

Text: The Book of Hosea

Title: Hosea in One Message

Truth: God is willing to take (back) unfaithful people and bring them into a loving, faithful relationship with Him.

Date/Location: July 16, 2023 at FBC

Introduction

The prophet Hosea spanned the reigns of four kings in the southern kingdom of Judah. He also ministered during Jeroboam's reign in the northern kingdom called Israel. He ministered around 755 to 710 B.C. His prophecies regarding the northern kingdom, aka "Ephraim" had to be before 722 B.C. because by then his prophetic announcements were fulfilled when the Assyrians defeated and deported the northern tribes.

I. Shocking Illustration—Hosea and Gomer

- A. The prophet was to marry a woman who was a harlot—likely before their marriage and again during it. Verse 2 explains with this phrase: "for the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the LORD." In Hosea's situation, the harlotry was physical—a woman who sold herself, later was married, then went back to her old lifestyle. This was a real-life illustration of the nation of Israel who had been taken by God as His own (a "spiritual" marriage, so to speak) and then the nation left God and fooled around with other gods like Baal (2:8, 2:13, 2:17, 9:10, 11:2, 13:1).
- B. Hosea married Gomer and together they had three children:
 1. Jezreel. His name portended two things. First, God would judge Jehu for his violence against Ahab. Second, God will bring an end to the kingdom of Israel, the northern kingdom which had walked away from God and true worship of Him.
 2. Lo-Ruhamah. This daughter's name meant that God would have "no mercy" on the house of Israel. He would have mercy on the house of Judah, the southern kingdom.
 3. Lo-Ammi. This means "not my people." God disowned His people during this time. He also would not be their God. This is devastating for the nation to hear because a truth repeated

throughout the Hebrew Bible is “I will be their God” (Gen. 17:8; Jer. 24:7, 31:33, 32:38; Ezekiel 11:20, 37:23, 37:27; Zech. 8:8; 2 Cor. 6:16; Heb. 8:10).

- C. After this, Gomer leaves Hosea to return to her old life. But in chapter 3, God tells Hosea to get her back. He “buys” her for 15 shekels of silver and some barley. Who would do that? Who can forgive like that? The situation shows just how much Gomer deserved Hosea’s grace—not at all. So it is with the nation with God’s grace.
- D. This is the shocking part of the illustration: it pictures how God is willing to take back the nation despite her spiritual adultery in going after other gods. Read 2:19-23 for details.
- E. But there is a bit of a catch: there will be a period when Hosea and Gomer’s relationship is cool. It takes time for a couple to get back together, prove that they are faithful to one another, and remember how to love one another. Gomer would stay with Hosea many days and not be free to mess around with any man, and perhaps not even her husband.

This illustrated how the nation of Israel would abide “many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim.” After that, the nation of Israel would return and seek God and David their king. *That* is being fulfilled in this very day in 2023. It has been that way in some measure since the deportations, then after the intertestamental period (between the events of Malachi and Matthew’s gospel) and certainly after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The nation has been “kind of cured” of idolatry. Yet they have not embraced Messiah yet in large part and so their relationship with God is still distant, estranged, not right. But they will seek God in the Tribulation and millennial kingdom. They will seek the Lord, and resurrected David. He will take a seat lower than the Messiah, David’s son and Lord.

II. Sins of Israel—Her Unfaithfulness

- A. Idolatry—3:1, 13:1, also known as “spiritual harlotry.” This is the main sin that is in the book.
- B. But there are others:

1. Greed—12:7.
2. Pride—5:5, 7:10.
3. Reliance on others but not God—7:11. The Hebrews tended to rely on Egypt and Assyria for help instead of trusting in the Lord.
4. No repentance—11:5.
5. Rebellion—13:16.

C. Throughout the book we read of God’s judgment against them as they persist in iniquity. For example, 13:7 says God will be to them like a lion.” Notice also the sowing and reaping principle. You are more familiar with it from 2 Cor. 9:6 or Gal. 6:7-8. But it appears centuries earlier in the Biblical witness—Hosea 8:7 and 10:12-13.

III. Salvation of God—His Faithfulness

- A. Even after all of that, God was willing to take them back. The same principle applies today to individuals as at that time to the nation of Israel: God will take *you* even though you have behaved terribly. He is willing to forgive, willing to enter a close personal relationship with you, but you must turn from your sinful lifestyle to Him in repentance and faith. This is why Jesus Christ died on the cross—not only for you, but also to take the punishment for the sins of the nation of Israel from millennia gone by so that God could welcome them into his family again.
- B. God calls the nation to repent in 14:1. Do you notice the prayer of 14:2? I find it amazing that the Lord gives a “sinner’s prayer” here—the very words of it! It does not have all the meat that you might like because it was written before the fuller context of the gospel of Jesus Christ was made known. But it is a true expression of repentant faith nonetheless. The sacrifices of their lips were their words about repentance and love for God.
- C. Israel shall continue with expressions of how they will turn away from empty hopes in the neighboring nations and hand-made idols, and acknowledge that God is the source of mercy (14:3). In 14:8, Ephraim will confess that they have nothing to do with idols.
- D. Notice how the nation will respond in the future.
 1. They will know the Lord, 2:20.
 2. They will fear the Lord, 3:5.

3. They will seek the Lord, 5:15.
4. They will return to the Lord, 6:1.
5. They will walk after the Lord, 11:10.

E. This is what your life needs to look like today!

Conclusion

Your life is a microcosm of Israel's generations-long history of unfaithfulness. Hopefully, you will receive the grace of God and then you will experience the other side of the situation—the enduring faithfulness of God. No matter your sinful lifestyle, God will take you in if you fear Him and call to Him for salvation.

There are other notable truths sprinkled throughout the book by Hosea. For example:

1. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (4:6). The knowledge here is about God's Word and law.
2. Hosea 4:10 – “They shall eat but not have enough...because they have ceased obeying the Lord.”
3. God's people “ask counsel from their wooden idols.” So often we seek counsel from people other than God. Shame on us.
4. Empty religious ritual is of no value to God. He desires mercy and the knowledge of God more than sacrifice and burnt offerings (6:6).
5. God knows all our sin – 7:2. Nothing is hidden from Him.
6. God has written wonderful things to His people in His book, 8:12, but people consider them strange. God spoke by the prophets and gave plenty of witness (12:10).
7. Israel's history of going to Egypt and returning was a pattern that Jesus followed, but without any of the unfaithfulness of the nation (11:1).
8. God reminds us that we must know no God but Him, because there is no savior beside Him (13:4).
9. God will rescue His people from the grave and death will no longer have dominion over them (13:14).
10. The wise person will take all these things to heart and understand them (14:9).