

The Choices We Make

Hosea 13

Throughout this life we are given the opportunity to make choices. We either make them in a way that honors God or serves Satan. The truth of the matter is that is the only way choices work. There is no middle ground. This concept is more important today than it has ever been. Please bear with me today because I have a lot of information for you that I bet you're not even aware of.

¹ When Ephraim spoke, people trembled; he was exalted in Israel. But he became guilty of Baal worship and died. ² Now they sin more and more; they make idols for themselves from their silver, cleverly fashioned images, all of them the work of craftsmen. It is said of these people, "They offer human sacrifices! They kiss calf-idols!" ³ Therefore they will be like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears, like chaff swirling from a threshing floor, like smoke escaping through a window.

As you can see Israel, is making choices that go against God and thereby serving Satan. Ephriam, the northern kingdom, held a lot of power in Israel. They made the choice to count themselves, in a sense, as being greater than God. They were guilty of worshipping idols and God took Himself away from them.

God never blessed Israel when they worshipped Baal, but that didn't stop them. They kept after their idolatry more and more. They choose destruction over honoring God. They have gotten to the point that they are even offering human sacrifices to their idols. Now, in ancient Israel human sacrifice was always child-sacrifice.

Israel's sin had increased like an unchecked infection and because Israel trusted in themselves and in idols, they were going to die off and only a remanent would be left.

⁴ “But I have been the LORD your God ever since you came out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me. ⁵ I cared for you in the wilderness, in the land of burning heat. ⁶ When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me. ⁷ So I will be like a lion to them, like a leopard I will lurk by the path. ⁸ Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open; like a lion I will devour them— a wild animal will tear them apart.

Israel changed, but God did not. He was still the only God and the only Savior, and God is telling them that they will acknowledge Him one day whether they like it or not. He reminds them that He is the source of everything, that He alone is in control.

It is a strange and terrible aspect of human nature that when times are good, we often forget the God who blessed us. When times are bad we are often more likely to turn our hearts back to God.

How about this, did you know that at the end of the 20th Century, America was in a season of unexpected prosperity. Yet statistics show that in the 1990s churchgoers gave the smallest percentage of their income in tithes and offerings since the Great Depression. Sadly, often when we are filled, then we find our hearts exalted, and soon we forget God.

When we neglect and affront God as He blesses, we then will often face the chastening hand of God. It isn't because God hates us, but because we have demonstrated that we will only turn to Him when times are bad.

The three animals mentioned here, lion, leopard, and bear were all native to Palestine and were well known for their relentless manner of killing their prey. So God is going to punish them relentlessly.

Understanding the knowledge of God would have permitted Israel to make the right choices but she forgot that the Lord was her Savior and it led to her own destruction.

⁹ “You are destroyed, Israel, because you are against me, against your helper.
¹⁰ Where is your king, that he may save you? Where are your rulers in all your towns, of whom you said, ‘Give me a king and princes’? ¹¹ So in my anger I gave you a king, and in my wrath I took him away.

You are no more Israel because you turned your back on me I have turned mine on you and destroy you. Where are your kings and princes to save you? Prompted by a desire to be like other nations, Israel asked God for a human king, a request God in His righteous anger granted but now He has taken the king away from them.

They chose a human king rather than choosing the King of Kings.

¹² The guilt of Ephraim is stored up, his sins are kept on record. ¹³ Pains as of a woman in childbirth come to him, but he is a child without wisdom; when the time arrives, he doesn’t have the sense to come out of the womb. ¹⁴ “I will deliver this people from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction? “I will have no compassion, ¹⁵ even though he thrives among his brothers. An east wind from the LORD will come, blowing in from the desert; his spring will fail and his well dry up. His storehouse will be plundered of all its treasures. ¹⁶ The people of Samaria must bear their guilt, because they have rebelled against their God. They will fall by the sword; their little ones will be dashed to the ground, their pregnant women ripped open.”

Labor pains often come unexpectedly, are intense, and increase in their pain and duration. In the same way, judgment would come upon Israel.

The sin and judgment of Israel were both great, but not greater than God’s ability and power to redeem. He can even [redeem...from death](#), so that [death](#) and the [grave](#) are mocked as defeated foes.

Even when Israel felt the sting of God’s chastening hand, they could still find help from the LORD, if they would only turn to Him but they were choosing death rather than life.

The Lord reminds Israel that restoration, not retribution is the goal of His sovereign plan. Like a ray of sunlight penetrating through a sky filled with storm clouds God offers afresh His promise to redeem Israel from the realm of death into which she was falling. Hosea warns that although Israel is flourishing Assyria will sweep down upon the land and cause it to become dry and barren.

So how does this apply to us? Why is it so important today more than ever before? To answer those questions let me give you some details.

We all know that we just had an eclipse on April 8th. You may have taken the time to observe it. But let us consider this. Genesis 1:14 says; ¹⁴ *And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years."*

When there is a sign in the heavens it is not about an immediate event. It is not like seeing a road sign letting you know that there is something up ahead that you need to be aware of. A sign in the heavens is a warning of things to come.

What I realized from this event is that people are so caught up in the moment that they forget to pay attention to the signs. What you fail to see is the fact that two weeks after the eclipse, for the first time in documented history, that Iran made a direct attack on Israel. Now Israel is in the process of deciding how they're going to retaliate.

There are some interesting things unfolding right before our eyes, but I want to take a second to talk about the reason for these signs. You see a lot of people say, well, you know, there's all these things that have been happening for so long and nothing has happened. Where is this Jesus? The Bible says in 2 Peter 3:3-4, ³ *Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."*

Since the beginning of time all these things have been happening and coming to pass. You Christians have been saying that Jesus is coming all this time. There have been wars and rumors of wars, famine and everything else. But still no Jesus.

However, Jesus said there will be a convergence of these things and when we see things in the heavens, like an eclipse that crosses the path of totality with another eclipse we better pay attention.

You may be thinking oh c'mon Pastor, your stretching things here. Ok, well how about this? A total solar eclipse happened on August 21st 1914, right before WW1. What about the total eclipse on June 8th 1937, as we were preparing for WW2? What about the total eclipse right before the Vietnam war? Are you convinced about signs from the heavens yet?

Well, I think there are two more we must consider. What about the total eclipse described in Luke 23:45 that took place while Jesus was on the cross? It says, ⁴⁵ *for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.* Now, lets consider Revelation 6:12, **12** *I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red,"*

In total there have been 9 total solar eclipses, visible in the US, that have happened since 1806 and they all happened around major events. Science says that the next one visible in the US won't happen until 2044 so you may be thinking that you have time but let's not be like Israel, let us remember that God is God and He is in control.

Now let's talk about some interesting things happening with Israel. Do you know that right now, across the US, we have protests going on about free Palestine and that people are angry with Israel? Do you realize that back in the days of David and Noah the Israelites were fighting against the Philistines? Well, the Philistines settled in what is now Palestine.

Guys, these are not wars that someone just got up one day and decided to start. These are wars that were foretold in the Bible. These are wars that are being fought against principalities and powers. Ephesians 6:12 says; ¹² *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.* KGV refers to them as principalities and powers.

How better to describe places like Palestine and Iran others than places of darkness. We live in a world where every country has now developed digital currency and it has been accepted by the world banks. One digital coin here holds the same value as one digital coin in China and so on. Did you know that the US just gave total control of our health to the WHO? Who, by the way, is already working up new vaccines for the next pandemic. They stated that they want to be ready when the next one comes, not if it comes, but when it comes. They also said that all new vaccines, no matter what they are for, will have the nano technology in them.

Do you know that our government is already making plans to go to war with Russia if they side with Iran, which it looks like they are going to. Daniel 2:43 says; *⁴³ And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.*

What is iron? Russia. What is clay? Iran. If we go to war with Russia right before the next election then there will be no election. The presidency cannot change hands during time of war.

We are living in a time when we are making more human sacrifices of babies than ever before through abortion. Are you seeing the correlation to Israel here?

I think we really need to turn to Romans chapter 1 starting with verse 18.

¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

²⁸ Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

People's sins are being revealed or exposed at an alarming rate. Pay close attention to what it says in these scriptures. It says that they know but they do it anyway. It says they know but they condone it anyway. It says because you know or condone then you are deserving of death.

Jesus said that when all these things start to come to pass then look to the heavens for your redemption draweth nigh.

We better get it together and recognize the one true King. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We better stand up and be recognized as His children. We better set ourselves apart and make the choices that honor God.