

## THE BOOK OF HOSEA

### Lesson 08, Chapters 4 and 5

Recently a couple spoke to me about their faith journey and how it had led them to Torah Class. They had been Mormons. They didn't find any great fault with their Mormonism or their Mormon community, but rather only that when it came to the sermons and Bible teaching, it troubled them that what was being taught didn't seem to match what their Bibles said. So, they explored a couple of other well-known mainstream Christian denominations, only to find the same troubling issue. They simply wanted to know the truth; they wanted to know the unvarnished God's truth in order to live a life of truth that was pleasing to God.

There can be a vast gulf between a community of God worshippers living lives of kindness and nicety and tolerance than those living lives of obedience to God. This is what Hosea chapter 4 highlights, and especially the words of verse 6:

**CJB Hosea 4:6** *My people are destroyed for want of knowledge. Because you rejected knowledge, I will also reject you as covenanter for me. Because you forgot the Torah of your God, I will also forget your children.*

Here the source of knowledge of God is directly pinned to knowledge of the Torah. Every indication is that the people of the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim/Israel were decent enough to one another; even nice people. We know that they were quite tolerant as they got along famously with their pagan neighbors and seemingly one another. These particular virtues continue to be valued by modern societies, and especially within the Church. Yet as we are learning in Hosea, kindness, nicety and tolerance must be defined by God's Torah and not by the societies of men. Let me pause here to make clear that in no way am I suggesting that the books of the New Testament fall outside of this knowledge. On the other hand, the New Testament didn't change the dynamics and principles and laws set down in the Torah as it is usually said to have; it affirmed them.

**CJB Romans 3:29-31** *<sup>29</sup> Or is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, he is indeed the God of the Gentiles; <sup>30</sup> because, as you will admit, God is one. Therefore, he will consider righteous the circumcised on the ground of trusting and the uncircumcised through that same trusting. <sup>31</sup> Does it*

***follow that we abolish Torah by this trusting? Heaven forbid! On the contrary, we confirm Torah.***

God is about to destroy the people of Israel (meaning destroying their Kingdom and sending them, scattered, into the nations) NOT because they weren't nice people but, rather, because what they thought to be truth came from something else than God's Torah; which, by definition, means what they believed to be truth wasn't truth. As so many of us know, in modern times to follow God in truth and obedience, and to take council on the whole Word of God, feels like we are swimming against a strong current. The harder part of that struggle is that while we can understand that reality as it concerns secular humanist society, at times it feels as if we're swimming against that same current within institutional and normative Christianity. It would be so much easier if we could just be neutral, wouldn't it? If we could find a happy comfortable place in the middle as a kind of religious Switzerland. And yet God gives us no such option. There's truth, and there's not truth. Ephraim/Israel wasn't intentionally abandoning Yehoveh; they just wanted to exist in that middle ground. So, Jeroboam's priests fashioned a new religion that brought part of their Hebrew faith along with them, added elements of pagan worship valued by their neighbors and friends, and subtracted anything that was controversial and might upset the peace. They wanted to get along among themselves and with their gentile neighbors. Yehoveh, through Hosea, responds with an emphatic "no!" to that, and He is about to mete out devastating consequences for such a misguided attempt.

Sir Hector Hetherington, who was for 25 years the President of the University of Glasgow in Scotland, spoke these intriguing words as regards a hard lesson about our earnest search for spiritual truth:

***"There are issues on which it is impossible to be neutral. These issues strike right down to the roots of man's existence. And while it is right that we should examine all the evidence, and make sure that we have all the evidence, it is equally right that we ourselves should be accessible to the evidence. We cannot live a full life without knowing exactly where we stand regarding these fundamental issues of life and destiny".***

The concept of neutrality exists nowhere in the Bible; neutrality is not part of God's character biblically, and therefore is not to be part of ours. To God knowledge only means knowledge of His truth. Wisdom only means wisdom from Heaven. And this kind of truth is not found in our nice thoughts, or our many human law codes, on college campuses, nor in increased intellectualism. There is one source alone for it: the Bible. And more specifically, according to the Holy Scriptures, the Torah. It is quite telling that in the final book of the Bible, Revelation, we find a teaching about the subject of neutrality and where spiritual knowledge is supposed to come from... but too often doesn't.

**CJB Revelation 3: 14-19** <sup>14</sup> ***"To the angel of the Messianic Community in Laodicea, write: 'Here is the message from the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the Ruler of God's creation: <sup>15</sup> "I know what you are doing: you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were either one or the other! <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth! <sup>17</sup> For you keep saying, 'I am rich, I have gotten rich, I don't need a thing!' You don't know that you are the one who is wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked! <sup>18</sup> My advice to you is to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich; and white clothing, so that you may be dressed and not have to be ashamed of your nakedness; and eyesalve to rub on your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup> As for me, I rebuke and discipline everyone I love; so exert yourselves, and turn from your sins!***

These words could have been spoken to Ephraim/Israel because they encapsulate exactly what God is telling them. Israel is lukewarm: they have created doctrines in order to be neutral. They have reshaped their formerly orthodox Hebrew faith in order to better get along in the world as it existed and as they wanted it to be. Israel has retained Yehoveh, but added elements of their neighbors' religious beliefs in order to demonstrate their tolerance and neutrality. Israel at this point in the Book of Hosea was still very prosperous ("I am rich, I have gotten rich, I don't need a thing"). But to God they were, spiritually speaking, derelict ("You don't know that you are the one who is wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked"). God in Hosea says that Israel is destroyed for lacking the knowledge of Torah ("My advice to you is to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich, and white clothing so that you may be dressed

and not have to be ashamed of your nakedness"). And for this lack of knowledge the priests, who are supposed to be teachers of truth, are blamed.

Let's re-read a portion of Hosea chapter 4.

### **RE-READ HOSEA CHAPTER 4:7 – end**

The "they" who increased in number were the priests of the hybridized religion of Ephraim/Israel. It seems that the more priests that became attached to this priesthood, the even greater they sinned. How is that? It's because as a group expands and adopts the same troubled mindset, they find in it a validation for their thoughts and behavior. However, because this group-think amounted to idolatry and rebellion against Yehoveh, they have exchanged their Glory for shame. Here we find another term "Glory" that is so often misunderstood. Just as Wisdom is seen biblically as a living person of God, and as we have learned so is The Word, The Glory is yet another manifestation of God. That is, their Glory is a living entity; it is a proper name. The Prophet Jeremiah also exposes this name as a specific manifestation of God.

**CJB Jeremiah 2:10-12 <sup>10</sup> Cross to the coasts of the Kitti'im and look; send to Kedar and observe closely; see if anything like this has happened before: <sup>11</sup> has a nation ever exchanged its gods (and theirs are not gods at all!)? Yet my people have exchanged their Glory for something without value. <sup>12</sup> Be aghast at this, you heavens! Shudder in absolute horror!" says ADONAI.**

So, while in Hosea knowledge that The Glory is a name for a manifestation of God is assumed, in Jeremiah it is explained. The Glory is the God that the Hebrews exchanged for something without value, and it is an absolute horror! Thus, to be clear: God is directly saying in Hosea 4:7 that Israel has exchanged their God, here called The Glory, for gods of shame... the gods of the Baal system.

In verse 8, the priests are accused of feeding on the sins of the laymen of Israel. I love what Douglas Stewart in his commentary on Hosea says:

***"Instead of teaching the people the nature of righteousness and motivating them to seek it, the priests are prospering via the OT equivalent of selling indulgences".***

For you who might not know, an indulgence is a unique doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church. It stems from the belief that repentance for a sin is, alone, not sufficient. Rather, there must be a penalty suffered as well. Often this would involve a kind of fine to be paid. Upon payment for the indulgence, priests would grant remission of that sin. Thus, in its fullest sense, indulgences are bought and sold. A person can pay a monetary amount and buy their way out of the guilt of having committed a sin. Naturally, this is quite a profit center for the Church. While this was not precisely what was going on with the priesthood of Israel, it's a good analogy. The more the people sinned, all the more sin offerings had to be brought to the altar. The greatest part of a sin offering was not burnt up, but rather given to the priests. Further, at this time because Israel had several holy sites with altars and priests to accompany them, then one can only imagine how many sin offerings were brought by the common people every day, and how much the priests profited from it. So, the priests' motivation was not to teach the people correctly, but rather to virtually lead the people into sin so that the priests could benefit from it, doing it all under the cover of religion.

The conclusion and consequence for this situation is found in the next verse. The NAS expresses it most literally and, I think, most clearly.

<sup>NAS</sup> **Hosea 4:9** ***And it will be, like people, like priest; So I will punish them for their ways, And repay them for their deeds.***

The thought is that just as God is going to punish the people of Israel, their priests will not escape. They, too, will suffer right along with the people. I'd like to give you an analogy that is meant only to help this verse impact us as it should.

In the usual Christian understanding of the Rapture event, Believers will be taken away to Heaven while non-Believers will be left behind. It is generally pictured that many Church goers who are convinced in themselves that they are indeed Believers and saved will be left behind because they are not truly faithful or they

have been some kind of pretenders. However, it is unimaginable that those left behind could ever be the men standing behind the pulpits. So, while many laymen in the Church might not be terribly surprised at not being Raptured, it would be unthinkable to the men who went to Seminary and who lead many in prayer, and have dedicated their lives to leading congregations. The idea underlying verse 9 is that the priests in Ephraim/Israel are certain that they must be exempt from God's punishment simply because they **are** priests. God says: not so fast. People and priest will be treated the same.

Verse 10 refers back to verse 8. The "eat but it will not be enough" refers to the portions of the sin offerings they receive. This is both literal and a metaphor. Not being enough means despite all they get, it's never enough; they always want more. It's pretty human that the more we get, the more we want; satisfaction and contentment with our particular level of abundance is only sometimes fulfilling, especially if our aim is to constantly increase our abundance. Simply put: the priests are greedy and unethical. The remainder of the verse speaks of the priests consorting with prostitutes and having no children. This is because they paid no attention to God.

The consequences listed here from the priests not paying attention to God (here meaning to God's Torah) are hunger and childlessness. The curses are actually curses listed in the Torah for these particular offenses. At the same time, these results are both literal and symbolic. Their coming exile will indeed cause them hunger (lack of food). Prostitution means the priests indeed consorted with whores. And childlessness meant that because they left their seed in whores instead of their wives, they had no legitimate offspring to carry on their family line. On the other hand, symbolically speaking, their hunger will be spiritual in nature as they will have lost their connection to God and be empty. And, Yehoveh sees them having intimacy with prostitutes as a metaphor for the idolatry they are committing against Him. Having no children means, symbolically, their careers as priests will have been an utter failure.

Verse 11 shifts the attention away from the priests and instead towards the population in general.

**CJB Hosea 4:11** *Whoring and wine, both old and new, take away my people's wits.*

Something I'd like you to notice is this: the verse speaks of both old wine and new wine, and they both take away people's wits. Often in the Church it is said that wine, **yayin** in Hebrew, isn't alcoholic; it is but grape juice. Or, sometimes it is said that old wine might have alcohol in it but new wine is grapes that haven't gone through the fermentation process yet, and thus is just grape juice. None of this is accurate. New wine means it comes from a recent harvest and indeed has fermented but has a relatively low alcohol content suitable for religious ritual, compared to older wine that has only gotten stronger with time. I'll paraphrase this verse to give you the sense of it. The people have become so eager to drink and get drunk that it has driven them to the brink of madness. Pleasure has become everything at any cost, and they derive their pleasure from excessive drinking and then making the typical bad decisions that come from that inebriated and therefore uninhibited state of mind. For the men, indulging their sexual lusts with prostitutes has gone hand in hand with that drunkenness. It's important that we understand that most men were married; it was just the culture. So, we are to understand that they have whores they visit even though they have wives at home. I say this now because some verses coming up require that we know that. Verse 12 then draws a parallel between these drunken sexual lusts and how this affects their spiritual relationship with Yehoveh.

**CJB Hosea 4:12** *My people consult their piece of wood, their diviner's wand speaks to them; for the spirit of whoring makes them err, they go off whoring, deserting their God.*

This same mindset that allows them to commit these debaucheries and to behave in such an immoral way is entirely connected to their worship practices. The "piece of wood" they consult isn't an idol; it is further defined as the diviner's wand. It is probably referring to a stick that was stood up in the center of a circle. The circle would have different words written in different sectors of the circle. A diviner (a priest) would let go of the stick, and it would fall into one of the sectors such that wherever it did land was considered as the divine answer from God for their inquiry. Yehoveh, here, mocks this entire religious ritual as nonsense. What causes His people to do this absurd thing? Their spirit of whoring (metaphorically



meaning idolatry); the result is to desert Yehoveh. And yet, their spirit of whoring (idolatry) is directly connected to actual whoring with prostitutes.

Folks, from the 30,000-foot view, here's what we are to understand: in God's eyes there is no way to separate our spiritual life from our physical life, and in reality we can't, either. A demented spiritual viewpoint and a demented physical life and behavior are directly connected. This doesn't mean that because perhaps we hold a couple of questionable doctrinal views about God that we're going to become pleasure seeking party animals and sex addicts. But there is some line in the sand out there that once our spiritual understanding strays far enough from actual truth, it will have a terrible effect on our earthly life; and vice versa. I don't think an illustration is even needed, because drug use and alcoholism and its awful effects are so visible and rampant in Western societies that all we have to do is pay attention instead of becoming dulled to it. I think it is probably close to non-existent that you could find a person who lives in a perpetual drug or alcohol induced haze, who has any kind of an actual relationship with God that God accepts. This is the sort of thing verse 12 is speaking about.

Verse 13 continues this same thought.

**CJB Hosea 4:13** *They sacrifice on the mountain peaks and offer incense on the hills under oaks, poplars and pistachio trees; because they give good shade. Therefore your daughters behave like whores, And your daughters-in-law commit adultery.*

While there is some scholarly disagreement over exactly which species of trees are being listed, the meaning is clear. It was the usual mode that when a pagan holy site was selected for worship by Baal religions that they picked a hill top, erected a small altar, and planted a tree. Or they found a pre-existing tree on a hill top and built an altar under it. That the tree has good shade is meant as sarcasm. They did it because these trees represented fertility and thus the fertility goddess Ashtoreth (shade was a side benefit). Recent finds throughout the hill country of Israel have unearthed these sites all over the place. It's hard to know how many there ultimately were 2700 years ago, but hundreds are likely. Anyone that felt like making their own holy site did so, and often it was out of



convenience; it's like going to a Church because it's the one closest to your house.

Likely many of the animal sacrifices that took place at these many altars were dedicated to Yehoveh, and yet with overtones of it also having some effect in their worship of Baal as well. For Hebrews the offering of any sacrifices other than at Jerusalem is expressly forbidden by the Torah as was the eating of any portion of the sacrifice (as concerned the priests). As a result, the daughters and daughters-in-law of the men who had performed these illicit rituals behaved like prostitutes and committed adultery. Once again; improper understanding of God results in improper worship of God, which results in family dysfunction and immoral behavior. Verse 14 follows with something truly extraordinary.

**CJB Hosea 4:14 *I won't punish your daughters when they act like whores, or your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery; because the men are themselves going off with whores and sacrificing with prostitutes. Yes, a people without understanding will come to ruin.***"

The sense of this is not that these women get a pass for their immoral behavior. Rather it is that the men are blamed for it. Despite the fact that by Christ's day adultery was considered by the Jews as only as a female crime, and despite a belief by many in the Church that in the Old Testament women were held to a different standard than men when it came to marriage and sex, that simply isn't true. Now; did Israelite society regularly try to reframe God's Torah to make it to the benefit of males? Constantly. There's no denying that Israel was always a male dominant society. And, there's no denying a dominant family role that males are to play, according to the Torah. Yet, women were not to be treated as cattle, second class citizens, nor was it that women didn't have rights. Men weren't given a pass for the same sins that women might commit, especially when it came to marital unfaithfulness. Even so it had been a nearly continuous custom to set women in the backseat and simply wink at the sexual sins of males. So, God is saying this in verse 14: men, I'm not about to condemn your women and look the other way for you. You think it's fine for you to commit adultery by having sex with whores. But then turn around and want severe punishment for your daughters (and by extension, your wives) for becoming the whores that other men visit. This entire society is so out of control and wicked because you

have no understanding of right and wrong. This entire society is utterly ruined; men, women, husbands, wives, sons, daughters... the whole lot of you.

I want to briefly touch on something that the more time goes by, and the more I learn, I'm less convinced about. That something is cult prostitution. That is, that the various pagan god systems had women that worked for them in which ritual sex was performed as a regular worship practice. It's not so much that I don't think it happened; I am just more and more coming to the conclusion that it was not as rampant and usual as it is regularly thought to have been, and was actually a kind of outlier. So, the increase of that activity seems to have occurred mainly at various pagan festivals and likely had more to do with a population influx of males looking for a good time, and so like cotton candy vendors at a fair, the prostitutes came out in droves to take advantage of the crowds. This as opposed to an increase of prostitution for purely religious reasons.

What was just said in verse 14, is followed by what is really a parenthetical statement.

**CJB Hosea 4:15 *If you, Isra'el, prostitute yourself, still Y'hudah has no need to incur such guilt. Don't go to Gilgal or up to Beit-Aven, and don't swear, "As ADONAI lives.***

There are a number of Bible academics that don't think this statement belongs here; rather that it was a gloss added much later. I find that not credible. There's no good reason to decide that this statement doesn't belong here because it was earlier established in Hosea that these circumstances don't currently apply to Judah. This seems to be a veiled call for those of Israel who desire to live a different and better lifestyle than their brothers, to go to Judah where they weren't committing idolatry. And in the end, not suffer exile. God says to those Israelites that might be heeding Hosea's message to turn from they're ways and to not go up to Gilgal or to Beit-Aven (in order to worship). Further, they shouldn't swear; this means not to make an oath at those places probably inappropriately using Yehoveh's name as the guarantor of the oath. So, what was wrong with worshipping at Gilgal and Beit-Aven?

Gilgal was actually where the Wilderness Tabernacle was set up for a while after all the tribes of Israel crossed the Jordan River (although there were more than one Gilgal). However, in time, the Tabernacle went into disrepair and a lot of wrong worship practices occurred there so that it gained a bad reputation. **Biet-Aven** means House of Trouble. Very likely what this is actually referring to is the place called **Biet-El**, House of God. In literature what we might be seeing is called a metonymy. That is, it is a sarcastic rebuke by giving a name to something that is the opposite of its original meaning. The place was actually called House of God but it had become so degraded that a more appropriate name for it would be House of Trouble. It's a little like how Las Vegas is also called Sin City. Las Vegas merely means The Meadows. A peaceful place. But what actually goes on there characterizes it more as a place of partying and sinning. Bethel was one of main places where the Ephraim/Israelite worship practices occurred and likely had one of Jeroboam's golden calf gods placed there.

Let's jump back up to the 30,000-foot level to get the gist of what's being said. The Prophet Amos, a contemporary of Hosea, speaking of the same issue, says this in his prophecy.

**CJB Amos 5:21-23** <sup>21</sup> *"I hate, I utterly loathe your festivals; I take no pleasure in your solemn assemblies. <sup>22</sup> If you offer me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; nor will I consider the peace offerings of your stall-fed cattle. <sup>23</sup> Spare me the noise of your songs! I don't want to hear the strumming of your lutes!*

God says any old worship, at any old place, isn't accepted just because you call on My Name. In fact, it is infuriating to Me that you would even try to. It's worse than if you did nothing at all. As a kind of companion message in this passage to Judah God is saying to them: don't do what Israel is doing. Things are going to be much happier for you if you abstain.

Let's re-establish that throughout our Hosea study the underlying cause for Israel's punishment is breaking their covenant with God: The Covenant of Moses.

**CJB Hosea 4:16** ***<sup>16</sup> For Isra'el is stubborn as a stubborn cow; will ADONAI now feed them like a lamb in a big pasture?***

Israel goes from being characterized as a cow to that of a lamb. A cow that doesn't want to be led can be very hard to move. No matter which way you push, the animal always seems to go a different direction. Israel has become so hardened that God can no longer be a shepherd to His people. A lamb is vulnerable. They must be more carefully cared for and protected than a cow. But how can God treat a lamb like a lamb when it acts like a stubborn, immovable cow? Notice how suddenly this narrative begins to use terms about raising domestic animals, when before it was using marriage terms. And terms about prostitution and debauchery. This terminology is selected because the people that God is talking to are familiar with them. It would be like in modern times God might liken our behavior to that of cars. Or tell us about things in terms of the Internet and Smartphones. These things are part of our everyday lives and so we all have some knowledge of them and therefore make for good illustrations.

Verse 17 says that since Ephraim is so extensively joined to idols, they should be left alone. Notice first of all the use of the name Ephraim all by itself. This indicates that the names Ephraim, Israel, and Northern Kingdom all meant the same place. But it also says that other than that the punishment of exile is coming, nothing further to dissuade them or coax them away from their unacceptable condition is going to happen. Their fate before God is fixed and not changeable. It would be a waste of time to make any effort to try to reform them. Might you believe that with the advent of Jesus that this harshness and severity of a worshipper of God being barred from His forgiveness and deliverance for their wrong doing is a thing of the past?

**CJB Matthew 7:22-23** ***<sup>22</sup> On that Day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord! Didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we expel demons in your name? Didn't we perform many miracles in your name?' <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them to their faces, 'I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!'***

The NAS Bible version does a much better job with this next verse in Hosea than does the CJB.

<sup>NAS</sup> **Hosea 4:18** *Their liquor gone, They play the harlot continually; Their rulers dearly love shame.*

“Their liquor is gone” just means that they have imbibed so much that they can’t drink anymore and now turn to another even worse activity; they play the harlot. Clearly this is a case of mostly symbolism. That is, after making themselves drunk and irrational, they take on the role of the community harlot. This is in the sense of the wife that is so drunk she doesn’t know what’s she’s doing, so she becomes unfaithful to her husband. As I said at our introduction to Hosea, we don’t have a really good copy in our day of Hosea that is fully intact. This particular verse is particularly problematic and so what these words actually are or are communicating is pretty tough to obtain. So rather than just add speculation to speculation we’ll move on to the final verse of chapter 4: verse 19.

<sup>CJB</sup> **Hosea 4:19** *The wind will carry them off in its wings and their sacrifices bring them nothing but shame.*

We probably have a play on words, here. The term “the wind” is in Hebrew *ruach*, and as you might know it is also the word for spirit. It seems to me that if it is a play on words, then on the one hand being carried off by the wind means Israel’s exile to wherever the wind blows them. On the other hand, it also is probably a reference to the prostituting spirit that God says now characterizes Israel. Therefore, as a result of this prostituting spirit, their sacrifices to Yehoveh amounts to shame because He doesn’t accept them. Let’s move on to chapter 5.

### **READ HOSEA CHAPTER 5 all**

Verse 1 is a summons to judgement. Three different groups are told to present themselves before God. First, Israel’s priests. Second, the people themselves. And third, the royal family (the King, Israel’s rulers). This is representative of every level of Israel’s society; none are going to be spared. Their crimes have thus been laid out in earlier chapters, now the verdict is being read. The priests are mentioned first probably because in God’s eyes they bear the most responsibility for having led God’s chosen people away from truth, installing instead a manmade poisonous concoction of false beliefs and worship practices.

God says that Israel... all of it... has entangled Mizpah in a snare... an animal trap. There were a number of Mizpah's in Israel, with the one located in Benjamin's territory perhaps the most well-known. It seems unlikely this is the Mizpah being referred to since Benjamin was part of Judah, and not Israel. Since it's hard to see where either of these 2 places mentioned (Mizpah then Tabor) have any logical reason to be singled out, it might be that they are only mentioned to be sort of random representative of many places in Israel. Otherwise, it's entirely unclear. That said, some fairly recent reconstructions of verse 2 seem to say:

***"..a net stretched over Tabor, a pit dug deep at Shittim. But I am a chastiser for you all"***. It appears that if this new reconstruction is correct, there might be a third place mentioned called Shittim. Shittim means Acacia tree. The significance of Shittim is that it is the final place all of Israel encamped on the east side of the Jordan before being led across it into Jericho by Joshua. Further, it has an additional connection that becomes evident when we go to the Torah to read about Shittim in the Book of Numbers.

**CJB Numbers 25:1 *Isra'el stayed at Sheetim, and there the people began whoring with the women of Mo'av.***

The mention of whoring at Shittim cannot be coincidental and seems to marry quite well with the whoring that God has been accusing Israel of. We'll stop here for today.