we have in our studies been benefited from an understanding of the permission of evil.

We know why the Lord permitted the death penalty, why he permits sin and sorrow and dying, because through these experiences mankind is being prepared for his kingdom blessing. So it's his love that permitteth the reign of sin and death. Now also the Lord in dealing with his people at the present time, permits experiences to come to the brethren, and we hear of these and say, those are trying experiences that that brother, that sister is going through, and if, if, if I could, I would spare them of it.

And if I could, I'd take away that experience from them. But that isn't the Lord's viewpoint. The Lord doesn't take it away from in many instances he might even make it more severe, and this is an expression of his love for his people. Not from the standpoint of how it affects them today or how it affects them tomorrow, but how it affects their eternal well being.

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And so not only the church, but the world generally and Israel in our lesson particularly, had to go through, and is still going through very severe trying experiences to prepare them for. So that we're told that it's through no cross, no crown. That's putting it rather bluntly. You must suffer. That's the only way you'll get it.

You can't get it any other way. It's only through suffering. This is a necessity, whether you like it or you don't like it. This is the method. This is the way the Lord has chosen.

And it must therefore be the best method. It's the method that would accomplish the greatest good. Now we, because of our limited vision, we can't see even till this evening. You know, all we see is what's happening here now, and we're only interested in this here.

But we don't know how, what the evening will bring, we don't know what tomorrow will bring, and so the Lord in His wisdom and foresight is dealing with us as he dealt with Israel, not how it affects us today, but the effect that it is designed to have to prepare us for the future. Blessings in the fourth chapter.

I guess I've gone, I've used up all my time.

We had much more to say, as apparently you realize, and I just want to say a few words that the idolatry of Israel was bad, and of course I don't expect that any of us would be bothered about us stone image or a wooden image or so on. That any of us would get involved in that. But first, John 5:3. John tells us, Little children, keep yourself from idols.

Not idols of stone or idols of wood, but idols, and the idols would be anything that we would set. That would in any way detract from our devotion and love for the Lord. That would be an idol, and it could be anything.

It could be our own desire to achieve something. It could be our family. It could be wife or husband. It could be desire to be more prominent. It could be a desire to achieve, acquire monetary things.

Anything that would in any way detract from our love and devotion to the Lord would be an idol. Whether it's a little idol or whether it be a great big idol. Anything that we would permit to come between ourselves and the Lord would be an idol, and we want to be careful that we don't have any idols interfering or standing in between our relation and love with the Lord, and may the Lord add his blessing.

Thank you, Brother Shovelbaum. Sorry that we ran out of time. We'd like to close this meeting with him. Number 183. Hymn number 183.