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**C0939 – October 14, 2009 – Hosea 4:15-19 – Israel Plunges Beyond
Recovery**

Alright tonight we're in Hos 4 and it's as good a time as any to review the basic argument of Hosea and why Hosea is important to us as believers. The book of Hosea is in the collection of the OT called the Nabiim. *Nabi* is the Hebrew word for prophet, *im* is the plural ending. And the Nabiim consists of fifteen books, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve Minor Prophets we call the Book of the Twelve, one of whom is Hosea. The Nabiim, books like Hosea, have as their practical effect in the life of the Christian dealing with deep problems of carnality.

The prophet's job was two-fold, it was to first convict the nation of the deep problems of sin in order that the nation might repent and if she did not repent there was a coming judgment of God and second, the nation was eternally secure and would finally be restored. The work of the prophet and in all these prophetic passages of Scripture you will find yourself going back to when you are working through the deep problems of sanctification in your own soul. When you have areas and times when you know things aren't going right and you have that conviction that there's just something wrong somewhere, then the prophets are the books to read. If you're working with someone in deep trouble, the point where they are terribly emotional, they start to manifest psychosomatic illness, then the Nabiim are the books to read.

These are the books where excuses for sin are put aside and it's exposed in all its grossness, for what it truly is. We see, for example, in the argument of Hosea, the first three chapters; God establishes a historic parallel between His relationship with the nation Israel and Hosea's relationship with Gomer, his wife. And the whole point of those first three chapters is that violation of

the contractual agreement is nothing short of prostitution in God's eyes. It's deeply offensive and deeply personal how God responds to our sin. You must realize that God is not sitting there in heaven, oh, so and so sinned, yeah, yeah, who cares. When we sin that's not what happens. He personally responds and His response can, at times, be violent, at times it can be sudden, and it can almost appear merciless. Conversely, of course, when God blesses, its astounding blessing.

So the first three chapters reveal that if you have trusted in Jesus Christ, God is interested in you personally and He's going to respond to you personally. Chapters 4-10, the Hosea's marriage and God's marriage with the nation Israel slips into the background and go into a verse by verse analysis in the form of a lawsuit. Why does God use a lawsuit, or the rib, against the nation? Why the lawsuit format? To teach us about true conviction of sin. True conviction of sin is not by vague guilt feeling. All through these chapters you will see God pinpointing specific violations of the Mosaic Covenant. And finally chapters 11-14 God's great love for the nation Israel, finally the nation will be blessed because these problems will be resolved. God has a way of solving the problems that Israel couldn't solve. So we see God's grace as the final note of history.

Now when we work with this we have to understand the history of the nation. Remember that Hosea is convicting of national sin; we're applying it to our personal individual sin, but we have at this point, from 926BC onward in time the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. The southern kingdom is called Judah, the northern kingdom is called Israel, sometimes in this book called Ephraim. Those are the titles for the northern kingdom. Hosea has his ministry in the northern kingdom and his ministry is a generation before the northern kingdom will be destroyed by the Assyrians in 721BC. So he is living in the last hours of the existence of his country and he is bringing God's lawsuit against his country; he is announcing why God is going to judge his country.

The country at the time was in deep, deep carnality. There's a difference between deep, deep carnality and just plain carnality. Carnality is just being out of fellowship and then you confess and get back in fellowship. Deep, deep carnality is when you get out of fellowship and you stay out of fellowship and you begin to develop habitual sin patterns in your soul as you reinforce your

negative volition to the word of God. That's deep, deep carnality. Now, there are stages to this as you head down into greater and greater depths of carnality. It doesn't just happen overnight. It takes time to decay into this kind of carnality and there's a sequence to the decay so we want to review this sequence. It's always the same sequence and so if you see yourself somewhere in this sequence you'll at least know where you are and how to get back on track.

The first step is the rejection of the knowledge of God. This comes in the form of suppression of known truth. God makes Himself known to all men, all men know God and therefore when we suppress what we know about God and we don't give thanks for the rain and the crops and the oxygen we breathe and we just go around acting like it's just all there then we have a problem because God in His grace is supplying order and stability to the universe so we can function. And so this is the first step, rejection of the knowledge of God.

The second step is the mind begins to darken. Darkening of the mind means re-orientation of the ultimate presupposition for interpreting reality and obviously it's a negative re-orientation. So this is a judgment in and of itself, that if you reject what knowledge God has given you, then the reasoning processes of the intellect begin to distort data. It doesn't mean we become stupid. It means the thought processes are oriented against God. And by the way, this holds true for unbelievers and believers. Don't think this applies only to unbelievers. There are plenty of believers that are in this pattern. And a believer in this pattern will be saying things like, you know, there's just too much teaching of the word of God here, we need this program and why can't we hold hands on Wednesday nights instead, and I'm sick and tired of coming here and all we do is open the word of God, isn't there something more to the Christian life? Besides, if I have too much of the word well that just leads to spiritual fatness and we don't want this. It's always some new scheme to shut down and malign the word of God. And what's happening as this goes on in the mind, as you take in less and less and less of the word of God and more and more of all this other stuff is you start re-interpreting all the incoming facts. We're constantly barraged with the quote "facts" but now you begin to re-interpret the facts according to a new authority, which is always man. So in this stage the intellect is in a period of re-orientation.

The third step is demonic influence. At this point we are really sucking up the pagan ideas in our culture. We are convinced that man basically has the answers. Those answers are demonically sourced but who believes all that Bible stuff. So at this stage the re-orientation has basically taken place and now we're rapidly organizing according to a new absolute and we're projecting, we're creating images such as evolution that are all encompassing principles of explanation, independent of God. They are manifestations of autonomous rebellion against the Creator and ultimately they are all demonically inspired. The demonic influence is powerful and widespread in our world, the demons hold sway which is why Satan is called "the god of this world" and the "prince of the power of the air". What's the air but where all the ideas float around. So this is his major operation, to infiltrate people's thinking.

The fourth step is outright idolatry. And this is when we're convinced that this demonic idea is right and the Bible is wrong, it has errors or something. In our hearts we seriously do not think the word of God is really true, God isn't really in control of history and by this stage the mind has transferred the attributes of the Creator over onto the creation. We have to have done this because to say the word of God isn't true requires a standard by which to judge it. And so now we have re-located absolutes from the Creator over to the creation. And wherever you have re-located them, that's your altar of worship. The nation Israel went through all four of these steps. Fertility was ultimate to her because that was an agricultural idea and I have to eat and I have to provide for my family to eat and so this became ultimate. And since Baal was the fertility god of nature then Baal became ultimate and so the absolute of God's grace, that God supplies all our needs, was relocated over in nature forces. Nature forces supply all my needs, nature forces provide for my well-being and make my soil fertile. And that is nothing more than the ancient Continuity of Being idea, that all is one, the gods and goddesses, man, animals, rocks, everything is part of the same mystery and everything only differs in degree and so I can move up the scale; I can manipulate up the scale to get better produce and so and this is all idolatry.

So what are some other forms of idolatry in our generation? Evolutionism is the modern counterpart to the ancient Baalism we just described. So don't fool yourself. Modern neo-Darwinian evolution is not a new idea with

Darwin. All Darwin supplied was a mechanism for an ancient belief held by the Egyptians, held by the Canaanites, held by the Greeks: the basic idea that all is one and everything only differs by degree is a pagan idea, it's pagan worship and so don't buy into it when any Christian says to you when you're witnessing to just avoid issues like creation and evolution. You can't avoid it. It's like avoiding discussing idolatry. Tell me how you can remain idolatrous and accept Jesus? If I'm an idolater that means I locate absolutes inside the creation. So if I'm still an idolater then the Jesus I accept is nothing more than a being encompassed by the same creation I'm encompassed by and that can only mean that Jesus is nothing more than a great moral leader or something, a fantastic teacher, but that's all He is. And that's an impotent Jesus, not a saving Jesus who controls history. So you can't avoid these kinds of discussions if you're interested in people genuinely being saved.

Another modern form of idolatry is political or party loyalty. These become ultimate in a person's mind and no matter what the issue is I'm going to remain loyal to my party. The problem with that is party platforms drift over time and the platform in 2009 was the opposing parties' platform in 1959. Obviously the party drifts and if you make party loyalties ultimate you're drifting. And if you're drifting then you're a relativist. Truth is relative, relative to the changing times. As time changes truth changes. But in any case party loyalty is idolatry and this is why there is always the need for new parties to step forward and get their platform on the table and get it heard and how when they apply their basic principles to the social problems at hand they come up with a different answer. The reason this hasn't been too successful is because of mass party idolatry, the two-party system is evidence of idolatry.

Another form of modern idolatry is economics. Value and wealth become ultimate and so whatever benefits my wallet that's what I'm going to support. And I never make any decision that's not good for my wallet, no matter who it might damage or what ethical principles might be violated. Everything gets oriented around that. Wealth becomes absolute.

These are some of the popular idolatries of our day. There are others, but we want to come to the fifth step. And *the fifth step is the social chaos* that eventually breaks out. The behavior that is naturally associated with

demonic ideas. When the mind is warped like this and the demonic infiltration has occurred then the natural by-product is chaos in the heart. And chaos in the heart leads to all kinds of strange behavior in society, things like mothers murdering their children, and fathers shooting their families. Other things like lying which becomes a way of life that's totally accepted. A lot of politicians tend toward that sin pattern. But after awhile we just redefine it to be a point of view and this is part of the relativizing that goes on when a society is in this fifth stage. Other things include increased homosexuality and homosexuality being re-defined as normal behavior and there's a whole list of about 20 things at the end of Rom 1 that typify this kind of a wicked, wicked society. God haters, disobedient children, greed, malice, gossip, it's all in there, the marks of chaos in the heart.

And that brings us to tonight, the sixth and final step, and that's what we see in vv 16 and 17. There comes a point when God cuts off His *divine protection*. And this is a very severe form of discipline. When God says I cut off My gracious restraint toward you then you've reached a point of no return. And we'll elaborate the point and prove it from Scripture but that's the picture Hosea has for the OT nation Israel and by parallel you, as a NT believer in Christ.

Now verse 15, **Though you, Israel, play the harlot, Do not let Judah become guilty; "As the LORD lives!"** ¹⁶**Since Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn heifer, Can the LORD now pasture them Like a lamb in a large field?** Now this is one of three passages that a doctrine of backsliding has been developed from. I grew up in a Baptist church and the Baptists always talk about backsliding. This is a very popular form of gossip, so and so is backslidden. And the idea I got was that backsliding was someone who stopped coming to church for awhile or something and what they were getting at was that so and so had fallen into sin and they got stuck in this sin pattern. Now that's not what this passage is talking about. The original is very different idea than backsliding and I can't really find that the backsliding they were talking about has anything to do with what is being said by Hosea here about the nation Israel.

Though you, Israel, play the harlot Do not let Judah become guilty; and there you see the divided kingdoms. In 926BC Rehoboam made a poor political move and his two tribes stayed in the south, that's **Judah**, and the

ten tribes stayed north, that's **Israel**. And the verse is addressing **Israel**, **though you, Israel, play the harlot**, and that's a present participle, it means continual action, they continually **play the harlot**.

Now playing the harlot is the idolatry and the parallel to spiritual idolatry in the marriage is physical adultery. The first three chapters marked out that God set in motion a historical parallel of His relationship with the nation Israel in the prophet Hosea's relationship to Gomer. Now both of these girls were committing adultery. And the question is why are the terms linked with marriage? There are two reasons. Reason number one is because marriage is a contract. Marriage doesn't begin when you fall in love with someone, marriage begins when you enter into a contract with them, whether you love them or not. Many marriages throughout history have been arranged by the parents because the kids were too imbecilic to choose a good spouse. And many people have entered into the contract first and then had to learn to love one another. Learning to love is the model of marriage in Scripture. It was never love first and then marry, it was always marry first and then learn to love. And so it was at Mt Sinai. God entered into a contractual marriage with Israel but Israel didn't learn to love until later. And so point one of this marital language is because both relationships begin with a contract.

But the problem is the second thing, they've played the harlot. They entered into the marital contract but they said this isn't sufficient, this isn't meeting all my needs and so I'll go elsewhere to meet all my needs. This is the spiritual idolatry and the reason they think that is because they've already advanced through these six stages so obviously they can't attribute to the proper source who is supplying all their needs.

Let's look at more of verse 15, **Though you, Israel, play the harlot Do not let Judah become guilty**, so for a moment Hosea thinks about the border kingdom of Judah. Judah was more with it spiritually than Israel because her life centered on the Davidic dynasty, they had the Temple, so there was more spiritual stability in Judah. But there's always this danger that if you hang out around fornicators you'll become a fornicator. That's a problem, so don't think you're going to go witnessing around the red light district and come out unscathed. You may love the people in the red light district, I may love them, God may love them, but that doesn't mean you should be so stupid as to go hang out with them. They're corrupt.

And then we get more explanation and I'll fill in the historical detail so this makes sense. They are told not to go to two places. Both these places are in the northern kingdom of Israel, so the southern kingdom of Judah is not to go up to **Gilgal**. Now Gilgal, in the time of Elisha, was the center of a school of prophets and this is where the word of God was studied in great detail and students were trained in the seminary there. And so it became famous for producing all the great exegetes. They would make pilgrimages up to this great seminary and God says, don't bother, the place is an apostate seminary, you won't find any fine exegetes coming out of Gilgal, the whole thing is turned into an idolatrous shrine. And this, by way of application, is the kind of thing that happens about every 75 years. Historically, no seminary or church stays orthodox more than about 75 years. They'll start building for a number of years, then they'll go into a golden era and then they'll decline and after about 75 years all that's left is the memories of the golden era and the reputation hangs around for awhile and God says, Gilgal may have a fine reputation for producing the great exegetes but it's an empty place; avoid it.

The second place neither **go up to Beth-aven**. And this is a figure of speech called *atbash*. *Atbash* is a Hebrew way of substituting one place name for another. You see this in Rev 10 where Sodom and Gomorrah is substituted for Jerusalem; the context makes clear Jerusalem is in view but under the heading of Sodom and Gomorrah because of what Jerusalem has become. And so the same is true here, Bethel is under Beth-aven because of what Bethel had become. Bethel comes from two words, Beth- meaning "house" and -el meaning "God," so Bethel means "house of God." It was known as the house of God because this is where Jacob met with God and made an oath and so the people of Judah always wanted to make pilgrimages up to this place and take the same oath. But later Bethel became a great shrine of idols that were set up by Jeroboam I. And Hosea refers to it as Beth-aven, -aven meaning "wickedness" or "iniquity," so Beth-aven means "house of wickedness." And he uses this figure of speech to say the house of God has been turned into a house of wickedness, so don't bother going up (cf 10:5).

Now the **oath** that you would take when you went up to Gilgal and Bethel: You'd make the pilgrimage and take some oath, promise the Lord something and the oath would always be sealed by the words at the end of v 15, "**As the Lord lives!**" This was the formula. And he's saying, don't waste your time

going up and making these oaths and going through the routine because I'm not going to pay attention. Why is He not going to pay attention? Because they won't worship Him according to the word of God. The word says worship in Jerusalem, go up to Jerusalem, so if you're going to go up to Gilgal and Bethel, don't use His name, they're apostate shrines. It's like a lot of people in evangelical circles, people who could care less about the word of God, they're always going around, "the Lord led me" to do this, "the Lord led me" to do that, etc. The Lord didn't do anything; it's just that they want to feel spiritual and so they confuse their emotions with God. It's not God, it's just overactive emotions. And the way you can tell this is it doesn't line up with the word of God. Five months later the Lord is leading this person to do something else and they are always starting things and never finishing things and that's how I know it isn't the Lord because the Lord doesn't start things He doesn't finish.

Now let's get to verse 16, this beautiful picture, mistaken for backsliding. **Since Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn heifer, Can the Lord now pasture them Like a lamb in a large field?** The translators have translated this as a question. Technically, this is not a question; there is no interrogative pronoun introducing this, so it's just a declarative statement. But they've had trouble with the text and so the question format is one of the ways they've handled it. We'll do our best to straighten it out.

You'll notice the word **stubborn...Since Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn heifer**, the key word is **stubborn** and that refers to stiff-necked rebellion and they're likened to a **stubborn heifer**. Now a stubborn heifer you can't get to move. You've got the animal restrained by a yoke so you can move the animal but a stubborn heifer you can't move. And the reason is because she'll take her front legs and she'll just stiffen them straight out and at that point I don't care if you push or you pull she's not going to budge. She's a big, fat stubborn heifer and until she bends her legs she's not moving and God says Israel is a big, fat stubborn heifer. She's locked down in negative volition to His word. They can't stand His restraint and so the statement is made, **now the Lord will pasture them Like a lamb in a large field**. Now what is this? Well, a **large field** is an unprotected area. And the Lord is saying I'll continue to pasture you but I'm not going to protect you, I'm going to leave you completely out in the open. And this tells us something about how God corrects believers. We have our five steps,

rejection of knowledge, darkness of the mind, demonic infiltration, idolatry and finally social chaos breaking out and God is saying, alright, I've had it, you're a stubborn heifer, you will never go positive volition, you will never confess your sin so here's what I'm going to do for you: I'm going to pastor you for a little while longer, I'm going to let you have some more green grass, but here's the catch, the **large field** has no fence around it, and the large field is completely open to the predators, and eventually wolves are going to come in and you're going to be like a lamb. And lambs are the some of the most inept creatures to ever walk the planet. They're stupid, they're weak, and they're one of the greatest evidences against evolution! How did these things survive? They're basically helpless and that's the picture of Israel, helpless, no divine protection.

So this is the sixth step, this is the picture of God removing His protection. He's not going to restrain them anymore, you want to walk in chaos, go ahead, have chaos, but just know that the time is near when the predators are going to come and eat you alive.

Now to see that this same thing is taught in the NT turn to 1 Cor 11:30. What we have here is parallel to the sin unto death. This is the context of communion service and they had turned the thing into a drunken party. Verse 30, "For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep." Now you can't get around that this verse is saying that physical sickness as well as physical death were due to disciplinary functions. Now this is not saying that all sickness is this way, there are reasons for suffering unrelated to your choices and there are reasons for suffering related to your choices, and you know those, we've been over them. But there is some physical suffering that can come because of your choices and this is one of them.

Now turn back a few chapters to 1 Cor 5:5. Here's how Paul dealt with a terrible case of social chaos at Corinth. Corinth was the sex capital of the ancient world. And they had a problem with one of the members in the church so Paul says, "*I have decided* to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." In other words, as an apostle who had authority, he says I cut so and so believer off from divine protection and just let Satan have at him. It's not a

loss of salvation notice, that's eternal; it's a form of discipline where Satan gets to feast on a believer.

Now turn over to 1 John 5:16. This tells you what to do when a person does this kind of a public, intentional sin that is against the character of God, you'll always find those three characteristics in a sin unto death. One it's public, in the congregation; two it's intentional, they knew exactly what they were doing and they did it anyway; and three, it's in some way an attack on the character of God, if you see someone commit a sin like that then 1 John 5:16 gives you instruction. There's no loss of salvation but something else happens. "If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death," so the first part of the verse is dealing with some other general sin, not a sin unto death, in that case it says, "he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death." Now here's the other category of sin, sin to death, which would have the three characteristics I mentioned, "There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this." What this is saying is when a NT believer gets so out of shape and he commits a sin unto death, don't even pray for that person. That is not something you should pray for; it's just a waste of time if you do because at that point it's useless. There are Christians, this is a Christian by the way, he's a brother, and they can do these kinds of sins and God may keep them around for awhile but don't you go trying to help these people. Don't have a big prayer session for them. Just leave them alone because the point is that God has decided to take them out and that's final!

And so that's the kind of thing this is getting at in v 16, God's removing His protection and now the predators can come in and they're going to devour them.

Verse 17, **Ephraim is joined to idols; Ephraim** is another name for the ten tribes so you'll see it throughout Hosea as a synonym for Israel. **Ephraim is joined to idols** and the word joined means stuck or glued. They're glued to idols and they're not coming unglued. So he instructs the people of Judah, **Let him alone**, and that's the instruction not to bother with a person that is this involved. John told the congregation, don't pray for them, don't help them, don't encourage them, don't pat them on the back, just leave them alone. Now that may sound harsh but that's God's word. Just leave them alone, get them out of there; you cannot help these kinds of people, you waste

your time trying. It's far better to spend your time with somebody that isn't so far down the line. Their judgment is determined. **Ephraim is joined to idol; Let him alone.**

Now, verses 18-19 the conclusion and the foreview of the judgment. **Their liquor gone, They play the harlot continually; Their rulers dearly love shame.** ¹⁹**The wind wraps them in its wings, And they will be ashamed because of their sacrifices.** Here we'll have to work through some translation issues so let's try to work it out. **Their liquor gone**, and the word liquor there is the word for strong drink, it's the word for alcohol that gets you drunk real fast, so the equivalent is they're drinking shots one after another till they're all out of liquor. And what the Hebrew is saying here is there is a causative connection between the heavy drinking and the harlotry. So we'd translate it "When their liquor is gone, they play the harlot continually." So they drink liquor till their drunk and that opens the body to fornication, they jump on Baal's altar and have at it. This is the ancient equivalent to the modern sex, drugs and rock and roll and this tells you what was going on at the religious ceremonies they were having for Baal.

So after they run out of alcohol it says, **They play the harlot continually;** this is difficult to translate, the whole phrase is just two words in the Hebrew, the same word repeated, zana, zana, the first in the form of the main verb, the second is the infinitive absolute and this intensifies the mood of the main verb. And the main verb is in the hiphil, so this is not simple action. Simple action is the qal stem. The qal you could just translate "they played the harlot." But the hiphil means "they caused to play the harlot." And putting this all together we have something like this, "They really caused extremely intense harlotry." So now we're in a strange position in the text because who's they, who's the they who are causing this extreme fornication and whose doing the fornicating? It's very difficult in the original text. But in the final clause of v 18 we have the answer, **Their rulers dearly love shame**, and so that's the they, the **rulers** are the ones causing the people to engage in extremely intense fornication.

And now we come to these **rulers**, who are they? Literally they're the *magen*, which is the word for "shields." Every where else this is translated as shields but here they translate as **rulers**, so let's look at it. Literally it reads **Their shields dearly love shame**. Now the function of the shield is to protect, you

take the shield and you put it out in front of your vital organs to protect your life. And so the shield provides a protective function for the nation's security and well-being. And so who provided protection for the nation? The military, the soldiers. So the military's function was to be a shield, to protect the nation from the Assyrians and the Egyptians and other threats. So the military is the shield of the people against foreign armies but here they have a serious problem because the soldiers who are supposed to provide this shield function, to protect the people, have not protected the people, they have not been a shield for the people, instead they have directed the people to go into this false Baal religion. And they themselves are involved in this false Baal religion. This is what a sex cult will do; it's very attractive to all the young people. Everybody wants to get involved, everybody come down here and have all the sex you want, and that includes the soldiers. C'mon down, get the next prostitute. So the soldier, while he ought to be out on his post keeping guard, wanders over to the local Baal worship center, he's on patrol, I'm patrolling over here right next to the Baal worship center, yeah right, give me a break and so he's abandoned his post temporarily so he can go fornicate and this opens the nation up for enemy attack. So the soldiers function was to be a shield for the people but they weren't doing their job. And the whole nation was suffering seriously during this period. There were a whole series of Syro-Ephraimite wars that occurred in this time frame and gradually Israel was losing more and more real estate. So we have a serious problem in the national defense department.

And that brings us to verse 19. With the weakening of national defense now Hosea says, **The wind wraps them in its wings, And they will be ashamed because of their sacrifices.** What's this? **The wind wraps them,** that's Ephraim, Israel, **The wind wraps them in its wings** is a metaphor for discipline by foreign military powers. The wind pictures the force that just sweeps across an area and clears it of all debris, and the picture is of the nation as debris being blown away. And so this is the military power just sweeping in and chopping them to pieces. Remember God said in v 16 you're going to be like lambs in an open field, no protection, you're going to be open to the wolves. And now the wolves are going to blow in and it's a perfect description of what happened in 721BC. The Assyrian army came in and blew them away. And it's a perfect depiction of what the Assyrians did because they'd re-locate you all over the map: they'd put you in so and so's land and move so and so into your land, they just moved people all

around and that's what happened to the ten tribes, they were blown in all kinds of different places, which is why it has become popular to say the lost ten tribes of Israel. They're not really lost but this is where the idea began because at first they thought they had been lost.

And then finally, the end of v 19 this gives some further insight about what happens when we're in compound carnality. The wind has blown, that's military defeat and only after this it says, **they will be ashamed because of their sacrifices**. Now the **they** is obviously the northern kingdom. And the first thing we can say is that while they were in deep, deep carnality, which we've sketched in detail, during all that time they were deeply deceived. They thought they were worshipping the true God but the nature of deception is that when you're in that position you're thinking is wrong, you're thinking is all screwed up. And so they'd go down and offer their sacrifices at the Baal cult and they really thought this was doing something. Why did they offer sacrifices? To appease the god. So they thought this is really having an effect, this is pleasing god and because of this god is going to bless.

And after all is said and done, after the military defeat, then finally **they will be ashamed**, finally they'll wake up to the fact that their sacrifices weren't doing a thing. They were putting their trust in something that was just a projection of their vain imagination. See, this is the end, when you reject the knowledge of God, what you know to be true. Don't stand there and say, I don't know God, it's just not clear to me that God is really there, you know God very well, you know He's giving you life and breath and all things. But once you start down that path of rejection...deception is the inevitable result. And it won't be until it's too late before you realize, all this time I've been trusting a vain object and you're **ashamed**, you're humiliated because you built everything in life upon this foundation you erected and then you suddenly the whole thing collapses and you realize there was no foundation there whatsoever and you'd been building on thin air. That's what it means **they will be ashamed**, they've trusted something they projected out of their finite imagination, that didn't even exist to begin with and that's a humiliating situation.

In conclusion, the lesson is we can go through these six steps and get ourselves in a sixth step kind of a situation. It's sobering to see how far a believer can go in rebellion against God. It doesn't mean you lose your

salvation, it's just that when we do maximum discipline is leveled against us and at that point the Lord says to your fellow believers, just leave them alone, don't even pray for them. That's what John says, don't waste your breath sending up prayers for them, just let them go because God has sovereignly determined to kill them, which by way of parallel we see in the destruction of 721BC. Thousands and thousands of Israeli's who thought they were worshipping god, but hadn't, got their teeth smashed.

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