The Book of Hosea

Zanesville, OH | Sunday AM Bible Study

**Chapter 2**

* **2:2-13– Israel is Unfaithful**
* In v. 2, the setting seems to resemble a trial or court case. The command *“contend”* is spoken to the children (Israelites) of the nation who like Gomer’s children are born into an age of flagrant harlotry. They are told to contend (repudiate, denounce) their mother (the nation) for her actions.
* It seems as though Gomer’s children are called to denounce her actions of being unfaithful against Hosea and thus this is paralleled to Israel’s unfaithfulness against God (Jer. 3:6-8). The text further describes perhaps the putting away or divorce of the wife from the husband (Israel from God/Gomer from Hosea).
* It is her harlotries that has led to this separation. Israel’s repeated rejection of God in favor of their beloved idols and false gods demands that God put them away. The face and breasts are body parts associated with sexual intimacy and beauty (Prov. 5:19; Song of Sol. 1:13). Here it has been employed in sexual sin and not in legitimate relationships.
* In v. 3, the judge (God) makes a threat to Israel. If she does not repent, she will be stripped naked and left exposed (Isa. 47:3; Ezek. 16) like the day she was born (reference to Egypt). It was the husband’s responsibility to provide basic necessities for the wife including clothing and food (Ex. 21:10). The marital rights will be acquitted if Israel does not repent.
* God will leave her exposed and make her a wilderness and a desert land desperate for thirst (Jer. 51:43; Amos 8:11-13). Israel will become a wasteland without God and His word and there will be none to help her.
* In v. 4, no compassion is emphasized once more (1:6). This time it is stressed to the children of harlotry. This goes back to 1:2 and the idea is that they have been conceived into a society of flagrant harlotry and it seems that they are now taking their roles as idolaters themselves.
* In v. 5, the mother of these children played the harlot (Israel as a nation; Isa. 1:21; Jer. 3:1-9). She has involved her children in her own illicit activities and as such she has acted shamefully. She is described as chasing after her lovers (Ezek. 23:5-11) and as such Israel was determined to seek their false gods and idols (lovers). Note that as this section continues it seems as if though Gomer has left Hosea to chase after her lovers and so the parallel occurs throughout the rest of the chapter.
* The latter part of v. 5 deals with Israel’s misguided thoughts surrounding its sustenance. They attribute their source of food, clothing, medicine etc. to their idols and false gods. This is not to be considered as a payoff but as blessings or gifts from the “gods”.
* In vv. 6-7, because of Israel’s flagrant sin, God will essentially set up roadblocks and walls so that she will not overtake nor find her paths to these lovers. The language used in v. 6 is typical when speaking of stubborn/dumb animals who stray away from their owners (Deut. 32:15; Hos. 4:16).
* Seek and not find is a reversal of (Matt. 7:7-8). The idea is that a pursuit of idols and false gods is really no pursuit at all. They are lifeless objects that offer nothing (Jer. 2:28; 14:22)!
* In v. 7, after Israel recognizes the folly of its pursuit they will return to God (their husband). The language is emphasizing repentance and not just a mere apology for wrongdoing (Zech. 1:3; Lk. 15:17-19).
* In v. 8, it is said of Israel, *“they do not know.”* The phrase is a common one in the book but also throughout the OT in speaking of their ignorance and rebellion (Deut. 32:28-29; Isa. 1:3; 44:18; Jer. 4:22; 10:8; Hos. 4:6; 5:4; 6:6). The things related to their sustenance that they attributed to their lovers in v. 5, comes from God (Matt. 5:45; Jam. 1:17).
* God says in v. 8, that the things He graciously gave His people they used in turn to serve Baal or they used it in the worship of Baal. Silver and gold (symbols of wealth) God also gave to Israel (Deut. 28:1-12) but they have also used this for Baal worship.
* In v. 9, just as the LORD gave so He will take it all away (Job 1:21). Notice the use of the word “My” in this verse. God will take away the grain during the time it should be most plentiful and likewise He will do the same with the wine. The people will experience a tremendous agricultural blow that in and of itself will cause severe consequences. God will strip the people naked as well (sign of shame and destitution).
* In v. 10, the language seems to indicate shame and helplessness. God will completely strip His people and their folly (lust, wickedness) will be open to all (Ezek. 23:29). No one will rescue them from Him (Deut. 32:39; Hos. 5:13-14). God’s omnipotence and sovereignty is stressed here with an understanding that He controls all and does as He please.
* The ecstatic celebrations of the nation coupled with its treasured feasts and religious holidays will come to an end in v. 11. While God Himself commanded His people to observe these days, they quickly perverted it into a means for evil and self-gain (Isa. 1:13-14; Amos 8:4-6). Notice the use of the word “her” in this verse. God is not abolishing the Old Law here but simply pronouncing judgment against the people.
* In v. 12, vines and fig trees (symbols of prosperity and security; Lev. 26:5; 1 Kings 4:24; Psa. 128:3; Mic. 4:4) will also be destroyed. These were pertinent to the feast of Tabernacles and without these there could be no feast. The covenant curses continue to take its course (Lev. 26:20; Deut. 28:39-40).
* What Israel thought was from her lovers (v. 5), God will turn into a wilderness or consume it (Isa. 5:5; 7:23; 29:17). God exercises His power here demonstrating that all these things did in fact originate with Him.
* In v. 13, God will punish the nation for its constant and consistent worship of Baal (Judg. 2:11-13; 3:7; 10:6; Hos. 9:10; 13:1). This is further demonstrated by the description of sacrifices and adorning of jewelry and earrings (Ex. 32:2; Ezek. 23:40-42). In her utter focus and consistency of serving Baal, Israel forgot God (forsook, neglected; Deut. 6:12; 8:11-14; 32:18; 1 Sam. 12:9; Psa. 78:11; 106:13, 21; Ezek. 23:35).
* **2:14-23– Israel will be restored**
* Very similar to the previous chapter, we are first told about the judgment (1:1-9; 2:2-13) then the literature is drastically changed to talk about blessing and restoration (1:10-2:1; 2:14-23). The timing of the blessing and restoration period is not specified but other passages point out that this is not to be fulfilled until the days of Jesus.
* In v. 14, God will seek out His people. The word allure (entice, seduce) is used to indicate the passion with which God seeks His people and desires a relationship with them (Isa. 30:18). Long after the judgment and destruction has taken place, a penitent people will look to reconcile matters with their husband (God).
* God will bring them into the wilderness (Ezek. 20:35-38). This may be referring to the period of time in which Israel was entirely dependent on God and a period of spiritual testing or trial after being delivered from bondage. The trial ultimately culminated with rest in the promise land.
* He will speak kindly to them (Gen. 34:3; Judg. 19:3; Ruth 2:13) is another way of stating God will romance His people. God’s love and His faithfulness does not lose it strength and fervor and thus He earnestly seeks an intimate relationship with those who seek Him.
* In v. 15, the vine image returns in a positive light. They will receive blessings and security (symbolic of the vine) in the days of the Messiah. The valley of Achor was where Achan and his family were destroyed for their sin in Judg. 7. The reference here seems to indicate that through suffering and trial the people will have their hope renewed (Neh. 1:8-9; Ezek. 37:11-14).
* It will be like the days when Israel came out of Egypt when they were a youth (Ezek. 16:8; Hos. 11:1). Those were days of great hope, celebration and joy (Ex. 15:1-21) when God rescued them from the hand of their oppressors with His outstretched arm.
* In v. 16, they will call God their husband/my man (Ishi) and not Baal (mater, lord). This might be a reference to earlier verses where Israel wrongly attributed her blessings to Baal and not YHWH. In these days they will surely know that God is their husband (Isa. 54:5).
* In v. 17, Baal will not be mentioned at all (Ex. 23:13; Zech. 3:17). The words Ishi and Baali can be used to refer to husband. As a result, to avoid any confusion whatsoever, Baal or any form of the word will be obsolete in these days for only the name YHWH shall be mentioned and praised.
* In v. 18, the beasts, birds and creeping things were symbols of God’s punishment against the people especially in the covenant curses (Lev. 26:22; Deut. 28:26). Thus, the idea in this passage is that in these days there will be peace and no longer will the curses prevail. This is common language used to speak of the days under Christ (Isa. 11:6-9; Ezek. 34:25).
* Also, in v. 18, military might, war and sword will be abolished, and everyone will be safe. This is not meant to be taken in a literal light but rather we should understand this as complete and utter reliance on the power of God and the Messiah (Jer. 23:6; 33:16; Mic. 4:3-4; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-18). These days will promote spiritual superiority.
* In vv. 19-20, a picture of marriage is painted. This speaks of the marriage between God and His people (Christ and the church; Isa. 62:3-5; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2, 9-10). Notice the emphasis here on the eternal nature of the relationship (Ezek. 37:25-28).
* The use of the word “betroth” is rather striking. The word is in reference to the practice of settling the marriage contractually by the groom paying money to the bride’s father. After this was done, in essence the groom and the bride were married (Deut. 22:23-29; Ex. 22:16-17).
* Notice the aspects of this relationship that is emphasized: righteousness, justice, lovingkindess, compassion and faithfulness. These are all God’s great attributes that are the most occurrent in the scriptures and the bride must practice these as well (Psa. 85:10; 89:14; Amos 5:7, 24; 6:12; Isa. 30:18; Mic. 6:8; 2 Pet. 1:4). Only if these things are practiced will one know the LORD (Jer. 31:33-34).
* In vv. 21-22, God once again trumps any argument that Baal controls the weather (rain). In these future days of blessing, God will call to the heavens and they will respond to the earth and from the earth grain, oil, and new wine will come forth (Zech. 8:12). A picture similar to Amos 9:11-15 takes place with the idea of blessings upon blessings to unfold in the Messianic Kingdom.
* In vv. 22-23 the name Jezreel is seen again and the idea is the positive notion of “God will sow.” God will sow His people (Jezreel 1:4) and He will have compassion on them (Ruhamah 1:6) and they will be His people (Ammi 1:9).
* As in 1:10-2:1 the names given to Hosea’s children are reversed for good through God’s infinite power, mercy and love. The One who makes it all possible is never explicitly mentioned but Jesus is the reason all these things will take place. Both Jew and Gentile will be God’s people (Rom. 9:25-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10; Rev. 21:3-4). This new Israel will lack nothing in terms of their relationship with God because Jesus’ sacrifice would be sufficient to take care of the problem of sin.