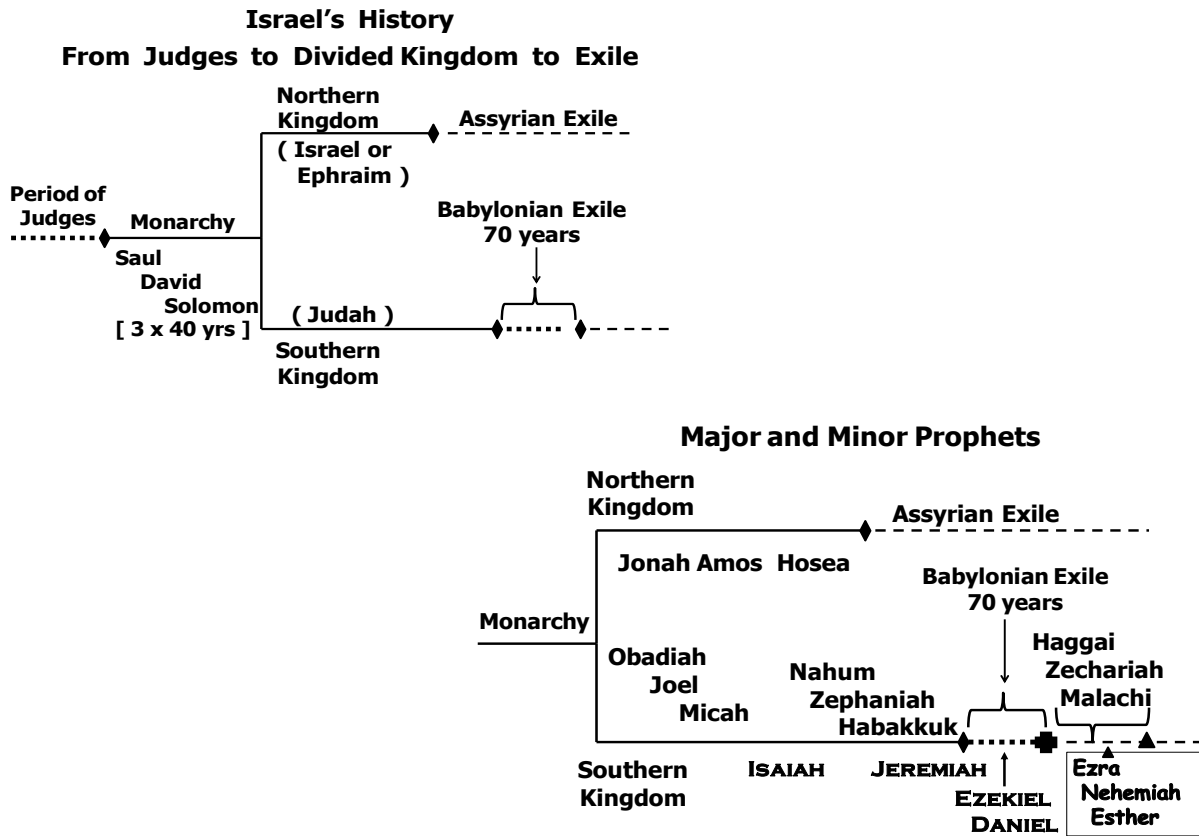
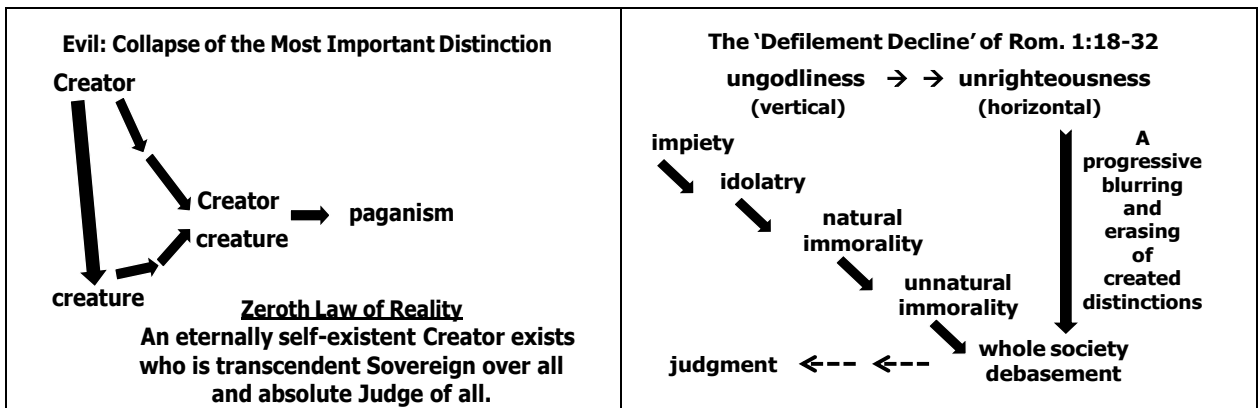


Hosea: Context, Controversy and Covenant.

1. Context



2. Controversy



3. Covenant

Hosea: Context, Controversy and Covenant

Suggestions for Self Study and Discussion

1. To understand something of the troubled civil and spiritual state of the Northern Kingdom leading up to and overlapping with Hosea's time, read I Kings 16 and note that the listed succession of kings all walked in the sins of Jeroboam I, son of Nebat and founding governor of the Northern Kingdom. Observe how these kings persistently provoked Yahweh to wrath in their ruling policies and practices.
2. To gain perspective relative to Jeroboam I's rebellion against God, and his laying the foundation for a wholly idolatrous society in the Northern Kingdom, read the following excerpts from the narrative accounts of the early days of the divided kingdom: I Kings 12:25-33; 13:33-34; 14:15-16; II Chron. 11:14-15.
3. With the rebellious folly of Jeroboam I's actions in view (viz., his dismissal and disbanding of the place and role of the 'Yahweh-commanded' spiritual leadership in the land), discuss the place, need, and role of healthy churches functioning under God-ordained elder-pastoral leadership in the sustenance of a God-honoring cultural climate within a nation. Question: Do you believe that we, as The Bridge Bible Fellowship, have a reasonably well-developed sense of the critical place and vital contribution we ought to be having as 'kingdom agents' of salt and light in our culture for our time (Matt. 5:13-16)? How might that commanded function be sharpened and better leveraged for "culture flavoring" and "culture illuminating" in our place and time?
4. Although Hosea's prophesy pertains primarily to the Northern Kingdom (Israel/Ephraim), yet God had a controversy as well with the Southern Kingdom (Judah) as evident from Hos. 5:5; 6:4; 11:12; 12:2. In this regard, compare Isa. 1:1-9 with Hos. 1:1; 4:1-10, and observe that Isaiah, contemporary with Hosea, uttered a prophesy to the Southern Kingdom closely paralleling Hosea's prophesy to the Northern Kingdom. Thus, the spiritual and cultural state of Judah seemingly was not very dissimilar from that of Israel/Ephraim at this time.
5. For further foundation relevant to the causal root of the Southern Kingdom's exile beyond their indulgence in idolatrous practices paralleling that of the Northern Kingdom, consult the textual statement in II Chron. 36:20-21 together with the strong warning God communicated through His servant Moses in the formative days of Israel's national existence (Lev. 25:1-7 and Lev. 26:27-35). History reveals, coupled with careful chronological consideration, that Israel's national leadership opted for presumed economic advantage over fidelity to Yahweh's clearly articulated command for the extended period of 490 years, whereupon the promise of God's judgment overtook them.
6. Referring to Hos. 4:3 and the text of Lev. 18:24-30, observe and discuss the link between national moral corruption and environmental factors in God's sovereign governance of nations. In God's economy (in His operational providence) there exists a dutiful environmental stewardship that includes the moral dimension as well as the natural dimension. Note: God is not without means to "spew" a nation/people steeped in moral defilement out of their nominal state of existence (e.g., the pre-flood civilization; the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; both Northern and Southern divisions of the divided kingdom; ... the Nazi Third Reich; ... even present and future nations)
7. Considering the prophet's description (Hos. 4:2) of Yahweh's controversy with Israel, and the fact that God is immutable in His character ("same yesterday, today, and forever", Heb. 13: 8), what might God's attitude be in relation to our present national state? Do you consider comparison between Israel in Hosea's time with the USA in our time to be noteworthy? Why? If so, in what particular aspects?
8. Observe that the prophet Hosea sprinkled within his messages repeated calls for repentance unto restoration of fidelity in worship of Yahweh in truth (e.g., 6:1, 3, 6; 10:12; 12:6; 14:1-2). Observe that he also included reminders of God's covenant character (e.g., 1:10-11; 3:4-5; 11:8-11; 14:4-7, 9).