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Deep Cuts: Empty Altars Bruce Nielson

Deep Cut: An idiomatic term referring to a song that is considerably less popular and well-known than other songs on the same album or by the same artist. Usually, these songs are known best by the true fans of the artist.

Deep Cut Trivia #1: Which song is a deep cut from Bryan Duncan? (Hint: It was when he was a member of the Sweet Comfort Band.)

- A. Freedom to Be Free
- B. Beyond Belief
- C. Valerie
- D. Best Friends

Answer: Valerie

Deep Cut Trivia #2: Which of the following songs is a Michael W. Smith deep cut?

- A. Soul on Fire
- B. Secret Ambition
- C. Good Good Father
- D. House of the Lord

Answer: Secret Ambition

Books of Prophecy

Major Prophets

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

Minor Prophets

Hosea Habakkuk
Joel Zephaniah
Amos Haggai
Obadiah Zechariah
Jonah Malachi
Micah
Nahum

Historical Context for the Book of Hosea

- He lived about 200 years after Israel split into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The kingdom of Israel had 10 of the original 12 tribes; Judah had the other two.
- He was a prophet to the kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II.
- His ministry was from about 750-722 BC, just before Israel fell to the Assyrian Empire.
- He was called to speak, on behalf of God, to Israel, also called "Ephraim" or "Jacob".
- One of the most famous portions of the book of Hosea is his marriage to Gomer. She commits adultery and leaves him. God has Hosea seek her out, pay her debts, and commit his love and faithfulness to her again. This is symbolic of God's relentless love for Israel even after their unfaithfulness to Him.

Hosea 6:4-7 (NIV): “What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears. Therefore I cut you in pieces with my prophets, I killed you with the words of my mouth—then my judgments go forth like the sun. For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings. As at Adam, they have broken the covenant; they were unfaithful to me there.”

Three Realities About What God Desires From Us

Reality #1: God Wants Our Heart, Not Just Our Habits

Hosea 6:6 (NIV): “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,…”

Matthew 23:27 (NIV): “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.”

Psalms 40:6-8 (NIV): Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—but my ears you have opened—burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, “Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.”

Reality #2: God Wants a Relationship, Not Religion

Hosea 6:6 (NIV): “...and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.”

Religion = Do these things, and God will accept you.
Relationship = God has accepted you, now walk with Him.

Matthew 9:13 (NIV): “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Matthew 12:7 (NIV): “If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ you would not have condemned the innocent.”

Reality #3: God Wants Transformation, Not Just a Transaction

Isaiah 64:6 (NIV): All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Micah 6:8 (NIV): “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”