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**C1003 – January 20, 2010 – Hosea 8:11-9:5 – The Glory Exchange  
Of Idolatry**

Someone asked last week, how was it a gimmick to select a new king without God's approval? What should they have done? What they should have done is just wait on the Lord. It's a problem you see in the OT with King Saul when he was waiting on Samuel to show up with the sacrifice and he's waiting and waiting and waiting and finally he says, that's it, I can't wait anymore, I'm going to do it myself. And he did and he got disciplined for it because he simply could not trust the Lord's timing. And Christians do the same thing today. They run into some problem in life and if the Lord doesn't give a solution in five minutes they think they've got to give the solution and so they do, they run off into some gimmick and the whole situation goes to destruction.

Another issue I wanted to conclude was on dating and marriage. If the Bible doesn't advocate dating what does it advocate? It advocates three things. First, friendship. Friendship is where you get to know someone of the opposite sex. But here's the key: under parental supervision. Not all this alone business. That's only looking for trouble. How can a father protect his daughter if she's not under his supervision? She's his responsibility until he hands her over at the wedding. Second, the Bible advocates courtship and courtship is simply the time that you have made known your intentions to marry this girl and from that point forward you're moving to a wedding date. And third, the marriage itself and that's self-explanatory.

Now beginning at Hos 8:10, here's where he announces the increase of discipline on the nation. The nation is cascading into deep carnality and the cascade always follows the six steps we've outlined. The first step is suppression of known truth, suppression of general revelation of God. The

second step is the mind is darkened as a by-product. The third step is demonic infiltration through ideas, pagan ideas. The fourth step is entrenched idolatry. But the prophets of this period, the classical prophets, are prosecuting the nation for violations of the Mosaic Covenant, so these are disciplinary truths and in Hos 8:10 he's announcing more discipline. **Even though they hire allies among the nations**, the **allies** were Assyria first, the northern king Menahem paid tribute, and a later king, Hoshea, paid off Egypt later. They're illegitimate Israeli kings trying to get security and their mistake is they don't trust the Lord for their security so the only recourse is gimmicks. **Now I will gather them up**, I said last time the **them** referred to the nations being gathered up to go against Israel, but with a little more analysis of history I find it refers to Israel. As I said verse 10 is very difficult to translate in the Hebrew so I had to do some more background history reading to get some help. And what happened was Tiglath Pileser, known as Pul in 2 Kings, came in and shrunk their territory down, he was gathering them up, hemming them in to a tighter territory and that's what he means when He says **I will gather them up**, their territory is going to be cut down. And God says **they will begin to diminish**. Again **they** is Israel, the noose is tightening and this is the beginning of their diminishing. **Because of the burden or tribute**, that's the payoff, **of the king of princes**. Because of these gimmicks of paying off, paying off, paying off to get security the nation is going to phase out economically. At the time they were still prospering but now **the king of princes**, who is Tiglath-Pileser III, the Assyrian tyrant, is going to come in and subdue the northern kingdom economically; he's going to tax all the landowners and drain the national economy. So the point of verse 10 is they are going to diminish, their prosperity is going to go down the drain. It hasn't happened yet, but it's going to happen. Keep this in mind, the people that listen to this message haven't seen recession, they haven't seen massive depression, they haven't seen famine, they haven't seen starvation. This is an entire generation that has lived in prosperity and these words are incomprehensible to them, just like the words are incomprehensible to many of our generation, absolutely impossible because we have no experience with this. So verse 10 can have repercussions for us.

Now Hos 8:11 is the reason why: **Since Ephraim has multiplied altars for sin, They have become altars of sinning for him**. Now the problem here of the **multiplied altars** is the fact that in the northern kingdom the first king who reigned was a spiritual failure by the name of Jeroboam I, he

reigned about 925BC. The united kingdom was last seen under Rehoboam. And Rehoboam almost caused a civil war but the Lord put a stop to that and authorized a peaceful division of the kingdom. So you have the northern kingdom called Ephraim or Israel and the southern kingdom called Judah, ten tribes in the north and two tribes in the south. The northern kingdom's capital was at Samaria. The southern kingdom's capital was at Jerusalem and the border was in between the two capital cities. Both kingdoms decline spiritually and the northern kingdom goes into Exile in 722BC, the southern kingdom goes into Exile in 586BC. So you have a division of the kingdoms. God carefully instructed the people, though you have two kingdoms I only want one religion because I chose Jerusalem, I chose to put My temple in Jerusalem and that is My appointed place to worship, and I will not tolerate you trying to come and worship me in other places and in other ways. If you want to worship Me you must come to the place I chose.

The sin of Jeroboam was that God told Jeroboam, look, you can relax because I'm going to consolidate your kingdom, you have nothing to worry about, you just obey My law and I'll take care of the rest of it, I give you the kingdom and your kingdom will be secure, so go ahead and send your people down to Jerusalem three times a year to worship Me. And Jeroboam had been away for years in Egypt, he hadn't been studying Torah and what he did was marry a nice pagan girl from the house of Pharaoh and in the house of Pharaoh he was exposed to the ins and outs of international politics, all the human view point gimmicks of paganism and so when the Lord said trust Me, Jeroboam said, I can't trust You, I'm worried, if I send my people down to Jerusalem three times a year there's going to be impressed with the southern kingdom of Judah and they're going to want to go live down there and that's going to spell disaster for my kingdom and the whole thing is going to break up. So to get security I can't trust the Lord, I can only trust myself and my political gimmicks and so he built an altar up north in Dan and down south in Bethel and that way there was no reason to travel all the way down to Jerusalem, you can do it right here. It was an in-house convenience store religion. And over time these **altars multiplied** throughout the land and the more they multiplied the more people sinned. Obviously, if you put more and more altars around then the people sin more and more and that's what verse 11 is going after, all these unauthorized altars they'd built.

Hos 8:12, **Though I wrote for him.** literally, I am writing to him **ten thousand precepts of My law, They are regarded as a strange thing.** Now the verb “to write” in verse 12 is not a past completed action, it’s not referring to the finished Torah, the first five books of the OT, it’s an ongoing action, it means I am still writing, again demonstrating why learning the original languages is important. Here in verse 12 we have one of those fine points that pays off in the study of languages; it’s a small point but it’s powerful. God says “Though I am writing the Law for you people” you have not a clue. The canon was still open at this point, God was still adding to the canon of Scripture through the prophets, they had Amos, they had Hosea, they had Isaiah, and revelation was coming through these men in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. They are adding to the word of God as prophets who stand in the unbroken line of OT prophets.

Yet **they are regarded as a strange thing.** Now that is very, very interesting because the word for **strange** is a word which means a Gentile, someone who doesn’t belong on the land, a Gentile, a foreign thing. I keep adding all these things to My Law and God says, they keep thinking of them as foreign things, they don’t even recognize these things and all I’m doing is adding to the things I’ve revealed before. Yet they over and over and over don’t recognize My law. God sent all kinds of revelation through the prophets and they **regarded it as a strange thing.**

Now the reason it had come about this way in the northern kingdom again gets back to Jeroboam. When Jeroboam took that first step of rejecting Jerusalem as the place of worship and setting up his own places of worship the Levites who lived in the north said we’re out of here. We can see where this is going and we want no part of it. And the Levites were the Bible teachers. They had other responsibilities but if you had a Bible question the Levites would search and inquire and come back with an answer. And so when the Levites fled to the south they didn’t have any more Bible teaching, which meant their educational system went down the tubes, but everybody has to have an educational system and so they imported the educational system from the surrounding nations and they began to be very schooled in paganism. Baalism became the official state sanctioned educational system. And so if a prophet ever ventured north you can imagine the kind of welcoming they got. They were agitators, they disrupted the fine pagan educational system they were building, and what they did was they outlawed

free speech; they said the prophets of YHWH are hereby illegal aliens. Yet some of these aliens who loved the Lord their God went anyway and they preached the word of God. Amos went up there and you see the welcoming he got when we went through verse by verse. They threw apples, oranges, anything they could, all because he was disrupting the nice pagan educational system they had going.

The same thing is going on today, I have several friends in the public educational system today, some of them over in Austin, TX, and they tell me how they are forewarned, don't you say anything about Jesus Christ in the classroom, no prayer in the classroom, no prayer in the teachers lounge, none of that, you can't even pray in your car in the parking lot. Why not? Because it disrupts the agenda, it disrupts the socialist program. Jesus doesn't fit the socialist paradigm. So what do we do? We outlaw Jesus in the classroom.

It's the same old thing. Now before we move on let's think through the **ten thousand precepts of My law**, *precepts* is not in the original, it just means the details, the tens of thousands of details in My law, My Torah. Now there are all kinds of details covered in the Torah, there are 613 instructions, some Jew sat down one day and counted up 611 and then the other two are counted as first words of the Ten Commandments spoken by God Himself, for a total of 613, they cover every area of life, they cover sewage, they cover education, they cover family, they cover sex, they cover national security, they cover worship, all these areas are covered in the Torah and God says when these details are presented to you, you turn around and call it **strange**—what is all this stuff, that's too much detail, I don't want to get involved in all that, best not to get involved.

And we have a lot of people who the moment we say the word of God applies to every area of life and every area of life equally they get turned off, immediately that is not attractive. They just want religion and the moment you start saying the word of God is reality and applies everywhere they walk out the door. That is not what they're looking for; they are looking for something to lift their spirits, some religious emotional high. They cannot even conceive that the word of God might actually have something to say about economics, about art, about music. And people think when we say this, that's strange. Why is that so strange? God created everything. God created the first man and on the first day of creation that man composed a piece of

music. And it's right there in Gen 2 and people get all out of fellowship over this. But there should be no surprise. And I've taken you through a number of issues in biology, astrophysics, geology and so forth because the word of God deals with these things. Some people say, why do you go into all that, it's strange you do that, that's too much detail, you're being nitpicky. But what they're really saying is, you're stepping on my toes, you're getting in MY business and I want to be free to think how I want to think about music and economics and you drawing all that out of the text, I don't believe it. But deep down it's just people saying I have these little areas where I like to sin and I was safe over in this area until you started going off at the mouth and so I don't like it, it makes me uncomfortable. Isn't there some area left for autonomous thought? And the answer is no. You are not free to think however you want about economics. Well, I guess you're free to but you're not free from the consequences. But that was their attitude, it's strange to have all these details in the word.

So now, Hos 8:13, here's what they're doing at all the altars from verse 11. This is the attitude that these people are showing toward God's sacrificial system. **As for My sacrificial gifts, they sacrifice the flesh and eat it, But the Lord has taken no delight in them. Now He will remember their iniquity, And punish them for their sins; They will return to Egypt.** Now in the first part of verse 13 we miss the point if we're not careful to go through slowly. **They sacrifice the flesh**, well that's not wrong; they were commanded to sacrifice flesh in the OT law. So what's the problem? **They take My sacrificial gifts and they sacrifice the flesh and eat it.** In other words this is the sin offering and the sin offering, when they took the animal to sacrifice it, stood for a vicarious substitute, the animal was being substituted for their sin and what have they turned it into? A barbeque. That's the sense of the original text, they look forward to taking the sacrifice because it's the best barbeque in town and they're going to have a big cookout.

**Now** he says, He's going to **punish them** for this and **They will return to Egypt.** Commentators debate whether Egypt is really Egypt here or if it stands for Assyria as Hosea 11:5 indicates and the fact that throughout Hosea Assyria is the rod of God's discipline. But they miss the point, the point is that **Egypt** is the place they were oppressed and **Egypt** is a picture of the kingdom of man throughout the Scriptures and the point is that God

delivered them out of the kingdom of man but they want so bad to be back in it that God says fine, you want to go back, go for it, and so they'll go into Exile and live out in the kingdom of man again.

And Hos 8:14 is the reason. **For Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces; And Judah has multiplied fortified cities, But I will send a fire on its cities that it may consume its palatial dwellings.** Now there are two sins mentioned, two national sins are mentioned, one in the northern kingdom of Israel and one in the southern kingdom of Judah. In the northern kingdom of Israel we have sin in the area of religion. In the southern kingdom of Judah we have the area of military power. Military power is not an object of trust. Don't ever get the impression because we are for a strong military that we are putting our trust in the military; you don't trust in the military, that is a place where citizens are obligated to uphold and defend their nation, but we don't put our trust there, we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. You have to be very careful. We are strong supporters of the military, we are patriots, but don't confuse being a patriot with being a Christian. Those are not the same thing. We are Americans and we can be for America but if America is not going to go along with the word of God here or there we can't go along with America here or there. We have to go along with the word of God. And anytime the two diverge you have to go with the word of God over America.

So Judah has their sin of trusting in the military for security and Israel has another sin we'll deal with in detail in a moment. Now act as if the chapter break isn't there, chapters weren't added till about a thousand years ago so the Hebrews didn't know anything about chapter divisions and Hos 9:1 is just a continuation of the same thought. **"Do not rejoice, O Israel, with exultation like the nations! For you have played the harlot, forsaking your God. You have loved harlots' earnings on every threshing floor. <sup>2</sup>Threshing floor and wine press will not feed them, And the new wine will fail them.** Now, if you've been here for this series you have a pretty good idea of what that's talking about. This is another one of those places where the Bible is frank. God is simply more interested in communicating to people than being nice and pious sounding. And it's funny sometimes to read how the King James and older translations read because they make it so pious and you miss the whole point. But I've given you a



number of examples in Hosea so you should be able to read and get the picture.

He says, **Do not rejoice**, there's a couple of ways to give a negative command in the Hebrew, the one here is to stop doing something you're doing. So the picture here is that they've got a big fat smile on their face and Hosea says, wipe that smile off your face, it isn't funny, stop it, stop rejoicing. What are they rejoicing over? Their prosperity. God says don't rejoice in that; don't bother because the prosperity is going to go down the drain faster than you can wipe the smile off. And then he goes on to explain the reason; it's a graphic portrayal of their sin in the religious arena, the first sin of Hos 8:14.

Verse 14 pictures Israel's sin in the area of idolatry or false worship. Here's what they were doing and here's more on the doctrine of idolatry. **For you have played the harlot, forsaking your God. You have loved harlots' earnings**, and we're going to see what **harlots' earnings** are. This is the language he's using to denote spiritual adultery which is idolatry. Israel was married to YHWH but they committed spiritual adultery by their idolatry. Idolatry is always pictured as adultery; idolatry is the fourth step in our cascade down into deep, deep carnality and the cascade always starts with the beginning of verse 14, failure to remember your Maker, failure to remember the Creator and His pre-eminent act of creation. Isaiah said, remember the former things long past, why did he say that? Why are the prophets so insistent that we remember history? Because history is God's arena, history is where God works and so history is where we learn about God. And that's why we emphasize in the framework and every class we teach here the historicity of these events. History is God's tool to teach us about Himself. And so if we forget history we forget who God is, we forget what God is like. And that's always the first step toward idolatry. Idolatry doesn't just happen over night. Idolatry happens over a long, concerted effort on the part of an individual to forget the truth they know about God, truth that Paul says in Romans all men know. And eventually what happens if we stay on that path is we transport the characteristics of God over on to something else, sometimes in a diluted form but nonetheless, if you look hard enough and you think hard enough you will always find that God's attributes have been transferred over on to something else, whatever the something else is that has replaced God as absolute, that's your idol. No one ever gets rid of



the attributes of God, everybody believes in the attributes of God, it's merely a question of where they locate them.

Now we're going to develop idolatry. The fourth step down in our cascade. Here's a thing about idolatry you want to catch. Idolatry is an exchange in the area of glory. This is Paul's point in Rom 1. It's an exchange of the glory of the incorruptible God for corruptible man and beasts and four-footed creatures. In other words, it transfers God's glory over onto some aspect of creation. You say what do you mean? Let me try to explain. Paul says you've exchanged the glory of God over onto some part of creation. Now God has glory, *doxa* and by that the Bible means weight; it's the term actually for heaviness of something. And when you study the attributes of God you see that He has weight, all these attributes are infinite in scope. We say flippantly God is sovereign, God is righteous, God is omnipotent. But it's not flippant. Those are very heavy things and what they are saying is God is the boss. God has glory and that's what we mean when God has glory, we mean He is the boss. So in idolatry something else is boss, something else is supreme.

Now it's going to take time to think this through for yourself, but if you think through your past, take some past problem, some hang-up to your sanctification. In your mind's eye just think of some problem you had, I've got mine and you've got yours, and if you don't think you have a problem you really have a problem. So here's some object; that's some object in creation. It may be money, it may be sex, it may be popularity, it may be power, it may be stuff, but whatever it is it's a part of God's creation. Fine, then what's wrong with it? What's wrong with it is that in your mind, now this is strictly in your mind, you may have some desire, let's say it's power. Power is not necessarily wrong, with certain positions come power. God tells man in Genesis to have dominion over the earth, that is an exercise of power. So there's nothing fundamentally wrong with power. God gave man power. But what happens? Power is visualized here and then it develops into something all out of proportion and one day you wake up and all you can think about is how you can control everybody who works for you and it is now a distortion of power. The distortion is in your mind's eye.

That's what happens in idolatry; spiritually you're looking at an object that's fine, nothing wrong with power, but then you build it up into something it's

not, you start attaching this false glory to it, and you are highly attracted to it and you can't quite explain how powerful the attraction is to you, but it's attraction is not a part of the object itself, it's all in your head. It's not in the object, you've distorted the original object, and so a person says okay look, power and control is my idol. So all right, I have this thing out here but I've distorted it, I've allowed my soul that's on negative volition to develop all these fantasies, all these vain imaginations so when I go to look at power I can't see it as it really is; it's like there's an interference in my eyes but I don't know that and I see the object but I see all this glory, there's kind of like a halo around it. I don't mean you visually see the halo but it's the idea that in your soul there's an attraction, it's almost like there's light emanating from it, and if you had 15 objects all placed in a room from creation your attention would gravitate to it, not because it is somehow brighter but because there's this attraction in the soul to narrow in on that one object.

Now what happens? The book of Ecclesiastes tells us Solomon's search for the true glory but he kept picking up the false glory, he kept looking at one object after another and trying them out. Turn to Eccl 2. This is one of the great reports on discovering the emptiness of false glory. See, the idea is that what God does is He allows you to pursue this idol, say it's power, with all this false glory around it, and then what happens? You get powerful, one day you get the top position at some organization, and it's as though for years it was so distant and you get closer to it and you get closer to it and you get closer to it and finally you arrive. What happens when you arrive? The glory disappears. All this stuff that you had hoped would give you all that satisfaction, suddenly it isn't there.

What happened? What happened was you didn't see power correctly. You had attached this false glory to having the power and you thought it was really there and when you got there it wasn't there anymore. It eludes you because it never was there to begin with; it was all in your head

That's what Solomon says; in Eccl 2:3 he says, "I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body with wine," so he tried the alcohol route, the drug route, desensitization of the mind. Verse 4, "I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself," so he did great construction, didn't have to worry about money, he had all kinds of money, could finance any project he wanted. Then notice, "I planted vineyards for myself; <sup>5</sup>I made gardens and parks for myself and I

planted in them all kinds of fruit trees;" I built myself a botanical paradise. Pick up on the fact that it's all about I. I did this, I did that, I, I, I, the translators have done that very accurately to the Hebrew text; the whole point is the emphasis is on me, me, me, me, me and what I do, my great works. Verse 7, "I also possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem." So he was the premier cattle company, he had the finest genetic lines; he was a top agriculture man. Verse 8, "Also I collected for myself silver and gold" so he has great investments, very secure. "I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men—many concubines." And that's the entertainment menu, it's very provocative in the original text what he surrounded himself with, he tried the entertainment route. Verse 9, "Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me. <sup>10</sup>All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. <sup>11</sup>Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun." Now look at that, that's the problem. All these things, people never see this, the glory that they attribute to these objects is in their head, it's not in the object, it's not in the person, it's not in the power, it's not in their success, it's in their head. That's where the problem is.

Now we have a question. Why is it that we all have this tendency to look out, take some object out of creation and attach this glory around it? What are we looking for? We're looking for God, that's what we're looking for; you see we're made in His image. We are made in God's image and we're made for His glory, but since we're in rebellion we don't want His glory, yet we can't help but admit that we need glory. So we find all these false glories rather than the true glory. And thus, to the degree that we are not preoccupied with the glory of God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, to that degree we are going to be suckers for the desires of our own soul, because every one of us needs to worship, we need glory to look at, we're built for that, that's part of our soul and you can't deny it. You can't deny your need for glory any more than you can deny your need for water, food and air; your soul desperately needs to look at something majestic. You're built to look for something majestic, and so we have one option or we have another one. We can look to the person of Jesus Christ for our glory and the place where you do that is

through the word of God because remember what God said, **I send them ten thousand details of My word and they regard it as a strange thing.** That's not the glory they wanted; they wanted to pursue this false glory.

Now let's turn to Hos 9:1. What's the false glory? **For you have played the harlot, forsaking your God. You have loved harlots' earnings** now that refers to Baalism. What is the Baalism that goes on? Baalism is a distortion of sex, but it's not the distortion of sex in our culture today, so be careful. Don't read today into this. Just keep an open mind, you've got to see how they abused sex; they abused sex in a different way than its being abused today. They thought of sex as that which is the source of creative power. They looked upon it as very, very powerful. Think back to the pagan myths and if you've studied the myths like Ugaritic mythology or Babylonian mythology they all start with the same thing, a god and a goddess having sex and out of that the universe is born. Sex is so powerful that it created the entire universe, that's pagan mythology. Sex takes on gargantuan proportions. They took the normal practice of sex and amplified it way out of proportion.

Now I'm going to illustrate how they did this and the practices that have been discovered in archeology, but to understand why they did some of these things, just remember that this is their presupposition, sex has the power to create.

In the Bible, now, you will understand why there are all those passages in the OT about sex being unclean, and why, for example, when a couple would have sex they would be unclean for some period afterwards. Now why was that in there? And why were these little things in the Mosaic Law? If sex wasn't bad and it was there from creation, why do we have command after command after command declaring this clean, that unclean, this clean, that unclean, and all these details? One purpose—God was cutting away that false glory. See, He wanted his people to realize, sex is fine, okay, but don't put a false glory around it. So God was wiping out all the possible glory that could be attached by these regulations. That was a way of cutting it down to size, of making the whole concept of sex not idolatrous.

Have you ever asked yourself why is it that all those stories of the patriarchs are of barren women? Why are the patriarchs always hitched to these barren women? Because God's saying look, naturally sex doesn't do it, I am the One

that gives life, I am the One that creates life. And so He deliberately had these patriarchs suffer in their marriages. They had to pray for their children and they had to be put through the wringer so they would not ever make the mistake that sex in itself is creative; it isn't. So sex was cut down to the proper size by the word of God.

Now what had the Baalites done with it, and what were they, in fact, using in the northern kingdom? What they had done is they had taken places called groves, (you'll see this word in Jeremiah and we'll see it in Hosea) and the grove was picked because of one or two reasons. One reason was that the grove was a place where the fields would be unusually fertile. Farmers noticed when they planted their crops near this area they'd have tremendous produce. So the priests of Baal would go out and the farmers would even pay them to go out and sprinkle whatever they sprinkled on the field to make it fertile ground. That's one reason for the groves. The other reason was there were natural objects that looked like a phallus, so you would have a phallic symbol in the area, it could be a rock, some strange tree or something and that would indicate this is a place of fertility. So the groves were always picked for one or both of these reasons.

Now there are all sorts of amusing stories that go on from Christians who don't understand this concept. Every once in a while around Christmas time you'll have some Christian just go to pieces over the fact you have a Christmas tree in your house because they ran across a verse in Jeremiah that says you shall not worship the tree. And these poor people don't even realize that Jeremiah didn't have Christmas trees in mind, he had a phallus in mind. The stump of a tree was a natural object that looked like a phallus. Now if you tell them that they'd probably fall over dead. But that's what Jeremiah was warning against, the phallic cult, not Christmas trees. But that's how stupid Christians come to the text and they never study it they just come up with these ridiculous interpretations.

So what would they do, well you can use your imagination. They would come out to the groves and have these big orgies. The reason they're doing that is to promote fertility in their field. Now again, this is different from how sex is being used today, this was an emphasis on the fertility. So guess what season? It would be spring, and in the spring when the fields would be planted they'd have these mass orgies, and we know from some of the

Canaanites texts what happened. We know there would be a procession, and at the head of this procession was the priest carrying a statue of Baal. Baal was always pictured as a young aggressive male. And he would be then accompanied by a “V” form of priests, and these priests would go and they would do their thing and bless the soil. They would throw various things on the soil and so on, the priestly fertilizer, actually our practice of throwing rice at a wedding comes from this, we’re saying go have a lot of babies, but don’t let it ruin anything for you. So they would throw these symbols of fertility at the soil and this is what supposedly made the ground fertile. And then along with it they would have other priests dress as pregnant women.

So here’s your procession, you’d have this line of priests marching and they are on the outside and they are throwing stuff in the field, and inside they would have other priests dressed as women who were pregnant, and this would indicate fertility. Then they would go to their sessions, and these would be held in the grove or on the hilltops, the reason being you’re closer to God this way. The various acts that would be performed would be bestiality, you’d have sexual intercourse with animals and this was to increase their herds. They would also have masturbation in which they would spill the sperm on the ground to fertilize it; this was considered an act of great importance. They would have sexual intercourse in which women would lie naked on the fields worshiping Astarte and the men would walk into the fields and have sex with them. And that’s the way the orgy proceeded.

In the courtrooms of the temples they had a sacred formula in which the man would come in and this is what Hosea is talking about here in this passage when he talks about the harlots earnings. There was a price to sleep with these girls and they’d give them the money and the man would say this sacred formula: I beseech the goddess Astarte to favor thee and Baal to favor me. And the money would be kept as an offering. That’s the earnings that he’s talking about in verse 1. **You have loved harlots earnings on every threshing floor.** The threshing floor is of course where you took your grain and had the chaff separated from the wheat, this is where you want to see an abundance of produce and so you would pay the harlot this money and she’d come over to your threshing floor and this is where you would have sex because you’re telling Baal and Astarte, favor me, make a lot of agricultural produce. Sex has such creative power that it will stimulate Baal and Astarte to have sex and that will generate agriculture. Sex is way out of proportion.



Now you can understand why he's saying what he's saying in verse 2, what's verse 2 talking about? You can understand it now because you know the theme of Baalism. What was the theme of Baalism? That sex is a creative force. And so in Hos 9:2 what does God say, it's not going to create anything. **Threshing floor and wine press will not feed them, And the new wine will fail them.** So when the failing occurs the false glory attached to sex falls away. You have loaded sex with all this creative power that doesn't exist and I pull it all away because it's Mine, you ripped it off of Me and My glory I will not share with another. And so God is sending the discipline for this idolatry.

Hosea 9:3, **They will not remain in the Lord's land, But Ephraim will return to Egypt, And in Assyria they will eat unclean food** <sup>4</sup>**They will not pour out drink offerings of wine to the Lord, Their sacrifices will not please Him. Their bread will be like mourners' bread; All who eat of it will be defiled, For their bread will be for themselves alone; It will not enter the house of the Lord.** <sup>5</sup>**What will you do on the day of the appointed festival And on the day of the feast of the Lord?** Now what all this is describing is the fact they're going to be in Exile and what it's going to be like in Exile. It's going to be extreme suffering, terrible conditions. Remember last week, the Jew is going to be the Gentile toilet bowl. And they may want to worship God when they're out there, they may want to celebrate the feasts but they're not going to be able to. They're out of the land. And the land outside of Israel is unclean. This is why David and others said when I'm outside of the land of Israel I worship idols. David worship idols? What did you mean David? I mean that I'm forced to work inside a pagan system. He doesn't mean I literally worship idols. He had to work with people who worshipped idols. And so they're going to be out there in a very stressful situation. They're not going to be able to worship the Lord in the place the Lord chose, they're going to have nothing to give to Him at the time of the feasts; it's going to be a very bitter experience, much like the prior Egyptian adventure.

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