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**C0935 – September 16, 2009 – Hosea 4:1-3 – YHWH Has A Case
Against Israel**

Alright, tonight we move into the second half of Hosea. Hosea can be divided into two basic parts. Chapters 1-3 and chapters 4-14. In chapters 1-3 the basic thought is that *God establishes a historic parallel between His relationship with Israel and Hosea's relationship with his wife*. These two mirrored one another and in these chapters we get a view of the broad strokes of God's program for the nation Israel. Chapters 1-3 span from Israel past to Israel present, to Israel's future making it the Roman 9, 10 and 11 of the OT. Tonight in chapters 4-10 the focus narrows in on Israel's past that led up to the destruction of 721BC. Now we're not going to leave Hosea's marriage to prostitute Gomer, but you'll see that fades into the background.

To get into it let's review the prophets briefly. The prophets are known as the *nabiim*. The Hebrews divided their OT into three parts; Torah, *Nabiim* and Kethubim which is where the Hebrews got the name of their OT, Tanakh. Ta for *Torah*, Na for *Nabiim* and Kh for *Kethubim*. We're studying the books in that second section, *Nabiim* or Prophets. There are fifteen of these in the OT, three major and twelve minor for a total of fifteen books. Hosea is one of the twelve minor books which just means they hold less content than in the major prophets. Hosea ministered to the northern kingdom along with Jonah and Amos. Those are the three *nabiim* to the north. The north fizzled out a lot faster than the south so we don't have any *nabiim* after Hosea. Hosea is the last writing prophet to minister to the nation. There may have been other *nabiim*, there were others, but they didn't do their job of confronting the nation with their sin, they just kept the quote '*status quo*,' they kept their mouth shut which was a personal failure in their spiritual life.

As we said, the function of these prophets was to confront the nation with their sin. And the question is how does God confront the nation? How does He convict the nation of their sin so they'll confess? And if you keep asking that question as we work chapter by chapter it will gradually sink in how the Holy Spirit confronts you when you're out of it. So these are lessons on how God works, how He confronts us to convict us of our sin. If that word convict is too religious for you just substitute the word "convince". "Convince" is just another word for "convict," they mean the same thing, and the *nabiim* are written for that purpose, to convince the nation of sin and show us how God convinces us.

Chapter 4 to the end of the book has been divided by scholars in a number of different ways so I'm not being dogmatic with this division. But I divide chapters 4-10 and chapters 11-14. In chapter 4 God comes to the nation in a lawsuit. Hosea is God's lead attorney in the prosecution of the nation. In chapters 5-10 Hosea makes various arguments in the lawsuit. Hosea made these arguments over a period of about 50 years. We don't have every argument he made to the nation, we only have a subset of the arguments, which is important to remember in our doctrine of revelation that God didn't want everything He said captured in writing. But what was captured is sufficient. So chapter 4 reveals God's lawsuit against the nation. Chapters 5-10 Hosea, as lead attorney, argues the case. And in chapters 11-14 we have one of the greatest revelations of God's unceasing love for the nation Israel and His passionate appeal for the nation to respond to His advances.

Now tonight we'll get into at least the beginning of chapter 4. God has a lawsuit against the nation Israel.

Verse 1, **Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel, For the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land**, the word case there is *rib*, pronounced *reev*, Hebrew doesn't have a b sound so it's *reev*. Your English version may translate it charge, contend or case, but when this word is used its drawing our attention to the fact that God has had it with the nation and He's about to send them into captivity. So I point it out because it's a technical term. This is not a random term, this is a term used to refer to the covenant structure and it's being used to draw our attention to the contract. What contract? The Mosaic Contract. So the case is harking back to the law so let's review by turning to Deut 1. Deuteronomy comes from two words

deuteros and *nomos*, *deuteros* meaning second and *nomos* meaning “law” so Deuteronomy is the second law. Moses had the first law given to him on Sinai and the nation broke the law so he smashed the tablets at the foot of the mountain and he was given it a second time, that’s Deuteronomy. We want to look at the structure to the Book of Deuteronomy as a treaty document.

There were two kinds of treaties in the ancient world. On one hand you have what was called the Royal Grant. The Royal Grant treaty looks like this. On one side you have the Great King and the Great King says I’m going to do this for you. I’m going to give you this, I’m going to give you that. It’s all one sided. I do for you, you don’t do for me. And that’s what we call a covenant of grace. Now that’s our Abrahamic Covenant. It’s structured after ancient treaties called Royal Grants, or it’s the original and the others we find are structured after the biblical one. But in any case the Royal Grant is a one way treaty; the Great King will do something for the lesser king. In Israel’s case the Great King will give the nation Israel a land, seed and worldwide blessing.

The second kind of treaty was the Suzerainty-Vassal Treaty. The Suzerainty-Vassal was again where you have a Great King and a lesser king. The Great King was the Suzerain, the lesser king was the Vassal and in this one both sides had obligations. So one side you a Great King, say Babylon, and he would come into a treaty with a lesser king, say Phoenicia, and both have obligations to the other. The Great King may say, I have a superior military and I will provide military protection for you if you will provide grain and spices and gold and silver in certain amounts on an annual quota and as long as you meet the quota I give you the protection. So this is a covenant of works. You keep up your end of the bargain or else. Now when two kings came into that kind of a treaty it was called Suzerainty-Vassal.

Now archaeology has discovered both kinds of treaties operational in the ancient world and the thing of great importance is their discovery and you want to understand the significance of this. In the last 200 years the unity of the Book of Deuteronomy has been under attack. In the 1800’s you had the rise of the higher critics and the higher critics began to take the Bible apart and undermine its authenticity. And the way they did this was to analyze the literary style and say, now this section is a different style than that section so this section was written by author A and that section was written by author

B. And what they were doing was ripping the Bible to shreds. So when Christ comes along and He says the Torah was written by Moses the higher critics said Christ was wrong. And that's a strong claim indeed. So what they said was Torah was written by four different authors, they named them after four initials, J, E, D and P and they called this the Documentary Hypothesis and still today if you take a Bible as literature course at the local university they'll trot this out to undermine the student's faith in the Scriptures, which is why we have to teach this in the Church before they get to the campus because if you don't they get to the campus and their faith gets wiped out. So what the higher critics were saying, (just so you get the feel for it) was something like Deut 1-4 was written by say author J, because we detect certain literary nuances and chapters 5-10 were written by author D and so forth. And what they were really saying in the end was, there's no unity to the Book of Deuteronomy, it's just pieces written by different authors all thrown together, it's ancient Hebrew mythology. And that's an attack on the Scriptures and on God Himself. Now this went on and hundreds and thousands of liberal preachers started lining the pulpits in the late 1800's and they were trained by these higher critics so they'd teach it to their congregations and what happened to the average Christian? He lost his faith. How can you have faith if the Bible isn't really what it claims to be? How can you trust a forged document? So this is not all theory, this is very practical, this wiped out the strong Christian faith in this country, it destroyed the godly heritage of many American families and now they have a new heritage, secular humanism. Now that's what higher criticism did to our country. But while this erosion was going on the archaeologists were at work and they started finding ancient near eastern treaties and they started analyzing them. They found Royal Grant Treaties; they found Suzerainty-Vassal Treaties. And what they discovered was they had a particular structure. And when they analyzed suzerainty-vassal treaties they noticed they all have six parts. And students of the Book of Deuteronomy who had been trying to answer the higher critics that were ripping it to shreds said, hey look, the exact parts of a suzerainty-vassal treaty I find between ancient nations are the exact same parts I find in the Book of Deuteronomy. And so this became strong evidence for the unity of the Book of Deuteronomy and refuted the idea that it was just Hebrew mythology. It argued that Deuteronomy was highly technical literature and myth is not highly technical literature so this argued against it. So now we want to look at these six parts and then we'll

trace it through Deuteronomy and finally turn to Hos 4 so we see what Hosea's up to with the lawsuit.

The first part of the treaty was it always had a **Preamble**, some opening words that identified the Great King. And here they are "These are the words of..." and you fill in the blank. Those words or some equivalent variant introduce the Great King. That's the Preamble.

Second, item two is the **Historical Prologue**, that is, in the beginning words there's some history cited, this thing isn't just happening out of the clear blue, something has happened that leads the two kings to enter into a treaty. Normally what happened was the Great King led a military campaign against the lesser king's enemies. And after that the Great King would start citing the history, I sent my infantry soldiers in to fight off your enemies, we used our weapons, some of my men died to protect you from your enemies, now you should obey me. And that's the historical prologue. It's an argument the Great King is making for the lesser king to obey. And so instead of saying you *are* going to obey me, the great king would say, you *should* obey me and here's why.

Item three, the treaties made certain **Stipulations**, these are the bulk of the treaty, they're what the Great King required. It spelled out in detail exactly what was expected. It could be a lot of things, it could be a few things but in any case these are the terms of the treaty.

The fourth thing in a Suzerainty-Vassal Treaty is the **Cursing and Blessings Formula**. This occurs in two key OT chapters that I've mentioned *ad nauseum*, Lev 26 and Deut 28, and these sketch for you basically how you read large portions of the Old and New Testament. That's one of the benefits of going through these six parts is I'm trying to help you read the Bible on your own. Our problem is we're a TV generation and TV is a passive activity. Think about when you have the urge to watch TV the most. When you're tired. That's because it doesn't take much activity to watch flashing lights, it's a passive activity. So today since we're mostly TV minds we have this tremendous difficulty reading the Bible because there are no flashing lights. And knowing this structure now you can read though OT text and think to yourself, do I see this structure working in the text? It will help you observe more closely and that's when the Holy Spirit starts working to illuminate and give you insight into the text.

Then next thing that would happen, item five the **Invocation of Witnesses** and this answers to who's going to monitor whether the terms are kept or not. You've got to have witnesses and so witnesses are called in and they're going to be the custodians of the treaty. Someone has to be a third party so it has legitimacy and we'll see who they are shortly in Hosea.

Item six, in the suzerainty-vassal treaty, **two copies** of the treaty were made, one for each king's temple where it would be safeguarded and periodically reviewed. So you had two copies engraved in stone. The great king would take his and deposit it in his temple and the lesser king would take his and deposit it in his temple. So both nations had a copy of the treaty. Why do both kings need a treaty? So they can periodically review what's required of them. So both sides had a copy of the contract. They'd keep it down at the local temple.

So now let's come to Deut 1 and see how this fits. The first item, Preamble. How does the Preamble begin? "These are the words of..." How does v 1 begin? "These are the words of..." and then it goes on to identify the speaker as Moses, but Moses was the one who received divine revelation from YHWH. So YHWH is the Suzerain who gives the covenant to the nation through Moses. So **Deut 1:1-5** is the Preamble.

Then in **Deut 1:6-4:49** we start reading about history. That's the second item, the Historical Prologue. And in the historical prologue the Suzerain sketches what He did for the nation. He starts at Mt Sinai or Horeb and talks about how He gave them the Law, He reviews the Wilderness Wanderings and how He protected them despite their rebellion and finally how He led them in the Conquest and Settlement going before them to remove their enemies. It's all historical analysis, look what I did for you, obviously building the argument that now you should obey Me. That's 1:6-4:49.

Third item, the Stipulations, that's everything from chapters **5-26**. That's the bulk of it and that's what the Suzerain demanded. These are the laws they should obey. God gave 613 laws that detail how they should relate to Him and then how they should relate to one another. The Ten Commandments were the fundamental laws and all the rest simply fell out of those.

Fourth item, we come to the Blessings and Cursings Formula, that's **Deut 27-30**. If they obeyed the stipulations the Suzerain would bless them, if they disobeyed the stipulations the Suzerain would curse them. He'd bring agricultural distress, famine, political intrigue, military defeat. This was all discipline to try to get them to return to Him. And God being a God of grace outlined in advance exactly how He would discipline them so when He did, it wasn't coming out of the clear blue. They could look at the circumstances surrounding them and say aha, I know exactly why God is spanking us. They knew exactly where they stood with YHWH.

The fifth item you can see in two ways, the Invocation of Witnesses. Who are the witnesses? You can see them in **31:28** and **32:1**, the heavens and the earth are summoned to serve as witnesses. Who are the heavens and the earth? They're the angelic powers that dwell in those spheres. Why angels? Think about it, if God is entering a treaty with the nation Israel that will go on for generation after generation then who can serve as witnesses across generation gaps? Angels, they have a continuity of existence so they can observe generation after generation, they can be the witnesses. The second witness is actually the Song of Moses, chapter 32. **Chapter 32** is the national anthem of Israel and the thing about their anthem that makes it different than ours is it foretells their future. Here it is, all sketched in advance. Now I didn't see the Star Spangled Banner do that. Francis Scott Key wrote a good anthem but he couldn't tell the future. So their going to sing this song, sing this song, year after year after year and that becomes a witness. Their own mouth witnesses against them.

The sixth item was the two copies, one copy for the Great King, one copy for the lesser king. The kings would take these and each put it in their respective temple. In Israel's case you have an interesting situation because where's God's temple? It's the same as Israel's temple; they both shared the temple or tabernacle, so the two copies were deposited in the same tabernacle. Isn't it interesting when Moses comes down Mt Sinai how many tablets is he holding in his hands? Two. The older idea was that Moses had commandments 1-5 on one tablet and 6-10 on the second tablet. But modern scholars seeing this structure argue that he had two tablets, each with all Ten Commandments. So he's carrying down two copies of the Ten Commandments! One was placed inside the Ark, that was God's copy, the other was placed beside the Ark, that was for the high priest to access. Of course later they made copies and so forth.

Now what do you see in v 10? What were they supposed to do with their copy? “At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing.” Radical idea, actually read the law we’re supposed to be keeping. Just imagine what would happen in America if we had a public reading of the US Constitution and everyone had to be in attendance. It might revolutionize the country.

But our point is that the suzerainty-vassal structure outlines the whole book of Deuteronomy and scholars found this and this is the background of Hosea 4. So now come to Hos 4 and we want to start looking at vv 1-3 and how this structure comes out. **Listen to the word of the Lord**, what’s that? That’s the Preamble, Hosea didn’t just say, well, I think I’ll start this way. Those words are a carbon copy of Deuteronomy and they identify the Suzerain as the Lord. **O sons of Israel**, what’s that? That’s the Invocation of Witnesses. These are the people who were to gather for a reading of their national Constitution every seven years, they were to sing the Song of Moses which goes through their whole history and future. So they’re witnesses that yes, indeed what the Song said about our future, we did it. **For the Lord has a case, a rib against the inhabitants of the Land**. That’s the explicit text that we have a lawsuit here. Then what does he do in 4:1b? He starts citing violations of the Stipulations. **Because there is no faithfulness or kindness Or knowledge of God in the land. There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed**. And verse 3 cites the Cursings, **Therefore the land mourns, And everyone who lives in it languishes Along with the beasts of the field** and so forth, all cursings for violating the Stipulations.

Alright, now let’s go into the details. That sketches what Hosea is doing in the overall. He’s going back to the suzerainty-vassal treaty of Deuteronomy and on that basis he’s bringing a case against the nation Israel. Something has gone seriously wrong so he says **For the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land**. Now why does he refer to them as the **inhabitants of the land**? Because it’s His land. It’s not Israel’s land. Really it’s God’s land and Israel is His tenant in the land. But ultimately it’s His land and they’ve been bad tenants. So he says this just to remind them, hey guys, it’s My land. I let you live in it. I gave you blessing in it. I gave you agriculture, I gave you

nutrients, I gave you produce, I gave you rains, I gave you blessing. And what have you done to Me? How have you thanked Me? It's My land. And in the Hebrew there's an article in front of the word **land** which means it emphasizes not just land, but "the land," the land of the covenant, that's the issue. You are inhabiting My land.

And then comes the indictment in the case. And watch, because verse 2, everyone thinks that's the sin. Verse 2 is sin, but the core of the problem isn't verse 2 sin. The core of the problem is verse 1 sin. And the verse 1 sin is very powerfully presented in the original text. Literally three times it says, it doesn't exist...it doesn't exist...it doesn't exist. And so the first thing He says that simply doesn't exist is **faithfulness**. **Faithfulness** is the word, *emet*, it's the word for truth. There's no truth. Truth is something stable, truth is something you can rely on because truth doesn't change, and therefore what He saying is there is no stability in your lives, you're all over the board, it's chaos down there. Second, there's no **kindness** and that's the word *chesed* we've seen in previous weeks, covenant love, loyalty to a standard and there's no loyalty to Me. Now what was the nation supposed to do? What was the aim? To learn loyalty to God. Loyalty to God is what the nation was supposed to develop over its historical career. They haven't done it, there's no loyalty. And third, there's no **knowledge of God**, a word we see a lot in Hosea, it's the word *yada* and it doesn't mean intellectual knowledge, it means intimate knowledge, it means closeness with God that's been developed over time because you took intellectual knowledge and you acted upon it. There's none of that in the nation. These people didn't *yada* Him, they didn't get to know Him more and more. They kicked God out on the streets.

So what's God pointing out right at the start of the case? No stability in the nation, no loyal love, no intimacy with God. In other words, it's all vertical stuff missing. It isn't social problems in the community, its theological problems in the community. These people have first and foremost a theological problem. After that we get into the social problems. Always think this way. Train yourself to think this way. You can talk all day about the social problems, so and so can't straighten his behavior out, but ultimately the social problems stem from theological problems. So therefore if you're going to solve a behavior problem you have to get into theological discussion. See, everyone recognizes the social problem, so and so is misbehaving and they need to adjust to societal norms so we send them to the local psychiatrist, the local AA, pop a pill. It's

always a gimmick and the solution is to straighten out your theology. Something is screwed up deep in the heart of people that no gimmick can repair. Of course, we're religiously neutral so it couldn't be a theological issue. And right there you've already admitted it is. There is no neutrality. If you say God's not related to the problem then you've said in effect God doesn't exist and that my friend is a theological statement. And until you solve the theological tension in your soul you're never going to fix in any permanent way the social problem.

So verse 1, sin sketches the deep carnality in their soul in the vertical relationship. They don't have a clear conception of who God is. They've distorted His nature and until that is clarified you can't confess their sin. Why not? Because you're not sure you really sinned. So the first step toward restoration is discipline to shock you back to a right conception of God. Then you know the standard, you broke the standard and you can be convinced of your sin, confess it and be restored. So there are theological problems in verse 1.

Then after the theological sin of verse 1 we come to the social sin of verse 2. ***There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed.*** Now you notice in the NASB it begins with ***There is*** in italics, *There is* is a verb, they're adding a verb to clarify. It doesn't clarify. The main verb is **employ violence** which is to be translated "break out" or "break all bounds," and the main verb controls this list of infinitive absolutes. So it says they break all bounds to swear, to lie, to murder, to commit adultery and blood mixes with blood. So verse 2, sins are all indictments of the social sins that broke out because of verse 1 - theological sins. That's the point.

Now hold your place here and turn to the Ten Commandments in Deut 5 and you'll see where Hosea was getting this list from. We normally turn to Exod 20 but since Deuteronomy is the second law I want you to see the Ten Commandments are also listed in Deuteronomy. The first one Hosea lists is **swearing** which means they were attaching God's name to their purpose to give it authority. God led me to do this and God led me to do that, God led me to start my organization and all the hoopla that still goes on in Christian circles. Parallel, Deut 5:11, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain," which is to say you don't raise up the name of God over your

organization when it's really *your* organization. That's an empty use of His name. And they were using his name that way. That's the first one.

The second one Hosea lists is **deception**. Deception is a distortion of the facts. It's lying. And that's Deut 5:20, "You shall not bear false witness." The third one on Hosea's list is **murder**. And that corresponds to Deut 5:17, "You shall not murder." And by the way murder is different than killing. Some Christians are against capital punishment because some versions of the Bible translate this command, "You shall not kill." But killing is authorized in chapter 17, 18, 19, 22 and 24 by way of capital punishment. So there's a difference and Hosea says this stipulation is being violated. The fourth one is **stealing** and what do you see in Deut 5:19? "You shall not steal." The fifth one Hosea lists is **adultery**. And Deut 5:18 corresponds, "You shall not commit adultery." So all this sin that was breaking out in the social sphere Hosea got directly from the Ten Commandments.

Now we've looked at the five commands Hosea says were breaking out. He didn't list all ten commandments, only half of the commandments, 50%. So what's the other 50% and why didn't he list those? Let's look at them. Deut 5:6, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." That's a recitation of history. That's what great thing the Lord God had done for them. So it's the Historical Prologue. And then after citing what He did for them He says this is what you shall do for me. Verse 7, "You shall have no other gods before Me." Hosea didn't cite that one did he? But had they committed it? They were stealing. What's stealing? It's saying I want that and I'm going to have it without working for it. Is that idolatry? I thought we were supposed to get things God's way, not our way. So when I steal haven't I set myself up as an idol? Aren't I saying the only way I can get this is by my works and my plan, not by God's works and God's plan? But of course I don't want to do it God's way - that requires faith, which requires trusting Him. And I don't trust Him, I trust me. So I've got to do it all myself. So really I've already transgressed commandment one even though it's not listed by Hosea. See, there's a link between all ten of these and if you start caving in on 1, 2 and 3 then 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 quickly follow. It's just a matter of time before the 50% not listed are added to the 50% that are. So to wrap up this issue, whenever we abandon our theological orientation to God, then there's natural fallout in the social sphere. It's always that order, if you're seeing society collapse into chaos it's because

mass numbers of people are avoiding the theological issues. And you can have all the self-help classes you want, all the organizations, all the humanitarianism but it will never fix society. Why? Because at the root of it all society got it wrong on a theological issue. The social is just the fruit. It's sin yes, but it's not primary. Primary is society abandoned God and that's what Hosea is saying, in v 1 you abandoned God and so in v 2 what breaks out but all the social chaos. Just as night follows day. And he concludes the verse **so that bloodshed follows bloodshed** and that's just an idiom for social decay and chaos. Society is collapsing and its crime after crime after crime.

Now verse 3 the Cursings. **Therefore the land mourns, And everyone who lives in it languishes Along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky, And also the fish of the sea disappear.** Now that might strike you as funny if you haven't been attending Bible classes here for long. Why does it seem to be teaching that God curses nature to discipline man? And when nature is cursed nature also suffers. So we have tremendous suffering for both man and nature that God brings because of man's sin. And if that's the way you're reading it you're correct. It may strike you as strange to think that fallout in nature is a judgment on man but this is the way the Bible thinks. This is the thinking of Genesis so turn to Gen 8. Gen 6-8 records the great Flood of Noah's day, God's judgment on that corrupt generation. And if you need a visual for the Ark it was a great lifeboat, it was God's rescue vessel for man and animal. It rescued the entire gene pool of both man and animal. If you think about it we're saying that every human being on earth today, every animal can trace its genes back to Noah's Ark and so we're linked to a subset of the world before the Flood. And God is a great Savior. He saved both man and nature by that event. And after the Flood God made a covenant, this is the first biblical covenant. People talk about theological covenants in Gen 1-3 but this is the first biblical covenant. And certain terms are laid down in v 22 that relate to geophysical stability, "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night. Shall not cease." In other words there are certain atmospheric and astronomic controls. God placed limits that give stability to the universe. There's fluctuation but its controlled fluctuation. It's not going to get out of those boundaries. Then verse 2, more terms of the contract, "The fear of you [man] and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky" and so forth. Those are biological and physiological

controls on man and animal. So we have atmospheric controls, astronomical controls, biological controls and physiological controls put on man and nature. And these controls are put into a contract. God made a contract with man, animals, plants, the sun that has implications for the magnetic field, the moon, other planets all the way out to the entire universe, all this depends on God's character. And so this covenant, the Noahic Covenant becomes the basis for every other covenant. It gives the structure, the room so to speak, and every other covenant is in this room. It sets up stability so man can survive and be involved in other covenants.

Now turn to Deut 28. Deut 28 is the Blessings and the Cursings. So now we're going to go into the fluctuation, there is cursing in Hosea on man and nature, but the cursing has certain boundaries, those boundaries are set by the Noahic Covenant. And so when you come to the Mosaic Covenant cursings in Deut 28 remember they're fluctuations inside the boundary conditions set by the Noahic Covenant. God's not going to collapse the whole system when He disciplines man because that would violate His word in the Noahic Covenant. So let's look at some of the cursings. This is for the nation Israel, this is not for all nations. Verse 15 for background, "But it shall come about if you do not obey the Lord your God," see it's all about your spiritual orientation to God, if you fail there what does he say at the end of the verse, then "all these curses will come upon you and overtake you." So let's look at the curse of verse 21, "The Lord will make the pestilence cling to you," what's pestilence? That's disease. Disease affects physiologically, it can also affect anatomically. Verse 23, "The heaven which is over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you, iron," What's that affect? Atmosphere, climatological controls. You can go out and plant all the seed but don't expect to get any rain. That spells agricultural disaster. It causes frustration and stress because you're hungry. It's going to be bad for the economy. Come down to verse 42, "The cricket shall possess all your trees and the produce of your ground." So now we have breeding out of control in the insect domain so they cause ecological distress, agricultural distress. God controls all this. But He's fine tuned the universe so there are boundaries. This isn't out of control. If you were there you may feel like it's out of control. But if you go back to the Noahic promises you know it's not chaos. You know there's order, you know there are limits.

So let's go back to Hosea. Think biblically. When this nation is out of it and God announces His lawsuit and He indicts them and announces the judgment in v 3, **the land mourns...everyone who lives in it languishes Along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky**, all He's doing is going back to the Mosaic Cursings of Deut 28. There's nothing new here, this is all old. The prophet is taking the nation back and he's saying that which you sow you shall also reap. That's an OT principle, that's a NT principle. I cite Gal 6:7.

What can we take from this? If this is how God disciplined the nation Israel how does God discipline us? We're not under the Mosaic Covenant like they were but we are His Church, we are "in Christ" and therefore we get disciplined. But just like the nation Israel it's inside the confines of the Noahic Covenant. We are recipients of that Covenant. And that means there are limits to the discipline, there are boundary conditions. So what principles carry over and apply to us? God's discipline can come on us in a variety of forms. Turn to 1 Cor 11. 1 Cor 11 is the Lord's Supper passage. They were doing it all wrong. It was a chaos situation. People were walking around drunk at the Lord's Supper. So Paul's instructing them to get this thing under control. Have some respect for the cross when you remember it. If you don't what does verse 30 say? For this reason many among you are weak," and weak there isn't physical weakness, its spiritual weakness, they're depressed, one of the disciplines the Lord can send on us is depression, that's psychological distress. Second "and sick," that's probably physical illness, not all physical illness is caused by sin but some of it is and that's physiological problems. And finally "some have died." And that's physical death, obviously biological. So there it is, you have the whole spectrum. These things happen but when they happen don't let your mind slide into thinking this is chaos, this is out of control. There are boundaries that God has built in, there are limits to the discipline. And so when we lose our theological orientation to God it starts breaking out in sin and sin and more sin and there can be consequences spiritually, mentally and physically. So watch how the Holy Spirit confronts you, this is the way He gets our attention to wake us up to our sin so we confess and get restored to the right track.

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