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C0937 – September 30, 2009 – Hosea 4:6-7 – Israel Descends Into Idolatry

Alright we're in the Book of Hosea chapter 4 and last week we got into the issue of knowledge because that's the edge of the cliff that falls into idolatry. Tonight we'll get into idolatry because chapters 4-10 record a severe problem of idolatry in the northern kingdom of Israel during the 8th century BC. And therefore to better understand what idolatry is and how it gets started in our soul so we don't fall into the same kind of severe discipline they fell into we go into it. In chapter 4:1-3 God has a lawsuit against Israel. In v 1a we have the Court Procedure, in v 1b-2 we have the Indictment, theological sin breaking out in social sin and in v 3 we have the Pronouncement of Judgment upon man and nature.

Last week we picked up in v 4 and this is a warning to the defense, "let no one find fault, and let none offer reproof;" which is a nice way of saying keep your mouth shut, don't try to counter the charges, you're guilty and I don't want to hear any of your rationalizations. We can learn from this because our sinful flesh tries to argue with God when our sin is pointed out. Nobody likes their sin to come out in the open. Nobody likes to come under conviction. So when we do the flesh automatically goes into defense mode trying to protect, trying to slide this way, trying to slide that way. There's always an attempt to evade ultimate responsibility and in a situation like that the Lord just says shut up. I don't want to hear your excuses. He continues with the reason, "For your people are like those who contend with the priest." What's being said here is that the OT priest had three functions; he served in the Temple worship system, he taught the Bible to the people and he was the judge, he judged difficult cases. Who better to judge cases than he who knew the word of God best? So he handled all the difficult cases and in Deut 17, God says, when the priest does this and he expends his energy studying Torah so he

can judge your case, and then he comes out with the verdict I don't want you arguing with him. That is the decision and it's My decision because it comes from My Torah. And Torah is final. And so if someone did fight with the priest over the verdict they were supposed to stone him. Why was this so serious? Because it was rebellion against authority. God takes authority very seriously. And so it was a very serious thing to contend with the priest and in Hosea's day the whole society was contending. They were a rebellious people.

Verse 5, "So you will stumble by day," that is the nation will fall flat on their face when they think it's impossible that they could fall. We're prosperous, we're productive, and we've got homeland security. Ha, ha says God, just when you think you're safe you're going to fall. "And the prophet also will stumble with you by night". This is the case when someone can't see his way through a problem he says I'll go to the prophet and I'll ask him, he'll have the answer and God says when you do that I'm going to put false advice in the prophets mouth so both of you fall. And the reason is very simple; the person has evaded the main issue. The main issue is you're not in fellowship and so if you want divine guidance but you don't want to get back in fellowship don't expect God to give you guidance. Not until the fellowship issue is worked out, and then we'll talk about divine guidance. So the two of you together will fall. "And I will destroy your mother," which just means I'm going to destroy the nation; the mother equals the nation. God has decided to judge and at this point there's no turning back. We have the similar case over in 1 John 5 where it says don't pray for a brother who commits a sin unto death. If someone commits a sin unto death you're just wasting your breath praying for him. God has assigned such a one to judgment and you can pray all you want but God's not going to answer, He's already made His decision. The nation has done something similar to a sin unto death situation. So there's nothing that can stop it, the nation is going into Exile.

And then we came to verse 6 and the root of the problem. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Knowledge of what? The Hebrew has the definite article preceding the noun "knowledge" so we know Hosea's being very specific. And so we go back in the context to v 1 "knowledge." "knowledge of God." That connects v 1 with v 6. So he's saying "My people are destroyed for lack of the knowledge" of God. It's not that they didn't have access to it, they had access to it, the verse goes on to tell us it's not an access issue, it's "Because they rejected the knowledge," they purposefully, actively rejected

the knowledge of God. The question is how do you get knowledge of God? That's a very important question to answer correctly because many people say the only source of the knowledge of God is the Scriptures and that would mean the verse is saying they rejected the Scriptures. That's true, of course, but the Scriptures are not the only source of the knowledge of God. There are two sources of knowledge; we categorize them as general revelation and specific revelation. They've rejected both which is what gets us into a discussion of idolatry. So let's review the points we made last week about knowledge.

The first thing we said was simply *God has all knowledge*. He always has and He always will have all knowledge. God never learned anything. And if that's true then God has forever perfectly understood this universe. And it was out of His perfect understanding that He created this universe. He's the architect.

The second thing is that *all human knowledge is derivative of God*. I've broken point two into two points but the same points we're covering. All human knowledge is derivative of God. You don't have any unique knowledge. Einstein didn't have any unique knowledge. Marcus Aurelius didn't have any unique knowledge. DaVinci didn't have the inside track on knowledge. God already knew everything and therefore what they knew or discovered was something God already knew and showed them.

A third thing that is corollary to this is that *all knowledge is revelatory of God*. Think about it. If God crafted the universe then doesn't the craft reveal something about Him? If you craft something and I come over and look at your craft and it's a sorry piece of work then obviously that says something about your skill level or it may say something about your work ethic. But it does tell me something about you. And that's because you can never separate the craftsman from his craft. Always the craft reveals the character of the craftsman. Now the atheist at this point always points out some of the sorry aspects of creation and scoffs at this. Well, if God is so great why is their death? Why is there suffering? Why is their pain? You're saying your God created all this? If so, He's an evil god. Now I do require people to think in my classes. And since atheists call themselves freethinkers I invite them to think of this. Let's go back to our analogy of the craftsman and his craft. Let's say I craft a piece of furniture and I give it to you and you wreck it. Does that say

anything about me? No, it says something about you and how you treated my craft. You wrecked it, I didn't. So obviously the creation narrative of Gen 1, 2 and 3 is the same story. God crafted a perfect creation, man who wrecked it at the fall. And so it's not God's fault you find death and suffering and pain in the creation. All the Bible is saying is that when God initially crafted it, it was a perfect craft. Then man rebelled and that brought wreckage into creation, but only partial wreckage. God only allowed it to wreck partially and then God says, enough, I allow it to be wrecked no further. And still we can see the marvels of His creative work, despite the fact there are things less than perfect in a fallen world. It still reveals His character. It's just like a seeing a wrecked vehicle that still runs. I can look at the vehicle and I can still see that Ford made the car. It still works well despite the dent in my hood. So design and mal-design are not mutually exclusive; one is accounted for by Creation and the other by the Fall. And so what we're saying here is that every piece of knowledge is ultimately revelatory of Him which means that God is inescapable and though men try hard to hide from God, He's everywhere all the time right in front of their eyes. And if they close their eyes to Him that's their fault. It doesn't mean God isn't there. If I walk in a lighted room I may close my eyes and say I don't see the light, but that doesn't mean the light isn't there. It means I've closed my eyes to the light. And so it is with fallen man and God.

So let's look at the fourth thing about knowledge. *All man's knowledge depends on trusting an authority.* Now that may sound strange to your ears. I thought faith and religion depended on authority and science depended on no authority, its non-authoritarian? That's what you're taught in the university, we're neutral over here, and we're just observing the facts. No, you're not; facts have to be interpreted and the question is what's the authority by which you're interpreting? All that's happened is you've transferred the authority. You've said God isn't the authority, man is the authority. Now that's always the exchange that takes place. Think of Eve in that Garden. She's got two trees there that were interpreted for her by God, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And God says if you eat that second tree you surely will die. Satan comes along, you surely will not die. Now she's got two propositions. You surely will die, you surely will not die. Which one is true? What did that woman do to find out? She said I'll decide for myself by doing an experiment. Now, at that point is Eve in a neutral position? She thinks she is. But where has the authority been re-located? To her. She hasn't

become neutral. She has said I will decide what is true and false, I will decide what is right and what is wrong, I will not accept it on any other authority than my authority. And that is autonomy. Autonomy very bluntly is saying I interpret all things without reference to God. I'm going to proceed in the knowledge process independently of Him. He is not sufficient but I am sufficient. Now when a human being makes that decision in his mind there's a serious price to pay. To see the price turn to Rom 1. Verse 18 again; here's knowledge all men have, vv 18-20 very clearly say that all men know God exists. It's not a matter of whether men know God exists and we have to set out to prove it. It's a matter of what they've done with that knowledge. If you suppress that knowledge Rom 1 says there's a serious price to pay. So here's the picture all men have at some point. I've got God, He's the Creator and down here is the creation and in the creation I have a distinction between man and nature. So we have two distinctions that are natural for man to see; the Creator-creature distinction. God is not the creation, He's distinct from the creation and the man-nature distinction; man is not an animal, he's not descended from the ape. Those are two biblical distinctions that all men should see but all men don't see and, as you know, what I'm saying here is very controversial, it may not be for you if you've been in church circles all your life but I assure you what I'm saying here is very offensive. Alright, these distinctions are known but watch - when a man suppresses his knowledge of the Creator something happens to this whole picture that blurs both distinctions. To see what happens drop down to v 21. "For even though they knew God," (see, all men know God, there it is in black and white), "they knew God." But what happened? "they did not honor Him as God or give thanks," and that right there is where things go horribly wrong. And now the price: "they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart," or mind "was darkened." So God says in effect, you don't want Me in your knowledge, fine, your mind is going to go dark. That means the intellect pays a price and now what men do is build speculative systems of thought. Speculative, they don't know these things, they're only speculations. Verse 22. "Professing to be wise, they became fools." They exalt this speculative system and they say, oh look! how wise we are, we are masters of the universe, we're so great in all our knowledge! Verse 23 "and exchanged the glory," (notice there's an exchange that took place in the mind, they traded one thing for something else), "and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures." So what's all that stuff? That's all part of

the creation. They're exchanging worship of the Creator for worship of the creation. Verse 24 consequence; "Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them." That gets into sexual corruption and we'll get into that in Hosea, it's all linked in with idolatry. And finally, verse 25, the explanation, "For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." And there it is in black and white, they re-directed their worship from the Creator to the creature. And that is the essence of idolatry. It's to transfer that which belongs solely to the Creator to some aspect of the creation. And so all that Rom 1 type operation is summed up in Hosea 4:6, "you have rejected knowledge," and therefore we know their minds were dark, we know the distinction between Creator and creature was blurred, we know the distinction between man and nature was blurred and with that come all kinds of sexual perversions. So this is a nasty text but it gives you a taste for how nasty it was in Israel when Hosea ministered. So let's go back to Hos 4:6 and finish the nastiness.

Therefore, because they have **rejected knowledge**, it says, **I also will reject you from being My priest**. Now when this judgment comes upon the nation, at that point these people are going to complain to God and they're going to say but God You promised back at Mt Sinai to make us a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. So what about Your word? What about Your promises? Turn back to Exod 19. They're going to argue on the basis of this text that God, You said You were going to make us a kingdom of priests so You can't do this. That's all contained in verse 6, "and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." but they forget verse 5, how does verse 5 begin, "Now then, *if*" conditional clause, "*if* you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then" these things will follow.

So you have these two emphases floating around in the nation Israel. We have, on one hand, the Abrahamic Covenant containing eternal promises of God that guarantee blessing upon the nation and yet on the other hand we have the Mosaic Covenant containing promises of blessing and cursing contingent on obedience. And the struggle is to see the relationship of these two. And so, we have some people who overemphasized the Abrahamic Covenant and their theology says we have security, nothing can happen to us and therefore we can sin and sin and sin and get away with it. 721BC

demolished that theology. Then there were other people and they overemphasized the Mosaic Covenant and so when they looked at the sin of the nation they said we have no security, we're damned, we really slobbered this one up and God is casting us off for good, never to shower blessing upon us again. Now the parallel in the Christian life is we have people who overemphasize God's gracious election and they say I'm in Christ and therefore I can do whatever I want, I can go out and raise hell and God's grace will cover it because I interpret grace to mean I have a license to sin. The other crowd overemphasizes law and they say now if you break the law then you'll lose your salvation and so they bring law keeping or works into the equation of salvation. Both of those positions are wrong because they overemphasize in one or the other directions. The biblical position is yes, you are elect by God's sovereign grace and that marks out for you a destiny. God has predestined you to be conformed to the image of Christ and that will happen. God's word guarantees it. But the road getting there is a rough road; there is law and if you, as His elect, violate the law then there are consequences to that. God's going to lower the rod in discipline. So, we have the relationship akin to Israel's Abrahamic Covenant and we have fellowship akin to Israel's Mosaic Covenant. And as God's chosen child you can sin but just know there's discipline if you do because God is going to get you in shape for eternity.

All right, so God is going to discipline His people so that ultimately one day fellowship will be restored with the nation. So when you see in verse 6 **Since you have forgotten the law of your God**, that's Torah, that's the Law, you haven't paid attention to the word of God and since you could care less, you've lost fellowship with Me and **I also will forget your children** meaning I'm going to bring judgment on you and your children. It's going to be an extended judgment, not just one generation will suffer but many generations will suffer, many generations will be spent out of fellowship.

So he says, Hosea 4:7, **The more they multiplied, the more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame.** Now notice the word **multiplied**. That's the word for prosperity. And so this is the time when Israel was enjoying great economic prosperity, great agricultural blessing; they were enjoying all kinds of blessing during this period. Yet look at the net result, **the more they increased the more they sinned against God.** Now that may sound funny to you but that's exactly what's happened in our

country. The more and more prosperity we've enjoyed the more and more we've sinned against God. And that means ultimately the removal of blessing, the destruction of prosperity. It may take 40 years, 50 years, 100 years but it will be removed.

How they sinned we covered back in Hos 2:5, where it's the picture of Hosea and Gomer. Remember this analogy illustrated God and the nation Israel. So, in 2:5 Gomer has left her husband and she's gone back into the prostitution ring and since she is a woman who has gone negative volition to her husband she creates a vacuum in her soul and to fill that vacuum she turns to other men. She's on negative volition and she thinks that by going to these other men she's going to get fulfillment, and so she goes to them over and over and over but no matter how much she makes love to them she can never be satisfied by them. And the reason is because those men aren't her right man. Her right man is her husband Hosea. And Hosea is the only one who can ultimately satisfy her. But look at what she says in v 5, this is where we get into idolatry, mid-verse, "For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, Who give me my bread and my water, My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.' In other words, what is she saying? She is saying that these men provide all my needs. She's attributing the blessing to these men and not to her husband. While all along it was her husband that was supporting her. And by parallel the nation Israel was going after Baal and saying Baal provides all my needs. Look at verse 8. "For she does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine and the oil, And lavished on her silver and gold, Which they used for Baal." Why do they give their offering to Baal? Because they attribute to Baal all the blessing.

Who's Baal? Baal is Nature with a capital 'N'. What did we say earlier in Rom 1? If you reject knowledge of God you destroy the Creator-creature distinction, you may have gods and goddesses in your system but they're not distinct from creation, they're just part of nature. They may be bigger than you but they're enclosed in the same reality. So what Israel has done is she's started to worship Nature. Baal is just Nature, he's a fertility god of nature. What must we always give lip service to today in the classroom? Mother Nature. Nature must always be given her due prominence. She's the provider, she nourishes us, and she provides all our needs. What's the big idea that underlies Mother Earth? You can't take a course on any university campus that doesn't have this idea at the root of it. Neo-Darwinian evolution.

Nature is all that there is and Nature creates life, that's ancient idolatry and its modern idolatry. Hosea is a strikingly contemporary text!

And so here God was like Hosea - providing, providing and providing and the nation was on negative volition to God and their minds were going dark and yet God was still being gracious, He kept providing agricultural blessing, He kept providing economic prosperity and the nation was sinning more and more and their minds were getting darker and darker until they were attributing the blessing to these nature forces. They had exchanged worship of the Creator for worship of the creation.

And therefore, v 9, God says, "I will take back My grain at harvest time And My new wine in its season. I will also take away My wool and My flax Given to cover her nakedness." He's going to use disciplinary shock. He's going to take away all the gracious blessing so they'll see that Baal isn't providing a thing. Baal is just a figment of their imagination. And so you'll go down to the local Baal altar and cry out, oh Baal, give us fruitful soil, oh Baal give us blessing and Baal doesn't even exist but they'll do it anyway and then they'll go out in the fields and there won't be any blessing and so they'll see Baal doesn't provide anything. And this is to shock them back into worshipping and serving the Creator rather than the creature. And this is disciplinary shock.

There are two examples of idolatry. We want to see what's happened; last week we spent some time in the doctrine of knowledge, tried to break some ground work on the fact that knowledge is not what you are taught in school, it is not just a matter of autonomously deciding what a fact means. That is not the Biblical concept of knowledge. Tonight we come into a little insight into idolatry, and I'm going to use a modern illustration first because this one will be most familiar to you, then we'll go back using what we've learned in the modern illustration to an ancient form of it in Baalism and try to show the connection. So let's look at the modern illustration.

Let's take evolution in the cosmic sense; the big bang to man hypothesis. Evolution is the modern form of idolatry. Evolution has two gods, Determinism by the laws of physics and Chance. Both are part and parcel of the driving force of evolution. The first idea is that Chance is somehow operating over vast periods of time to bring things into existence. At the same

time you have operational Natural Law and Natural Law determines by the laws of physics the direction our universe is taking. And these two forces are used to explain all things. Now this is basically a contradictory system as you can see in this quote by Richard Dawkins, he says, "Darwinian evolution, the nonrandom survival of randomly varying coded information." Let's dissect that statement and look at the phrase "nonrandom survival." Well, if it's nonrandom, what is it? It's Determined, so there's god one, Determinism. And then it says "of randomly varying coded information." And if it's random what is it? It's Chance and there's god two, Chance. Chance + Determinism over vast ages of Time gives all things. That's the formula of Darwinian evolution. And in this formula there is no need for God, so says Dawkins. He says God is a quote "redundancy." Evolution leaves God with nothing to do.

Inherent to evolution is contradiction. Contradiction lies at the heart of this whole idolatrous system as it does every idolatrous system. On one hand you've got Chance and if Chance is involved then Determinism is excluded by the opposing principle. On the other hand if you insist on Determinism then Chance is excluded by the opposing principle. Chance and Determinism are diametrically opposed to one another.

Now what are they stealing from the Christian worldview to get these two gods? Well, Chance is stolen from the Fall because the Fall is what brings in disorder and chaos resulting in mal-design. There are certain features of the universe that don't appear to be ideal. To explain them they distort the Fall into the principle they call Chance and make it an absolute principle. Where does the second god come from? Natural Law or Determinism. What do they steal to erect this into a god? They steal it from the Noahic Covenant. God gives stability to the universe so that we can do math, we can measure things, there's an order to the universe that comes from His word in the covenant. So they steal his word in the covenant and call it Natural Law or Determinism and absolutize it. And so both of their gods are distortions of biblical truths. They put the two together and call it Darwinian evolution. This is today's popular idolatrous system.

Now there is no such thing as Chance and there is no such thing as Determinism and there is therefore no such thing as Darwinian evolution. You can sit in a court for hours and I don't care how many people testify to the contrary there is no evidence for Darwinian evolution, period. Never has

been, never will be. Why? Because these are futile speculations, they are imaginary constructs in people's minds. It's Rom 1 all over again. So what I want you to notice at this point is that Darwinian evolution is man-made. Man made it up, that's going to be Hosea's theme song, you made up Baal as a controlling principle in your head and modern man made up Chance and Determinism as controlling principles in his head. And it's nothing more than an imaginative construct to interpret the facts. So let's say something about facts.

Here's what's going on and here's how to see the idolatry. Down here we have facts: say you find a fossil, you observe a biological process, you count tree rings, whatever, these are all quote "facts." And we have fact after fact after fact. Now in the creation/evolution controversy are we dealing with different facts? Are the facts what solve the issue? Do facts decide the question of creation or evolution? No, we're all looking at the same facts. The issue isn't the facts; the issue is how you're interpreting the facts. Now how do we interpret facts? Well, we interpret them according to presuppositions. Everyone has presuppositions and by that we mean an ultimate commitment. Everyone has an ultimate commitment, no one is neutral as I'll show and there are only two ultimate commitments. Either you're ultimate commitment is God and His word as the authority for interpreting the facts or you're ultimate commitment is man and his word as the authority for interpreting the facts. What did we say last week in the Garden? Knowledge presupposes an authority. Eve was confronted with a fact, there's a tree in the garden with fruit on it. God gave her the interpretation of that tree. If you eat it you will surely die. Then Satan came and gave her an alternative interpretation of the same tree. If you eat it you will surely not die. Now the only question is on whose authority will she proceed in the learning process? She can choose to proceed on God's authoritative interpretation of the fact or she can become her own authority, do an experiment and decide for herself the interpretation of the fact. What did that woman do? She went with herself. She went with man will interpret the facts. She made herself ultimate. She became the ultimate presupposition. Now the game that's being played today with the creation/evolution controversy is the same game. We all look out at the same facts but when it comes to interpreting the facts we have two mutually exclusive ultimate commitments. Either you interpret facts in terms of God and His word or you interpret facts in terms of man and his word. And so every fact will be interpreted in terms of your ultimate

commitment. One group of people is committed to God and His word so they will say all the facts support creation. Another group of people are committed to man and His word as ultimate and so they will interpret the facts to support evolution. Other people are in-between and they're the most confused of all. But the point is that facts are being arranged in terms of a prior ultimate commitment. There's nothing neutral about it. Everyone is doing this. You're only kidding yourself if you think you're neutral.

So Hosea, describing idolatry is actually describing the parallel idea in our day of evolution; that's the popular form of idolatry today. The evidence that it's a full-scale religion is to watch how vehemently they proselytize for it on the university campus. Christianity is mocked. Christianity was overtly attacked in my biology classes at Texas Tech on several occasions with the intent of destroying young Christians trust in God's word. A professor wouldn't give me a letter of recommendation to medical school because I believed God created man. If you do make it to graduate school and it comes out that you're a creationist your fellowship dries up or they won't accept your thesis. This is the kind of discrimination that's going on behind closed doors for being a creationist. And what these responses prove is how deeply committed they are to evolution. This is a serious issue for them and the very emotional response you get to this kind of thing proves that it is far more than just a question of neutral discussion. It involves a very deep commitment. It's a secular religion and world renowned evolutionist Michael Ruse has gone on the record saying that. So what I'm saying here is not unheard.

Now that is evolution with its twin gods of Chance and Determinism and out of that comes forth all things, Nature is the mother out of whose womb comes all things.

Now to show you that basically is not a new idea we go back into the Bible to Baalism, and to start off the word Baal simply means "lord" or "master." It was used in the marriage relationship for the legal contract that bound a woman to her lord or master. It was originally a synonym for *ish* but *ish* is more intimate than just a legal contract. So the word originally just meant one who was a "lord," it was a good word.

But then, after the Flood we have Noah and his family get off the Ark, they're all believers and they begin to populate the earth. We imagine they were passing on the truths of Gen 1-8 to their offspring but somewhere along the line the offspring began to go on negative volition to Gen 1-8 and that meant their minds were darkened and they began to exchange worship of the Creator for worship of the creation. Rom 1 again and gradually the word Baal came to be identified with Nature Forces, something akin to Natural Law but they believed man could influence the Nature Forces, modern man doesn't believe he can manipulate Natural Law, but it's the ancient corollary nonetheless. So they'd refer to the Nature Forces as the "lord's" the "Baalim." And so they began to segment nature up into spheres and you have the water sphere, you have the land sphere, you have the sky sphere and so you'd have the Baal of the water, the Baal of the land, the Baal of the sky and all these Baal's were projections of the human mind of gods and goddesses that controlled nature. They were nature forces that mysteriously controlled those spheres. So this is how polytheism got started after the Flood. Man began to look down at nature and in the darkness of his mind broke nature down into these compartments and then attached different Baal's to these compartments. And notice the gods and goddesses all have one thing in common, they are strictly projections of the human mind-they don't exist, they are totally the product of man's sinful imagination just like the twin forces of Chance and Determinism.

Now here's what happened; of all the things in nature what do you suppose most concerned, particularly, early men? They were an agrarian society so they depended heavily on agriculture and so their lives depended on the next crop. The issue was we want Nature to give us fertility so we can have a good crop, so we can have good genetics in our animals. They knew about breeding and, we know that from as early as Gen 30 they knew about breeding, so we want good genetics in our animals and we want good genetics in our families, lots of children because that means lots of workers and we can get more crops. So they worshipped heavily in these areas because these were the areas they were most interested in and most dependent on. And so in every polytheism one of the core ideas is fertility and fertility is linked to sex so you always have these lumped together in idolatry. Sex has a profoundly significant role in ancient polytheism as well as modern polytheism, in modern evolution sex is a very important concept in organizing how mates select among man and animals and man's desire to pass on his genes and so

it has repercussions for issues of the ethics of rape and polygamy in our culture. But in any case, in the ancient world fertility is linked with sex and that's why bestiality was a problem. If my mind is darkened and man and nature are blurred in my thinking then man and animals can have sex because man is an animal. Now it was strictly forbidden in Torah, but what happened to Torah in v 6? They forgot Torah. So if you've forgotten Torah and you've blended man and nature so now there's no strict boundary and you want fertility in your animals then logically have sex with your animals. And so this is why it was so prevalent in all the cults.

So Baal is one of the many Nature Forces. They want fertility out of Baal. So turn to Amos 2:7 to see some more sex. We could see it in Hos 4:13 but it's clearer in Amos and Amos wrote during the same time to the same people so we'll use him. What Amos shows you is they engaged in these fertility rites down at the Temple. So first man has sex with animals, now man has sex with man and we want to see why. Amos 2:7 ⁷“These who pant after the *very* dust of the earth on the head of the helpless Also turn aside the way of the humble; And a man and his father resort to the same girl In order to profane My holy name. ⁸“On garments taken as pledges they stretch out beside every altar,” and in these Canaanite fertility cults they would get up on the altar which was like a bed or they'd get beside the altar if the bed was taken and they'd have these orgies. What are they doing this for down at the local Baal temple?

So we link now, because they rejected worshipping God and worship Nature Forces, they're connecting with the Nature Forces through sex. Sex is always profoundly powerful in pagan thought, it's central to the whole system. You go down to Baal's temple and they have priestesses who were the professional prostitutes and it would be an act of worship to have sex with one of these girls, and conversely they had situations where they had male prostitutes and it would be an act of worship for the female to have sex with one of these men. And as they would have sex by the altar it would be an act that would stimulate the gods to have sex with the goddesses and that was a message that we want fertility, we want you to get the fertility process going so we can have fertile land so we can get a good crop. And obviously with that kind of theology you're going to attract a lot of people to your cult. And that is what the Israelites were involved in, they rejected the knowledge of God, their minds were darkened and they got involved in speculative systems of thought

and this is the idolatry that is deep seated and the problem is up here in the mind, the destruction that has happened is how men think and obviously how men think affects how they live in society.

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