

More Sin Yet More Grace

Let's turn to our Bibles to Hosea chapter 13, verses 1-8, and let us listen attentively to the Word of God. Hosea chapter 13, verses 1 and following. When Ephraim spoke trembling, he exalted himself in Israel, but when he offended through Baal worship he died.

Now they sin more and more, and have made for themselves molded images, idols of their silver according to their skill. All of it is the work of craftsmen. They say of them, let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves.

Therefore they shall be like the morning cloud, and like the early dew that passes away, like the chaff blown off from a threshing floor, and like smoke from a chimney. Yet I am the Lord your God ever since the land of Egypt, and you shall know no God but me, for there is no Savior besides me. I knew you in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.

When they had pasture, they were filled, they were filled, and their heart was exalted. Therefore they forgot me. So I will be like to them like a lion, like a leopard by the road I will lurk.

I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs. I will tear open their ribcage, and there I'll devour them like a lion. The wild beast shall tear them, let us pray.

In such shocking language, God, you use the mouth of the prophet Lord to wake the heart of the hardened Jew of that day and age. May it open our hearts, if our hearts are a little too hardened towards you as believers of members of the church of Jesus Christ, to continue to humble us, Lord, and to strengthen us to follow you all the days of our life that your name be magnified, that we would affirm not with just our lips that there is no Savior besides you, but with our actions in worshiping and honoring you, and not dishonoring you through false worship as the saints of old did. And in this regard, we ask, God, that this sermon would help us to persevere in this life, we pray, amen.

So in this chapter, the prophet describes the Lord's punishment upon Israel, as we saw especially in the last two verses, but more will be coming, of course. But it's in the context I want to highlight here, verses 4 and 5 and part of 6, which is the grace of our Lord God Almighty. As He remembered their wayward way as a tribe of the north before, the God who calls them to repentance is the Lord, their God of the covenant, who brought them out of Egypt, their only deliverer and Savior.

As such, the impending judgment would come, of course, but only as the loving discipline of a father, not as a judge, if indeed they put their trust into Him. And even as they increased in wickedness, the Lord's longsuffering increased all the more and outstripped it in so many ways as we will see. This reminds us even today that God's grace is sufficient to cover our sins, brothers and sisters, not just the sins of Old Testament Israel, who, what, sinned more and more as we read there in that phrase in verse 2. More sin or more and more sin, and as we'll see, more and more grace.

More Sin

Verses 1-3, when Ephraim spoke trembling, he exalted himself in Israel, or he was exalted or lifted up. But when he offended through Baal worship, he died. So there's an applied contrast here in this first verse, two parts of the verse, that Ephraim was exalted at one time insofar as they were trembling before God.

The object is implicit, which has happened a number of times, you've noticed in the book of Hosea. When Ephraim spoke trembling, trembling what? Trembling before the Lord, as some of the older commentators believe, and I agree with them, because of this contrast that the northern tribe there is exalted in the first part, but the second part, when he offended, that is Ephraim of the northern tribe, remember Ephraim being the main picture or representative of northern tribes, offended, then they die. So you have the opposite of dying is being exalted and not dying, being lifted up, being honored or blessed in some way.

So there's this contrast, and because of that contrast, it makes sense that when Ephraim is being blessed or exalted in Israel or among Israel, it's because he's trembling before God and His Word. There was a time when the church of the northern tribes honored the Lord. Unfortunately, it was many, many generations ago, it was back before Jeroboam, who was after Solomon.

You have Saul, David, Solomon, and that's it. After that, the northern tribes split off, they're no longer trembling before God, but create a parallel religious system, as you recall, with their own priests, their own place of worship, and their own holy days. So I believe this is a reference to that picture, an allusion there, reminding them that there was a time in which they did honor the Lord, and when they honored the God, which is the godly fear or trembling here, clearly, God honored them and exalted them and blessed them, as He did under Solomon.

But instead, they offended God, God of the covenant, and continued to offend Him by bail worship. And what happened when they went after other gods? What's the language here at the end of verse 1? What's the consequence and the fruits therein? He died. Death.

Death. A thousand times, death. They died to the grace of our Lord, Savior.

They morally died to righteousness and uprightness, and of course, they died to the faithfulness of the Mosaic economy in the specific way in which God told them to worship Him, a threefold death. And ultimately, to the extent that they were unbelievers, for surely there were many, unfortunately, they were spiritually dead. They were unregenerate from the beginning.

And so this is not only a collective death, but for many, unfortunately, an individual death, an expression of the deadness that was already among them, although they were circumcised and part of the church. So it's a very sad picture in this simple description. He died, or Ephraim died, collectively conceived.

The northern tribes fled God's ways and are described as dead. Where else do we find that phrase of death? But in Ephesians 2, dead and trespasses in sins. So you have then, the Old

Testament has an understanding of the depravity of man, of the fallenness of man, and here he describes it with death.

Obviously, it's metaphorical in the sense that he doesn't mean physical death, he means spiritual death. But it's a real death, nevertheless. The false gods and false worship and the obvious public signs of that and evidence therein shows their ongoing sin, their ongoing death to the Lord, if they are unrepentant, it's a permanent death in that sense.

Ongoing sin, unfortunately, we read in verse 2. Now they sin more and more. What is this sin that's more and more, not just a little, but increases over time and activity and even in depth that seems of depravity? Well, they made for themselves molded images, idols of silver. We're back to the same problem, Old Testament saints, of idolatry.

Broadly, that word means or is used at times to mean false worship, whatever that entails. Either chasing after false gods or mixing false gods' worship or false religions' worship with the Lord God of the covenant, as you recall, or both, we call it idolatry. Or more narrowly, the word, or perhaps you may say more properly, is with respect to the specific act of worshiping that is honoring, venerating, images, idols, physical, concrete things made by man's hands.

We may say today figurines, relatively large figurines of some sort of the head or the body or something that represents their so-called God. So more narrowly, that word, which is clearly what's being used here, because he describes it, right? They made for themselves molded images, we call that idol worship, out of all kinds of elements, usually something precious, but it could be wood, it might be very nice wood, gold, or even silver, and they would literally bow down to them as an act of honor. Now, we know they bowed down to kings and they bowed down to dignitaries and the like, but that was not an act or intended to be an act of divine worship but an outward expression of reverence and honor to that who is the superior to them, like a king, for example.

We have plenty of examples of that in the Old Testament. That was okay. It was a social way of showing honor.

Today, you know, we may shake hands, we may bow or something like that or salute in the military. Those are ways of expressing honor to a superior. There's nothing wrong with that.

But they, of course, took the same action he did in a civil sense and a religious sense, in a divine sense, saying, we are going to worship and honor this molded image. It's just rank paganism in the church of God, crass idolatry. Now, of course, today, outside the Roman Catholic Church, we have, I think, a more refined idolatry of false worship in some ways, unfortunately.

Now, this is a known sin. What I mean by known sin is even unbelievers know there's something wrong with this approach to worship. And they know this by natural revelation.

Romans 1.22, for professing to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man and birds and four-footed

animals and creeping things. They use all kinds of animals and representations and even insects. As you know, they had the dung beetle in Egypt.

Incredible. And what does Paul tell us in Romans? They are guilty nevertheless. They know these things and suppress the truth and unrighteousness.

That's the same chapter, same theme carried on through those verses. So, natural revelation tells them that, yes, even without the book of the law, they know that God is invisible and therefore cannot be worshipped and put under any kind of image. He has not a body like man.

And the Jews knew this. The point here in particular is the Jews knew this. You may be saying, well, you know, it's a northern tribe.

They had their own kind of parallel system for several generations. Nevertheless, God says you're guilty. They knew enough at this time, enough of a perhaps oral tradition of some sort.

But even without the oral tradition, by nature, they should know that there is only one God. There's only one eternality that creates and sustains all the finitude that we see around us. It just decays without Him.

He holds it all together. And you cannot worship or honor Him with an image. It's impossible.

And so, and of course, as the king of the universe, and they understood kingship in a way we have a hard time grasping, as you know, in the American system, the American way of thinking and individuality. They understand what it means that God is a king. And it's His will that determines how you honor Him.

You don't come to the king in any way you feel like, but you must go according to how He desires. And so from that twofold description of the natural revelation, they should have known better. But of course, more than that, as I hinted at before, they probably had oral tradition.

They certainly had the prophets over and over again. It wasn't just Hosea. They had a number of prophets running about in different parts of the northern tribes and some of them went to north and the south, warning them and telling them this is false worship.

God's going to punish you for it. You're playing with fire. Supernatural revelation.

It wasn't just natural revelation, but supernatural revelation. Deuteronomy 4.15. Deuteronomy 4.15 we read, Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Mount Horeb, out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourself, what, a carved image, and it continues on to describe different ways in which the pagans have played fast and loose with the general revelation of God and did things contrary to the light of their own conscience and nature and worshiped graven

images. They may not have had the book of the law right before them, but they had perhaps, we think, and Matthew, Henry, and others think, some summary of the law of God.

If you recall Josiah, Wednesday night in 2 Kings, they find the book of the law. He's reading it. He's renting his clothes.

He's saying this is terrible. God's going to punish us. And because of that, many surmise that what he saw that was new was not as much as the commandments, but the punishment for breaking the commandments.

That's why he was crying out for mercy and that they knew something was going on. How else could he do reformation unless he had knowledge of what was proper worship already? So he probably has some kind of summary of the Deuteronomy code that was conveniently missing the punishment part, the curses of the covenant. And I think all that more or less makes sense and puts all the pieces together here.

And so here in the northern tribes, again, I'm arguing that they're culpable both by natural revelation and by supernatural revelation at the very least, in the second case, because of the prophets such as Hosea. But of course, the same is true for us today. Even without a Bible, well, the average American, they know that there is a God.

They suppress the truth and they know he's an invisible God. And therefore, you can't image him in any other way. You don't know what he looks like.

He has no body. You're just making things up. You think it's okay to run around making things up about your deity, about your family, about your parents? Of course not.

They'd be highly offended. How much more God? And I think the closest parallel we have today, not to make ourselves pure as though we're the only perfect church and we have no problems. I've alluded to some of our problems in the past in Hosea.

But here, remind us again, I think the northern tribes fit closer to the parallel today of the liberal churches and progressive churches. It's a parallel religion. It talks a lot of the same things we do, but much of it is so distorted and dangerous thereby.

And their consciousness, of course, and the revelation of nature, excuse me, shows them that they are guilty and they know these things. More and more, right, that phrase there in verse two, I unpacked what they were sitting in particular, which was making images. That's contrary to the light of nature and the light of the word of God.

But more and more, increasing over time from the sudden break with temple worship away from Jerusalem under Jeroboam after Solomon, to erecting a temple to Baal under Ahab a few kings later, to worshipping the sun and starry host that we read about there in 2 Kings already under Josiah. And that was the southern tribes, let alone the northern tribes. Meanwhile, they increased the number of altars to all the high places, to this temple to Baal under Ahab and others, and removed the Lord's altar under Manasseh, what was that, two generations before Josiah, so his grandfather, and the temple, right? They took the altar of God, put it in the corner, and put his own offering altar for his own edification, his own

private little public worship, private public worship, right? It was astounding, absolutely astounding.

Now, he continues here in verse two, and I think it's not in an intellectual matter-of-fact description of the idols, but he's more or less making fun of them. We must not forget this. You can't read tone in a text, of course, but from the gist and the purpose of why the prophet is describing these idols, why is he describing them other than pointing out what kind of a God do you worship, the ones made from your own hands? Really? Who made this podium, this? Bob.

What would you think Bob's like? This thing's amazing. I think it's so amazing, I'm going to kiss it? I'm going to bow down to it? You'd be like, you made it, Bob. You are better than that which you make because you're the creator, right? And that which you make of your own, of the things of this world, is inferior to you.

As a general rule, of course, children are an exception because they're made by God in the mystery of providence, but, you know, your own hands did this, your own creativity. And that's what you have in the description here. They've made for themselves, you made your own gods, molded images, idols of silver.

And so they would try to make it more special to them, according to what? God's will? No, their skill, according to their skill. All of it is the work of craftsmen. It's not the work of God.

And so he's criticizing them. It's not honoring them or just giving an intellectual description of what they did at the time. No, no, a thousand times, no.

And so they have this image, this idol, they put much money and effort and timing and planning into, they made it themselves and they bow before it and honor it as though it was greater than themselves, their own children, and certainly their own God. Idolatry, in particular, we read here as he narrows down on this problem. And they say of them, they say of these idols, let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves.

Let men who sacrifice kiss the calves. You're not saying kiss the cows out in the field. That's not what he's talking about.

It's the image. The number of the images are calves themselves. They made an image of the golden calf, for example, right, earlier under Aaron.

And so as a reminder, the calves were worshiped in Egypt and they also dug up calf worship elsewhere in the Middle East. And so kissing the idol, of course, is an obvious act of honor and reverence, like you kiss the feet of the king or something. And they were not thinking of God while they were looking and kissing the calf.

They, as you go into the history of pagan worship, which I don't necessarily encourage you to do, but you find out the more wise of them, if I can use that phrase, the more knowledgeable of them was saying, we don't really believe this is the god, this idol, but it's a conduit to the gods. It's a way to help us honor the gods that are beyond this particular idol. It doesn't matter.

You're still kissing it. You're still treating it like a god. You're still venerating it.

One of the distinctions that the Roman Catholic Church makes, for example, is we're venerating, they have a couple of particular technical, semi-technical words, the image, which is not the same as worshiping God. No, it's all the same. Those are just synonyms.

Those words are just synonyms. What you have here with the Jews of the Northern tribe in particular, but not uniquely as we know, and emphasized here in Hosea is syncretism, the mixing of pagan religion with God's worship. The Jews rationalized the worship of Baal, Asherah, and other deities with Jehovah's honor.

By worshiping Baal and the others, what I'm saying is not only worshiping the false gods directly, but using the methods of worship of the false gods to worship God. So, they would use a calf to worship God, for example. They probably did a little bit of both, it seems, from the text.

You read a number of these, and I mentioned this in prior sermons. Here are some historical data that's quite fascinating with respect to calves or, relatedly, a bull, the cow family. A name written on a broken pot shard, which is the ancient counterpart of a piece of scrap paper, scrap papers wouldn't last very long, but a pot shard would, from Samaria, right, up north, northern Israel, bears the inscription which means either the bull calf of Yahweh, or the bull calf is Yahweh.

There you go. This isn't just Hosea written by some guy named Hosea, or a fake author like some of the liberals argue from even up to today, I suspect, but somebody who was there. They had these false idols, these calves.

In the case of the goddess Asherah, if you remember, or Astaroth, depending on if you're from KJV or not, some graffiti left by ancient travelers through northern Sinai, that's down south, south of Judah, and discovered in 1976 on the side of Kenalti, indicate that some Israelites regarded Asherah to be the wife of Yahweh, or Jehovah. Yeah. One scrawling reads, I bless you by Jehovah of Samaria and by Asherah.

So you see, again, this is syncretism, the mixing of two religions, more particularly false religions, with God's religion. It's quite astounding. So through cultural peer pressure, or simple indifference, or hatred, or they just want to be popular, I don't know the reasons, Israel, I mean the northern tribes in particular, unlike, unfortunately, and like too many churches today, like to mix things up with Christ's simple worship.

It's just not enough for them. And of course, it makes them stand out really weird if you're surrounded by them. By people doing all these, what sometimes we call smells and bells, right? Anglican Church does that, so it's not just the Roman Catholic Church that does that.

Other violations, not just crass idol worship as such as a problem for the prophets, and of course for God and His Word, but turning everyday items of life into something holy and an act of worship. I'm recently reading, for example, of the debates with the Presbyterians. See how I can incorporate this in my history class in Sunday School.

The Presbyterians with the Anglicans, who wanted something less than Roman Catholicism, but more than the Word of God, and they apparently, I did not know this, would not give you the Lord's Supper unless you bowed before the host. I don't think they called it the host in the Anglican, right? If you didn't bow before the elements, you're like, what? Bow before the elements? Of course, Presbyterians are like, no, where'd that come from? It's one thing if you do it, if you think it's a proper act of reverence in general, I've talked about this before, you stand up to hear the Word of God, some cultures sit down, you may put a hat on, you may not put a hat on, etc., but they're saying you cannot have, we will not give you the Lord's Supper unless you bow your knee, because we believe it's such an act of reverence, not just reverence in general, social reverence, but religious reverence that it must be done or you're not really honoring God, and nobody, we don't believe that. We don't believe that at all.

So those kind of things are still going on, unfortunately, or of course, entertainment, the great example amongst evangelicals, and again, our churches are not immune to entertainment oriented approaches to things. There was one Presbyterian church, a big Presbyterian church, that had men in tights dancing on the stage in worship. I watched the video.

I watched enough of it to get repulsed, and that was enough for me. So, this text, although clearly about the wooden and golden images or silver images, is not just that. He's also concerned about all the false worship.

In the punishment therein, verse 3, therefore they shall be like the morning cloud, and they shall be like the dew that passes early away, like chaff blown off from the threshing floor, and like smoke from a chimney. So four metaphors describing what? They're passing, and they're going to become history. That's right.

And the northern tribes, as we know, when the Assyrian Empire comes down upon them, are history, and there are no more. They're gone. And that's where we are in 2 Kings.

The northern tribes are gone. They passed away like smoke in a chimney, up into the air, dissipated forever. And Israel was punished, and God will punish others if they do not repent.

More Grace

More grace, however, verses 4 through 6, yet I am the Lord your God. In contrast to all this and your disobedience to me, I am still your God. I'm your Lord.

I'm your Master. I'm your only Deliverer, and I was with you since Egypt. So, it's a reminder again, he's in this a number of times through the book of Hosea, bringing them back to the proper context of his covenant of mercy and compassion upon them.

Lord their God, I am that I am. Lord here, or Jehovah, from that great incident there, the burning bush, and Moses in Exodus, where God tells Moses, tell them, I am that I am sent you. And the point being, I am is He who never changes.

I am eternally the same. And so, when I've given my word, I will not change. I am that I am, that I keep my word.

I keep my covenantal word. So, sometimes you can see Jehovah as shorthand for I am the one who will keep my word and do not change, says the Lord your God. So, He has not forgotten them, although they have forgotten Him.

And He will bring them to protection and glory if they but repent, is the implied call here, verses 4 or 5 and part of 6. If they but repent and bring themselves and return to the Lord their God in humility, He will forgive them. And it's not just the Lord, but the Lord your God. Isn't that wonderful? He didn't say, I'm just the God out here.

I'm the God of all creation. I'm Elohim or something like that. But I'm Jehovah.

I'm particularly your God in contrast to all the other people of the world because they were circumcised and brought into the covenant therein in the Old Testament form of it. They were brought into the church as we are brought into the church. So, even though they increased more and more, verse 2, they sent more and more over the generations, the Lord reminds them He is still their God and He is still your God, brothers and sisters.

He has love and compassion upon you in spite of your sins. And since Egypt, of course, was the great redemptive historical event of the Old Testament referenced so many times, I've lost track of. I'm sure someone has a list somewhere in the Old Testament where God brings it back to that great event that ties them especially to Him and points ultimately to Christ and His great power and deliverance of us from the exodus of Satan's kingdom when He comes in the future here, 600 years, 400 years later.

And the great wonderful doctrine here at the end of verse 4, for there is no Savior beside me and you shall know no God but me for there is no other Savior beside me. It's a moral imperative, a necessity that they know no one else but God Almighty because He is the only one who can save and deliver them. He can redeem them as no one else can.

And so the honoring and worship and veneration of the calves, let's put a negative example here, was never about finding random gods or honoring random gods but honoring these gods believing that they can deliver them and save them either politically or from famine or from physical ailments and pestilence. So when they worship their false gods or they worship the true God falsely or a combination of both, they did it with this understanding and belief of a deliverer and God's telling them, I'm the only deliverer. I'm the only one who should come to worship and honor and I'm the only one who can save you, not like these other false gods like Baal.

More Discipline

The third point, more discipline, verses 6 through 8, God's goodness here is abuse. He moves right into this theme. When they had pasture, they were filled and of course it was God who gave them pasture.

He knew them in the wilderness. The idea of knowledge there, of course, isn't just simply intellectual, but He was there and had a covenantal intimacy and care for them in the wilderness, as you know in the story there in Exodus, and preserved them like in the book of Numbers. But when they got filled, their hearts were exalted and they forgot Me, the end of verse 6, forgetting the Lord, not as though they just got a mind wipe or something like that, but rather it's a metaphor to describe them walking away from the path of honoring the Lord.

It's an echo of Deuteronomy 8, 11 and the following. In Deuteronomy 8, 11 and the following we read, Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God, by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, His statutes, which I commanded you today. Lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, when your heart is lifted up and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage.

He warned them several hundred years earlier that you're going to be prosperous and the danger is going to be, look what my hands have done, why do I need God anymore? Which unfortunately I think is the theme of America, given our history, the 1600s of the Puritans in spite of their limitations and sins, and they are there, and our forefathers, their limitations and sins. But what we have now is clearly a forgetting and a throwing away. In fact, I think there are stronger words, not just forgetting, we just outright reject them collectively as a nation, unfortunately, more and more as generations pass.

The blessings, of course, are wonderful things, but they are easily abused by proudful hearts. And God's punishment for this pride in verse 7 and 8, a horrific picture of his judgment upon the northern tribes, I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs. And we know you don't want to meet one of those animals in the wilderness.

Now, here in the text, it's like a leopard and God is like a lion to them, so it's not necessarily literal, although there is such a literal curse in Leviticus 26, 22. We read, Then if you walk contrary to me, and are not willing to obey me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues according to your sins. Verse 22, I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, destroy your livestock, and make you few in number, and your highways shall be desolate.

Which may have also happened as well, given that they were invaded by the Assyrians in the north, and once you lose a lot of people real quick, the wilderness comes in to fill the vacuum and the animals get really bold. So that may have happened. Of course, metaphorically here, it's the curse of the Assyrians.

The northern tribes will be crushed and devoured by a power greater than them, no matter how many times they cry out to Baal and their calves and kiss them. They can't honor their false gods enough to get help and deliverance. And of course, this is the lesson for us today.

Let us remember that the Lord is involved in our troubles because it says here, I will be like to them a lion. God's behind these acts, not random chants or the devil's workings as such. The devil and evil men are involved.

God's behind all of that. They're not in charge, He is. That's what you must remember.

And He's in charge as a father, and a father will do what? He will discipline His kids as they need to be disciplined. And it happens because He cares. He loves us.

And so He gives us hardships to purify us individually and collectively from our sins. Hebrews 12.5 is the great passage there. My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him.

For whom the Lord loves, He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives. Sometimes it's more than just a chastening, it's a whooping. Some of us had that when we were younger.

We needed it. Sometimes we need it even now. And this reminder, however, that hardship and troubles, which we will have in varying and sundry degrees in this life, is not automatically on the surface evidence that you have sinned necessarily.

I can't just come to you and say, obviously you're in sin because you're having a hard life. It must be your sin. Sometimes it is.

And the question is, do you submit to God's hand of providence and humility and ask for forgiveness and still may not have anything change and still have hardship for the rest of your life? Or will you be stubborn and hard of heart as the Jews? Too many of the Jews were here in the time of Hosea, where God brought this punishment upon them. So those who have hardened hearts, the punishment will crush them. But those who have a soft heart, it will not crush them because Christ will carry the load and carry them through.

So it's the same events of destruction of the northern tribes, but I'm sure there are a number even then, although maybe a small number of believers, nevertheless, that were preserved because they had hearts of repentance, soft hearts, tender hearts before our God. So let us pray, brothers and sisters, in spite of our sins and transgressions, that our loving God will continue to forgive us as He's promised and we would receive that forgiveness by repentance and faith in Him. Let us pray.

Our Lord and Savior, indeed, may we be acute and aware of our shortcomings and our sins to the extent that we need to repent of them. At the same time, God, encourage us to know that if we are going through hardships that we know clearly are not directly a result of our sins, that we would accept them and certainly pray for a change, but there's no change, to know that You use these things to help purify us and help us to grow as Your people. We ask

these things, Lord God Almighty, that we continue to trust in You and flee false worship, we pray.

Amen.