

The Providence of God (Part 4)

All Things Work Together for Good

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The previous sermon in this series focused on the meaning and the practical application of the word "providence". Now providence, we found, literally means "to see before" or "to have foresight". But as it is used in reference to God it includes *what* He provides, as well as *its timing*. Now God has shown that He provides such things as food and clothing, or interventions as in the weather, favor in another persons eyes, and protection. But He also provides events and circumstances to test, to develop, and to correct His children in preparation for His Kingdom. All these things are inextricably bound within the term providence.

I want you to go with me to Matthew 6 and we are going to just look at this very quickly. It is because of God's providence that we quickly went through a number of scriptures here.

Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

We used this section in regard to providence and it is directly tied to this, because verse 25 says:

Matthew 6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

The inference is clear. We are to trust God within what He provides. In verse 28 Jesus repeats:

Matthew 6:28 And why take you thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.

The inference is very clear. Why should we be concerned about what God provides so abundantly to His children? If He provides for the animals and for the flowers of the field, surely He is going to be providing for us, and we can trust Him. In verses 31-32, a third time, Jesus repeats this.

Matthew 6:31-32 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. [Gentiles here standing for those who have not made a covenant with God] For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things."

Now there is no alternative. We must trust God within what He provides, whether it be a thing, a circumstance, or an event. There is no alternative because we cannot serve God and mammon equally at the same time. The lesson to us is that anxiety over these things immobilizes one from doing his responsibility. What is our responsibility within the context of this chapter where His providence is the issue? "Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all

these things shall be added unto you."

The wonderful thing is that God does not merely provide, He is watching over in His foresight and provision. We used the example of how He watched over Israel so well that when they left Egypt He provided a situation in which not even a dog barked as the Israelites left. It must be understood that He provides primarily within His purpose and that cannot be emphasized enough. He provides within His purpose, what He has in mind rather than what we feel we might or should be provided with. But whatever He provides it will always be sufficient. In Psalm 37: 25 David made a very significant statement in this regard.

Psalm 37:25-26 I have been young and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful and lends; and his seed is blessed.

God will always provide. Paul put it this way in Philippians 4. He said, "My God will supply all your needs through Jesus Christ our Lord". Our responsibility is to trust.

After that section was finished (in the previous sermon) we went back to Jacob again as an example of what God provided him to confront a problem he had in his character. It was the incident where God changed his name to Israel and I said to you that Israel is poorly translated in most Bibles as "one who prevails with God." But as I mentioned to you that Bullinger wrote that Israel means that "God prevails, or God rules, or God commands, or God orders or God arranges." If you look up the word Israel *Strong's Concordance* it is # 3478 and it will tell you that Israel is from # 8280 and # 410. number 410 is El, one of the names of God meaning 'The Almighty'. number 8280 is Sarah. Do you recognize that? And since the Hebrews did not write with vowels (they left the vowels out) it is usually penned into English as Sar, which means, "to prevail or to have power (as a prince)." Now why? Because a prince commands, a prince arranges, and I mentioned to you that Sar is variously translated as captain, officer, chief, taskmaster, or prince. All are people who oversee, give orders, or arrange.

The root of Israel is Sar, but it is a verb. The root is a verb and when a verb is combined with El (the name for God) it is El who is doing the action. El is God; thus we have words like Daniel. The "el" is on the end. Dan is a verb that means "to judge". When el is put on the end it is, "God who judges." Nathaniel—el is put on the end of Nathan. Nathan means "one who gives". So, God gives. He is doing the action. Israel means "God commands, God has power, God orders, God arranges, etc," not the man Jacob. The whole point of the wrestling match was to lead up to a change of names because of something that occurred there, something Jacob had to learn. The whole purpose of that wrestling match was to teach Jacob that God rules!

Jacob's character is revealed as a vigorous, gifted man who energetically, but deceitfully, contended and struggled with man and God to get what he wanted out of life. He appears to have been a controller 'par excellence' through crafty scheming. He had to learn a major lesson; i.e., that within God's purpose it is God who orders life. It is He who commands and arranges and we are to learn to submit to His will without anxiety.

The name Israel, brethren, identifies those who submit to God's rule in their life. When we take the name Israel, the Israel of God, it means that we are proclaiming that God is ruling our life. That is why God gave Jacob that name. We are the spiritual children of Israel and Jacob had to

learn that lesson, this man who was such a controller, this man who was so intelligent and gifted and hardworking, that there was one person he could not manipulate. It was God. There was one person that he could not contend with that he could defeat in any way, shape, or form.

So brethren the lesson to you and me is that we are to purpose our goals in life without lying, without stealing, without coveting, without dishonoring our parents, without any idolatry of any kind, without breaking God's Sabbath, without any sin or any series of sin, all of which are done through the exercise of our own will to gain and control an advantage for ourselves. Think of it. Is that not why we sin? We sin to gain advantage for ourselves. We exercise our will in that direction in order to get, to protect, to achieve, and to manipulate events so that we can succeed in accomplishing our goals.

The lesson that Jacob had to learn within God's purpose is that it is by submitting to God that we overcome. The image of God cannot be created through sin. The image of God cannot be created simply by intellectually believing the gospel of the Kingdom of God, but continuing to do things in the same general way and attitude that the world does. And so Jacob had to learn to trust God and overcome his own will! And it was a struggle for him! And I think, brethren, you will agree, you might think that you are weak-willed, but that is our human nature deceiving us. We are very strong-willed in resisting God's way in some areas of our life. We wrestle with it in order to submit.

Well it was a struggle for Jacob to do this and, spiritually, he was in reality, actually struggling against God's will in his contentions with his fellow man. Because God's will for Jacob was not the same as Jacob's will for Jacob.

How frequently does this same thing happen with us? God provided Jacob with a painful and humbling wrestling match, which Jacob endured, but he did not win over God. But in one sense Jacob did win, because it was a major turning point in his life. He stopped contending with God's will. He came out of that wrestling match understanding that it is God who orders life and Jacob must, if he wanted to be in God's Kingdom, by faith submit himself wholeheartedly to God's way of doing things.

Jacob did not prevail *over* God; he prevailed *with* God because he prevailed over his own will. He prevailed over himself. It all happened within what God provided—a wrestling match. So the overall lesson here, when Jacob's life and character is combined with the wrestling match God provided, is that nobody, not even a Jacob so beloved of God, is going to be in God's Kingdom doing things his own way in order to control life. *It is God who orders life*. It is God who is the creator. It is God who knows the end toward which He is taking us far better than we could even begin to guess. If we are going to be in His image we have to learn to submit.

As we go into this sermon, we are going to carry the central issue of Jacob's wrestling experience into two more applications, because about 800 years after that wrestling match with Jacob, God inspired Hosea to apply its lessons in another situation.

Hosea 11:12-12:1-14 "Ephraim compasses me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet rules with God, and is faithful with the saints. Ephraim feeds on wind, and follows after the east wind: he daily increases lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt. The Lord hath also

a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways: according to his doings will he recompense him. He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yes, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel and there he spoke with us; Even the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial. Therefore turn thou to thy God; keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually. He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loves to oppress. And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance; in all my labors they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin. And I that am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast. I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets. Is there iniquity in Gilead? Surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields. And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep. And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved. Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

Now if you stop to meditate on this, study it seriously, you are going to find that this section clarifies Genesis 32—the wrestling match, considerably, by showing that it was a spiritual wrestling just as much or more than it was physical. It might also be helpful to know that Hosea prophesied just before Israel went into captivity and about 140 years before Judah did. Hosea and Amos appear to be contemporaries living in the same period of time, Amos just a little bit before Hosea. It's almost like Hosea picked up the baton from Amos after his prophesying stopped, but they concentrated on different things. Now it appears that Hosea then prophesied somewhere around 750 -740 BC

Hosea 11:12-12:14 (The Living Bible) "Israel surrounds me with lies and deceit. But Judah still trusts in God and is faithful to the Holy One. Israel is chasing the wind, yes shepherding a whirlwind, a dangerous game. For she has given gifts to Egypt and Assyria to get their help. In return she gets their worthless promises. But the Lord is bringing in lawsuit against Judah too. Jacob also will be justly punished for his ways. When he was born, he struggled with his brother. When he became a man, he even fought with God. Yes, he wrestled with the Angel and prevailed. He wept and pleaded for a blessing from Him. He met God there at Bethel, face to face, and God spoke to him. The Lord, the God of hosts, Jehovah is His name. Oh come back to God. Live by the principles of love and justice and always be expecting much from Him your God. But no, My people are like crafty merchants, selling from dishonest scales. They love judge to cheat. Ephraim boasts, "I am rich. I have gotten it all by myself." But riches can't make up for sin. I am the same Lord, the same God who delivered you from slavery in Egypt and I am the one who will consign you to living in tents again as you do each year at the Tabernacles Feast. I sent My prophets to warn you with many a vision and many a parable and dream. But the sins of Gilgal flourished just the same. Lo' on row of altars, like furrows in a field, are used for sacrifices to you idols. And Gilead too is full of fools who worship idols. Jacob fled to Syria and earned a wife by tending sheep. Then ~~the~~ led

his people out of Egypt by a prophet who guided and protected them. But Ephraim has bitterly provoked the LORD and the LORD will sentence him to death as payment for his sins."

We are going to go back through this now, verse by verse in a fair amount of detail, and while we are doing this I want you to think of how Jacob's (the man) experiences paralleled the nation's experiences, because that is what God is drawing upon here—Jacob and his descendants, because his descendants were acting just like Jacob. The apple does not fall very far from the tree. Like father, like son. So we have to ask the question. Would Israel do as Jacob did? We will see.

Hosea 11:12 Ephraim compasses me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit, but Judah yet rules with God, and is faithful with the saints.

God is saying Israel the nation surrounds me with lies and deceit. Think about Jacob the man. He was not above being a crafty, scheming liar to get what he wanted. He took advantage of Esau when Esau was at a low point in his life and desperately hungry from coming in from the field, famished. So Jacob took advantage of him in his weakness and succeeded in getting the birthright from him. Then later on Jacob was not above lying in collusion with his own mother in order to get the blessing away from Esau by deceiving his own father. Is it possible Israel was acting in much the same way?

Hosea 12:1 Ephraim feeds on the wind and follows after the east wind; he daily increases lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians and oil is carried into Egypt.

There is an analogy about Israel being a type of the Worldwide Church of God and Judah being a type of the splits. With everything we are able to see, WCG has gone off the deep end, just like Israel did, and Judah, still faithful, but full of problems. And I think in a sermon about a month or so ago, one of the elders showed that Ephraim can also be used in two ways. It is the name (like a code name) that God sometimes uses for the ten northern tribes, but at other times God actually uses Ephraim to indicate the church. These types will apply in several different kinds of ways.

So right off the bat we see a clear warning that what Israel the nation was doing was as vain as trying to shepherd and control the wind. Can anybody do that? In fact God says it is downright dangerous, because the wind that God uses to illustrate is a very hot, dry, sirocco wind blowing off the desert with very high velocity. Some of you in southern California are familiar with the Santa Anna's. This was somewhat similar to the Santa Anna's, the wind blowing off the desert sometimes with hurricane force and sometimes tripping off tornadoes. Now can you imagine a man or a nation trying to control the wind? Well that is how serious the situation had developed within Israel. What they were attempting to do was so full of sin, it was compared with trying to control the wind. Nobody can do that.

Hosea 12:2 The LORD has also a controversy with Judah, [a type of the splits] and will punish Jacob according to his ways, according to his doings will he recompense him.

Jacob was dead, but Jacob is used in reference to Israel, the northern ten tribes. They carried

the name. Judah carried the name of Judah, the ancestor of David. The northern ten tribes carried the name of Israel, Jacob the father. So we see in this verse that both of them are being addressed, both Judah and Israel—Judah using the name Judah and Israel using the name Jacob. What he is showing here is that God has a controversy with the splits. And what it is indicating is a lawsuit, indicating that God's contentions against the splits, Judah, was not as serious as His contention or controversy with Israel. Now with Israel, with Jacob, the northern ten tribes, controversy and punishment was on His mind.

Though the specifics of what God had against Israel are not the same, Jacob (Israel) was playing a dangerous game for the sons of God—those who had made a covenant with Him. They should not have been playing such a game. They should have known better than to live life and conduct business as they were doing. The nation was living much as Jacob had, seeking to control his destiny through deceitful manipulation and, to them, prudent exercise of diplomatic, economic, and military power. Remember, we are dealing with the nation on the one hand and individual on the other hand. The individual, Jacob, is a type of the entire nation and so that is why Assyria and Egypt are mentioned. The actions of a nation. The exercise of diplomatic, economic, and military power was not being done, as God would have them doing.

Again, tie this in with the Genesis 32 wrestling God had with the man Jacob. God had a dual purpose in mind in what He provided Jacob there. He was going to balance the books somewhat for the way Jacob had conducted his life and at the same time correct a flaw in Jacob's character.

Hosea 12:3 He took his brother by the heel in the womb and by his strength he had power with God.

This verse has to be reconstructed somewhat because it subtly gives the impression that Jacob overcame God and won his wrestling match with Him. But again, if you look up that word in Strong's you will find that this word "prevail" has several meanings. What Jacob did, he struggled with the Angel or God and he endured. That is one of the meanings of that word. Now, what Jacob did is being held before the Israelites, in this case, to Jacob's credit. Remember what I said earlier. That was a significant turning point in Jacob's life. God is reflecting back on that. He is, in this case, being held up as an example that the nation should follow, because whether they realized it or not they were following the same pattern Jacob had. They were struggling with God's will for them through the means of their consistent pattern of sin.

Jacob came out of his encounter with God a much better man. But it still hung in the balance as to whether Israel would come out of this better for it. Jacob came out of his wrestling match and appears to win, but how?

Hosea 12:4 Yea he had power over the Angel and prevailed. He wept and made supplication unto him. He found him in Bethel and there he spoke to us.

Weeping and supplicating. Begging and pleading are not the actions of a man who is victorious. Jacob clearly lost the wrestling match with God and was overcome. What you are looking at here are the actions of a repentant man. What Jacob did in the wrestling match was repent! He got the point of why God was contending with him, because he was not submitting! So what he

was doing here was weeping and pleading for forgiveness. It was right here that Jacob had his victory because God forgave him!

So Israel, the nation, was being shown Jacob's example of how he ended up seemingly winning with God. Jacob prevailed, but he did not prevail *over* God. He prevailed *with* God because Jacob prevailed over himself, over his own will by humbling himself and repenting. He won by repenting, by submitting. So God is telling them "Why don't you do as Jacob did and repent. You're playing a dangerous game, just as Jacob was doing." Jacob learned a bitter and humbling lesson and God marked it by injuring Jacob's hip and changing his name to Israel. Jacob carried with him, for the rest of his life, the mark of his loss and the mark of his win. He lost the wrestling match and, so that he would always be humble, God put his hip out of joint and he never walked normally after that. Every step he took in his life after that was a reminder of what happened when God wrestled with him. Then He changed his name to remind him constantly that God rules, not Jacob! It is God who orders life for His children. God commands. God orders the life of His elect.

Back to 12: 4, because I want us to notice the change of pronouns here.

Hosea 12:4 Yea he had power over the angel and he wept and made supplication unto Him [meaning the angel]. He [Jacob] found Him in Bethel and there he spoke with US!

Were Jacob's descendants there in Bethel where Jacob had God revealed to him? They were not there. They were still in Jacob's loins. But I want you to notice this because what we are looking at here is a very important principle of biblical interpretation that enables the Bible to be applicable to all of Jacob's children for all time. What God is saying through Hosea is that what God said to Jacob also applies to the children of Jacob.

Genesis 28:13 And behold the LORD stood above it and said I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land whereon you lie to you will I give it and to your seed.

That is so plain. God is speaking to us there, not merely the children of Israel in Hosea's day because we are the children of Jacob, Israel, spiritually. He is speaking to you and me there.

Genesis 28:14-15 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, to the east, to the north and to the south: and in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in places whither thou go, and will bring thee again unto this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

That applied to Israel and it applies to us today. That is why Hosea changed the pronouns. God is faithful in how He deals with those He makes the covenant with. That is the only way the Bible can consistently apply to the people down through the ages. Jacob was the elect of God. The nation Israel—Jacob's physical descendants—were God's elect under the terms under the Old Covenant and we are the elect spiritual descendants of Jacob.

Hosea 12:5 Even the Lord God of hosts, the Lord is his memorial [Jacob's memorial].

You might remember that at the end of that wrestling match that Jacob asked to know the

Angel's name. Hosea is pointing out to you and me that God's name is God's memorial. A memorial is erected to serve as an honor to someone or to some event of significance so that the nation will never forget what they, the human being or the event, have meant to those who follow after.

So we have a Lincoln Memorial, a Jefferson Memorial, and we have Washington's Monument. There is a Vietnam Memorial. We have a memorial to the Marines who raised the flag on Iwo Jima. People have streets named for them. There are Martin Luther King streets, boulevards, and avenues in virtually every city in the United States. They memorialize Martin Luther King. But with God, His name is His memorial. It is not the phonics. It is not what the word used to identify Him sounds like, but what it means that counts. HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY, the Lord God of armies and no puny Israelite is going to win against Him. Jacob had to learn that lesson. He had to learn that we submit to the Lord God Almighty.

Now would Israel submit? In verse 6, after saying "Even the Lord God of hosts, the Lord is his memorial" and drawing attention to the power that is inherent in His name we find:

Hosea 12:6 Therefore turn you to your God [because that is what Jacob did, he turned to God], keep mercy and judgment, and wait on your God continually.

Here are two huge areas that they needed to repent. The King James Version is not well translated. It would be better if it were translated faithfulness and justice rather than mercy and judgment. Faithfulness to the covenant and justice (meaning being fair and righteous in their dealings with others) or it can even be translated loving kindness and justice. And of course love is the keeping of the commandments and being fair in dealings. We have already touched, at least briefly, on some of the things they were doing. But their aggressive and contentious spirit is again brought to the fore when they are told to wait on God continually. Hosea is telling them to let God provide the blessings rather than through crafty scheming, grabbing them from others for themselves. That is the way Jacob did and that is the way Israel was doing. And maybe it would be good to think about this in a modern connotation too.

The United States has not gone to military war in order to bring other nations into subjection to us. But we have made economic war using the power of the riches God has given to us to subdue other nations economically so that they are tied to us and subservient to us as a result. We are seeing here that God does not appreciate that at all. We are using the riches He has blessed us with in a wrong, wrong way. Verse 7 really gives us insight into this.

Hosea 12:7 He [meaning Jacob, not the man in this case but the nation] is a merchant [Your Bible may say Canaanite. That is what the word Canaanite means, a merchant.]

The balances of deceit are in his hand. He loves to oppress.

Like Jacob, the Israelites were crafty merchants who gained through fraud and lying. Israel's dealings with other nations were contaminated by deceit. They were, in short, breaking the commandments. They were skilled in finding loopholes in contractual obligations. They were skilled in 'pushing the envelope' as we might say, managing to just barely remain legal. They were skilled at throwing their economic weight around to intimidate. They were skilled at redefining broadly accepted meanings of words to deceitfully get their own way.

Hosea 12:8 And Ephraim said, "Yet I am become rich. I have found me out substance. In all my labors they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin."

As a result of their shady business practices they had become rich. They judged that their wealth was evidence of God's blessing and so they held themselves guiltless and undeserving of any punishment. They thought of themselves as being self-sufficient without need of God. Are we seeing a repetition, brethren? As I said earlier, the apple does not fall very far from the tree.

Hosea 12:9-11 And I that am the Lord your God from the land of Egypt will yet make you dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast. I have also spoken by the prophets and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets. Is there iniquity in Gilead? Surely they are vanity. They sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal. Yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields.

Do you know what God is doing here? He is reminding Israel that He has been their God since the coming out of Egypt, that He knows their whole history and that they need to be reminded of what Deuteronomy 8:10-20 says. Do you know what that says there? You know, one of the wonderful things about David was that God said he was a man after His own heart. You can read many of the things that David said, and though he was king of Israel, exalted to the heights, David never forgot where he came from. He knew he had very humble beginnings and that he owed where he had come to the blessing of God and was humbly appreciative of it.

Deuteronomy 8:10-20 When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shall bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.

Think of this in terms of what Paul said in Corinthians when he said, "What it is that you have that you are not given?" Ephraim said, "I'm sinless. My riches are proof that God is blessing me. You're not going to find any iniquity in me." What a difference.

Genesis 8:11-20 Beware that thou forget not the Lord your God in not keeping his commandments, [boy had they forgotten—deceitful, shady business practices] and his judgments and his statutes which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten, and art full, and hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then your heart be lifted up [was Israel's heart lifted up?], and thou forget the Lord thy God [God says "wait a minute there Israel. I have known you from the time before you came out of Egypt."] which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy later end. And thou say in your heart, my power and the might of mine hand has gotten me this wealth. [That is written all the way through Hosea 12.] But thou shall remember the Lord thy God for it is he that gives thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord your God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

As the nations which the LORD destroys before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God.

He warns them that since they are forgetting Him when they are prosperous, He is going to make them dwell in tents again. It means to suffer privation, to break the pride of their power, scattering them all over the earth. He reminds them that He has sent prophet after prophet to warn them to get back on track, but they have persisted in their numerous idolatries.

Hosea 12:12-14 And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep. And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved. Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly, therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

So here God again draws upon Jacob's experience by referring to the privations he suffered and then references again made to the privations of bondage in Egypt. The point was to remind them that these experiences should not be forgotten, that they should serve as reminders not to let their vanity run wild and not to forget their humble roots and to be humbled.

I told you at the beginning that Hosea prophesied to Israel, the ten northern tribes, not to long before they fell. But instead of repenting, Israel grew worse and worse and therefore God was going to repay them for their sins against Him and they would once again be humbled by very painful privations.

Now the point should be getting made. God weaves the story of the man Jacob into His later controversy with the nation that came from Jacob. In defense of Jacob, I want to say that he was nowhere near as bad as his descendents. Rather with Jacob, it was a matter that he was nowhere near as good as God wanted him to be. It was a matter of 'to whom much is given, much is required'. Jacob had simply not been living up to as much as he had been given. But he makes a wonderful example for them in their time and Israel in our time, because I think the case can be made very clearly that Israel today is walking the same path as ancient Israel did, maybe far worse. Israel then went into captivity. Israel today gives every indication that it is not going to repent anymore than ancient Israel did. They failed to do what Jacob did. So Israel today gives every indication that they are going to go into captivity.

The next step that I want to take is to make a direct application to the church today, because it applies in spades to what is happening within the greater church of God.