

2025-03-09 - The Latter Days of Hosea - Shawn Mathis (31025416564037) SermonOnly

Let us turn to our Bibles to Hosea chapter 3 verse 5. Hosea chapter 3 verse 5. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God. Hosea is after Daniel, the end of the Old Testament. Afterward, the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king.

They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days. Let us pray. Gracious God above, as we read these Old Testament prophecies, may we be encouraged as we see here this phrase and the idea, Lord, not just the phrase itself, but the idea of your people returning in mass, that is all of them, certainly all the elect, but the bulk of your church visibly expressed to you in repentance and submission to you, God, is not just an Old Testament activity that happened when they returned from the captivity of Babylon, but God Almighty is a picture of the New Testament age.

And this should therefore encourage us that you are continuing to gather your people until the coming of our Lord and Savior. And we are part of this prophecy, our Lord and Savior. May this spring into our steps, God, and encouragement into our hearts this week we pray.

Amen. So eschatology, right, that word is an ungainly word. It can even be a mouthful.

So often we use, of course, in place of it, another word, end times. But that, to me and many others in my background, conjures up images of fire raining from heaven, punctuated by wars and even large beasts arising from the ocean. That's what I think of for the longest time when I hear the word end times, end time prophecies especially.

That's, of course, from the dispensational understanding of eschatology. But end times, that phrase, does not have to mean that at all. The phrase refers to all future acts of the prophecies after the first coming of Jesus.

There are different understandings of the end times, to be sure, for major ones. We heard of one of them, dispensationalism. And they even differ over how to understand one particular book of eschatology, the book of Revelation.

And so you take those views, you take their views on Revelation, and you cross them over, and you have six, seven, eight different understandings of the future. And I'm not going to go through all those different views. We covered that Wednesday night, going through Professor Venema's book, *The Promise of the Future*.

And I want to focus instead on a related theme. This is obviously about the end times. And it's here in the Old Testament, and it's the phrase, latter days, and another related phrase to that, in the New Testament, the latter days in particular.

The Old Testament's Future

So let's look at the Old Testament. I'm going to do a survey of this phrase and its usage in the Bible. So beginning in the books of Moses, and Deuteronomy in particular, we have Deuteronomy 4, verse 30.

A prophecy, a future apostasy, as well as future repentance. Deuteronomy 40, verse 25 and following. When you beget children and grandchildren, and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly, and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the Lord your God, to provoke them to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess, and you will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed.

That's part of it. I'm going to continue on here, but I will stop and make a few comments here, that they were of course told early on, as they came into the land, right? The book of Deuteronomy is the second giving of the law, is where that word comes from, the Latin. And God gives them, and unpacks a lot more detail, as they are there in the land, after they've gone through the desert.

And they were given the Ten Commandments of Mount Sinai. And in this book, a number of prophecies are actually mentioned. The prophecy of Christ the prophet, as well as the king.

And here, there's prophecy of them. Early on in the book, I know what kind of people you are. You're going to apostatize.

You're going to worship a graven image as a form of anything, and do evil on the side of the Lord your God, to provoke them to anger. And so, he warns them ahead of time, obviously, so that they would avoid it. At least a number of them would avoid it.

I'm sure a number of them have. And we've talked about this before, although we read often of the failures of the Old Testament church. We know many in the background were faithful to him.

We just don't hear a lot about them, because they were basically outnumbered, more or less. But here, it does indeed come to pass that they will be prosperous in the land. They will grow old, generation after generation.

And because of that prosperity, is the implication here, they're going to forget their God. And we see that exactly here in the book of Hosea, right? That's one of the themes I pointed out. That they have corrupted God's holy worship, the first table of the law, in particular, first four commandments, because they were blessed.

That is, in their blessing, they thought, I can do whatever I want. God's happy with me, so I can keep doing all these bad things. And that's exactly what happened, prophesied Deuteronomy 4. So, Deuteronomy is probably about 1300 BC, right? And Hosea was, what, somewhere around 700, several hundred years later.

Verse 27 of chapter 4, And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you. And there you will serve

gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. These are dead gods.

You want to worship them? I'll give you what you want. One of the ways God punishes our sins, as a Heavenly Father, as we talked about in Sunday School class, He does punish us, discipline us, is perhaps the word you like to use, is by giving us exactly what you want. And here, He gives them these false gods from the false religions of the pagan nations around them.

And again, Hosea is warning them as well. They're going to be invaded by the Assyrians and the like, and the Babylonians, and be brought into captivity. Exile and captivity.

Here, of course, is often associated with the prophets. That's what they keep warning them about, Isaiah, Hosea, and the rest of them. But Moses warned them first, several hundred years earlier, that this is coming.

Verse 29, But from there you will seek the Lord your God. You will find Him, if you seek Him, with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice.

For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not forsake nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which you swore to Him. What did you hear in that reference of the Old Testament? There in verse 30, When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, pointing to the future.

Obviously, several hundred years into the future. The Babylonian captivity. And he's saying, that's the latter days.

So you can tell already the phrase isn't to be taken literally in the sense of, well, it's a few number of days. In English, you hear latter days or later days or something. You hear numbers like 40 or 50 days or something.

A time sequence of days. That's not what this is. Literally hundreds of years later, which is thousands upon thousands of days later.

It's just a way of speaking, the Hebraic way of speaking here. But the point is, it's a language of prophecy of the future. And it's used elsewhere in the Old Testament, as we'll see.

Now there's the same theme here as well in Deuteronomy 4, as with Hosea, although condensed here in Deuteronomy 4. And Hosea, it's spread across the whole book, which is judgment and captivity and punishment for their wicked ways. Right? But also repentance and mercy. We saw that in chapter 1. Those who are not my people shall be my people.

And here again, at the end of chapter 3, where he literally says, in the latter days, you'll be drawn back to me. You'll have David as your king, that is King Jesus. And they will fear me, the fear of the Lord and his goodness in the latter days, in the future prophecies.

And verse 31 of Deuteronomy 4 emphasizes more clearly than Hosea does in this verse, but Hosea does it elsewhere, of course, because you can't say everything in one text. He says, the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not forsake nor destroy you.

So even in the midst of these punishments, the promised punishments of Deuteronomy 4 and Hosea, God comforts his people, that is those who are already soft and humble in their hearts. You'll get through this. I'm with you.

However, not only is the beginning of Deuteronomy, talk about the latter days and warn them, so does Deuteronomy chapter 31, near the end. Deuteronomy chapter 31, verse 29, we read, for I know that after my death, you will become utterly corrupt and turn aside from the way which I've commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.

So as he finishes the second giving of the law, in which, if you recall, there's a number of incidents there in which God urges them to repent, urges them to cling to him. In fact, this interesting word cling, cling to God of the covenant is there in this book so heavily on the law of God. He warns them at the end before they nod off and forget these things that it's coming.

God's not pleased with rebellion. The punishment will be real, but the punishment, of course, will be the punishment of a father. So that's Deuteronomy.

Let me pick up the theme again in the major prophets and of course, the minor prophet, Hosea. A reminder again, minor just means smaller books, not just they're insignificant. They're very significant in what they teach.

Isaiah chapter two, verse two, as we go through the survey of eschatology or the Old Testament picture of the future with respect to that time period, which is a picture of today. Isaiah 2.2, now shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills and all the nations shall flow to it. Now Deuteronomy four says the latter days, and one could think, well, that's a different latter days, that they're going to be drawn into captivity.

But the major captivity, of course, is Babylon. And there in Deuteronomy four, as well as Hosea, the other theme is not just judgment, but repentance, that God's people come back to him. And here is the positive side, Isaiah 2.2, of the latter days, describing God's kingdom, of course, as a mountain and all the nations flowing into it.

All the, what nations? Nations is often a translation of goyim, right? Us, Gentiles. Verse three of Isaiah 2, we read as well, many people shall come and say, come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. We are the house, that is the church.

He will teach us his ways and we shall walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth a law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. God's kingdom described here as vast and strong as a mountain, transforming people, his people and the nations around them.

So the prophecy of Deuteronomy, in other words, has now been expanded, not just my Jewish people, but all kinds of people, all the other ethnos, to use the New Testament Greek word, you hear the word ethnic there, right? The nations of the world should be brought into God's church, which is expressed in the Old Testament language as not only the mountain, but the house of the Lord, even Jerusalem itself, which was the center of worship in the Old Testament. Daniel 2.28 is another passage. Daniel 2.28 and 44, there's a lot going on in Daniel, prophecies from its time period forward, four major empires conquering the Middle East up to the time, the Mediterranean in particular, up to the time of Christ and the Roman Empire.

But in the opening part of these visions, we read here in verse 28, chapter 2, but there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar that we will be, what we will be in the latter days, your dream and the visions of your head upon your bed were these. You see the language there again? The language of latter days. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord, the house, excuse me, that's Isaiah 2, but there is God in heaven.

He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days, your dream and your vision of your head upon your bed were these. So future same kind of language as did around before, same kind of language as Isaiah 2.2. In verse 44, we read in Daniel chapter 2, and in the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed and the kingdom shall not be left to other people. It will break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms and it shall stand forever.

And as you recall, it's described as a rock destroying and consuming the world and becoming a giant mountain. Same language of Isaiah, a giant mountain, the establishment of God's kingdom. Something that's immovable and massive and majestic.

Daniel 11.31, we read, he desecrates the sanctuary fortress and does away with the regular sacrifice and they will set up the abomination of desolation. And then in chapter 12, verse 11, from that time, the regular sacrifices is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up and the like. These descriptions here later on, chapter 11 and 12 that I read, were fulfilled before the time of Christ by Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificing a pig on the altar, for example, when he came and conquered Israel.

That's a serious abomination in the temple, isn't it? That's some pretty bad stuff back then. You can imagine how scandalized the Jews were. So it is fulfilled in the Old Testament.

We're going to see that Jesus, however, picks up the prophecy of Daniel and talks about the future with respect to him. So apparently it's being fulfilled in the Old Testament was itself a type of more to come of the latter days. We read again in chapter 10, verse 14 of Daniel, now I've come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days for the vision refers to many days yet to come.

And of course, when he says many days yet to come in the phrase of latter days, he obviously doesn't mean a few days. He means prophetic days, even years, or if not hundreds of years, as we saw in Daniel, or excuse me, Deuteronomy, which was several hundred

years, and Hosea and the like. Next, we have the phrase used in Micah chapter four, verse one, Micah chapter four, verse one.

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills and peoples shall flow to it. It almost sounds like I'm reading Isaiah two, one again, doesn't it? Many nations, verse two, shall come and say, come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways.

The glorious picture of the Lord's kingdom there, and Micah and the like. What Daniel describes in broad terms in the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. There's a picture of a mountain.

Isaiah, Micah, all with the language of the latter days of the future, way forward from the future from where they are. A wonderful time of submission, of growing knowledge of the word of God, of the king of kings being magnified. No more ignorance, but holiness and purity.

Out of the Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Hosea three, five, lastly here in the Old Testament, where we have afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king. They shall feel the Lord, his goodness in the latter days.

After God's punishment and exile of captivity, as we see here in verse three and four, I brought her myself 15 shekels of silver. And I said to her, stay with me. The children of Israel shall abide many days, verse four, without a king or a prince, without the blessings of a stable society of their own people.

They're in a society of a different kind of king and a different kind of prince in captivity. And of course, without the temple sacrifices and the blessings of public worship, just like Deuteronomy prophesied, chapter four, and again at chapter 31. And these verses also offer a bright hope and future, just like again, Deuteronomy chapter four and Isaiah itself.

The New Testament's Future

The latter day carries the same idea here, I believe, from Deuteronomy to here, to as we'll see in the New Testament ourselves, where we are now. When we read what we read in Micah, he will teach us his ways and we will walk in his path is another way of talking about here. They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.

To fear the Lord in the Old Testament language means to submit to him. And therefore, if you're going to submit, you're going to obey, you're going to follow him. And of course, his goodness towards them.

So it's a different way of describing the same idea as Isaiah, the same idea as Micah, in which he describes God's people will come to him and they will learn God's law and his ways. And of course, by implication, follow him. So these things have the immediate fulfillment and the exiles of the Old Testament.

New Testament, however, we have more going on here. Jesus speaks of these things in Matthew chapter 24, Matthew chapter 24, verse 15 and following. Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, these are Jesus' words.

That's why I read those passages in chapter 11 and 10 of Daniel, spoken of by Daniel, the prophet standing in the holy place, whoever reads, let him understand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who was in the housetop, not go down to take anything out of his house and let him who was in the field, not go back to get his clothes.

But where are those who are pregnant and those who are nursing babes in those days? Jesus here is quoting Daniel, which was so accurate in its fulfillment of the rise and the fall of the four empires, of Antiochus Epiphany and his timing in which he came there and brought the abomination of desolation into the temple, that the liberal scholars of a hundred years ago, and probably even today, I don't keep up with liberals anymore, got more important things to do. Or like book of Daniel had it clearly been written near the time of Christ, I mean, many hundreds of years later. And that's why the typical understanding of this passage by the reformers, whether they're all mills or post mills or whatnot, is Jesus is not saying it was never fulfilled under Antiochus Epiphany, it was, but that there's a further fulfillment with respect to Jesus' timeframe to the future, right? So this is 700s and 680s and thereabouts, 730, I think it was in which the North empire fell of Israel.

That's the captivity. So 700 years later, Christ comes, zero, one AD, right? And now he's speaking about 33 AD saying there's still yet a time to be fulfilled in the future of this Daniel prophecy of what? The latter days. So I read those two references there and Daniel, he said, God tells him, I'm talking about the latter days.

It was Daniel chapter two, that the King may know what will happen in the latter days and thus the interpretation of the dream in the days of these Kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. And that is a new Testament church and God's kingdom and the kingdom shall not be left to other people and shall break in pieces, consume all the nations and it shall stand forever. And we are part of that fulfillment of Daniel's future prophecy of God's kingdom growing in the language of Isaiah two and Micah, as well as a mountain expanding across the face of the world.

Thus Christ applying the prophecies that were about the latter days of Daniel's time to the future, our time of Jesus time, even whether you look at it as the fall of Jerusalem or not, that's still our timeframe that is between the first coming and the second coming is the point between the first coming and the second coming latter days falls in there somewhere, either that, but I believe it's all of what we find ourselves here now. And I'll point a little bit to that as I get to the apostles. So apostles, first Timothy chapter four, verse one, first Timothy chapter four, verse one.

Now the spirit expressly says that in latter times, some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies and hypocrisies, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding the Mary and commanding to abstain from foods, which God created to be received with Thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. I preached on that a few weeks ago. Here we have the language

of the latter times, same translation, although it's in the Greek, what you hear of the old Testament, latter times, but other words also seem to describe the same thing.

So in second Timothy three one, so it's Paul writing again, a second letter to Timothy. He gives a similar description of how bad things are going to be in the future. Chapter three, verse one, second Timothy.

But know this, that in the last days, he didn't say latter times, he said last days, perilous times will come for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of monies, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, kind of sounds like what he's saying here, evil spirits, false doctrines, seared with a hot iron, making up these supposed laws. They're slightly different, but clearly bad things are happening. And in both cases, he describes it as the latter or the end or the future, and one place times and the other place days.

I submit to you, it's the same timeframe. It's the same idea, although slightly different words. We use synonyms all the time.

That's what they are. Latter days, latter times are synonyms, it seems to me. In fact, Peter claims that he and his generation won the last days, quoting the Old Testament prophet himself in the book of Acts, as you recall, that great sermon of Pentecost.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, this is Peter preaching, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. Quoting Joel chapter 2, verse 28 and following, Peter says that prophecy, I will call the last days, or we can probably say the latter times, it's a synonym, is being fulfilled here and now. In the time, the apostles in the book of Acts.

They, in other words, were looking forward to the future and saw the grand coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the incarnation and the like, Isaiah 9 and elsewhere. All these prophecies, you piece them together as a puzzle and you'll see a picture of the New Testament age, described as the end times, the latter times, and the like. And yes, I'm not going to go down this path.

As I said, there are different approaches to eschatology. There are some arguments that there's a latter days of the latter days, or the latter day, in which before Christ comes, things get really bad. And that may be the case.

I'm not interested in going down that path right now. I want to highlight that this description here, continuous phrase, and then the synonym there in the New Testament, the end days, plural, or the last days, are pointing to the same thing. And Peter, and we'll see elsewhere as well, Hebrews as well, says, this is us.

We are in these last days and these last times. Again, Hosea 3.5, afterward, the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall fear the Lord in his goodness in the latter days. Since we know David the king wasn't raised from the dead again, it's a type and a picture of Jesus.

Hosea 3.5 is about Jesus. When he's saying they're going to submit to Jesus, what's he talking about? He's talking about our time period. So latter days, clearly in Hosea, I think, is carrying on the same theme as Isaiah, and Daniel, and Vica, and Deuteronomy.

It's the time of Jesus, the first coming. And even until now, submitting to King Jesus as our Lord, we are in the latter days, brothers and sisters. They have sought God in the day of Pentecost, and continue to seek him, baptized by thousands.

And so this is being fulfilled and was being fulfilled in the book of Acts. As a reminder, Peter said, this is the end days, or what was the specific phrase there, last days. You could have quoted Hosea.

Hosea is indeed quoted by Paul in the book of Romans. It includes more than just Jews, of course, per the prophecy of the latter days. You could read this, of course, as a Old Testament Jew and think, well, the children of Israel shall return.

The children of Israel always means the ethnic biological Jews, but we know it ultimately means God's chosen people who are spiritual Jews, as Romans 2 says, the circumcision of the heart that counts more than anything else. And it shall come to pass, Isaiah 2.3, and they shall say, come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. That is another way of describing the children of Israel seeking the Lord, their God.

Verse 5, let us go to him. There he is in God's holy temple, the church of the living God of King David sitting on the throne of his church in the New Testament era. That's how they seek and show us and we find them.

Hosea is, as I said, quoted in the New Testament in Romans 10, chapter 18, those three chapters talking about what do I do about the ethnic Jews? And Paul says they too can be saved if, of course, if they are elect like the rest of us. And the Gentiles are saved as well, Romans 10.18. But I say, have they not heard? Yes, indeed, their sound has gone out to all the earth, and that is the gospel preaching and the words to the ends of the world. But I say, did not Israel not know? And first Moses says, I will provoke you to jealousy, you Jewish people, by those who are not a nation.

And I will move you to anger by a foolish nation. But Isaiah is very bold and says, I was found by those who did not seek me. I was made manifest by those who did not ask of me.

So there's that theme of, from Isaiah's perspective, of not having people who are really God's people. But back in chapter 9, verse 26, we read, and it shall come to pass, and the place where it was said to them, Paul writes, you are not my people, lo, I am me. They shall be called the sons of the living God.

That's what counts. That's his emphasis here. Don't be stuck on whether you're an ethnic Jew or not.

You can do the Jewish things like circumcision. It's whether you're called. And God called the Gentiles because you were so arrogant about who you thought you were.

He was going to humble you by their conversion. Those people who are not a people will now be just as equally a people as you are, or actually more, because you're unrepentant. And so Isaiah, Hosea 3.5, the children of Israel returning, there's a picture of the New Testament church, whether Jew or Gentile, will now become ami, or my people.

God's grace extends over time to us today, brothers and sisters, in the latter days, in the end days, or latter times. We are here worshiping Him because of His mercies flowed beyond the land of Canaan and drew across the world by His majestic mountain. And we are drawn as the other nations, as it says explicitly there in Micah and Isaiah, to come to the mountain of the Lord.

And they shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days, as we read here in verse five. Praise be to God, because this is true for us, brothers and sisters. Let us pray.

We are grateful and honor God Almighty that we can go to the Old Testament and see these prophecies that surely were somewhat confusing to the believers of old, although the saints understood at the very least that many of them would return and seek God. And they would live in godly fear of Him and submit to David, that is Jesus, as King of kings and Lord of Lord, and marvel at His goodness in the latter days.