

The Prophets

Lesson #11

Hosea

Outline

I. ***The Adulterous Wife And Faithful Husband (1:1-3:5)***

- A. The prophetic marriage of Hosea to Gomer (1:1-2:1).
 - 1. Hosea's marriage to Gomer (1:1-2).
 - 2. The children of Hosea and Gomer (1:3-9).
 - 3. The application of future restoration (1:10-2:1).
- B. The application of the adultery of Gomer (2:2-23).
 - 1. Israel's sin of spiritual adultery (2:2-5).
 - 2. The judgment of God (2:6-13).
 - 3. The restoration of Israel (2:14-23).
- C. The restoration of Gomer to Hosea (3:1-5).

II. ***The Adulterous Israel And Faithful Lord (4:1-14:9)***

- A. The spiritual adultery of Israel (4:1-6:3).
 - 1. The sins of Israel (4:1-19).
 - a) Rejection of the knowledge of God (4:1-10).
 - b) Idolatry of Israel (4:11-19).
 - 2. Judgment on Israel (5:1-14).
 - 3. Eventual restoration of Israel (5:15-6:3).
- B. The refusal of Israel to repent of its adultery (6:4-8:14).
 - 1. Willful transgression of the covenant (6:4-11).
 - 2. Willful refusal to return to the Lord (7:1-16).
 - 3. Willful idolatry (8:1-14).
- C. The judgment of Israel by God (9:1-10:15).
 - 1. Judgment of dispersion (9:1-9).
 - 2. Judgment of barrenness (9:10-17).
 - 3. Judgment of destruction (10:1-15).
- D. The restoration of Israel to the Lord (11:1-14:9).
 - 1. God's love for Israel (11:1-11).
 - 2. Israel's continuing sin (11:12-13:16).
 - 3. God's promise to restore Israel (14:1-9).

Notes

Hosea 1:1-3:5

- The prophetic marriage of Hosea to Gomer (1:1-2:1).
 - Hosea's marriage to Gomer (1:1-2).
 - Hosea's father was Beerli, of whom nothing but his name is known. It is probable that Hosea began prophesying in the last days of Uzziah and continued into the first part of Hezekiah's reign.

- Gomer was probably not a harlot when she married Hosea. She was likely a typical woman of that day who was influenced by her environment to become immoral. The parallel between Hosea and Gomer and God and Israel supports this conclusion.
- The children of Hosea and Gomer (1:3-9).
 - Hosea obeyed God's command and married Gomer, though this was certainly not easy, knowing what Gomer would become.
 - Homer and Gomer bore three children, to whom were given prophetic names: Jezreel (God scatters), Lo-ruhamah (Not Pitied), and Lo-ammi (Not My People), to show that God was about to bring His judgment upon Israel.
 - The political house of Israel would never be restored. "At that day" probably points to the end of the kingdom of Israel. God would no more show love to Israel; yet He would continue to show love to Judah.
- The application of future restoration (1:10-2:1).
 - The statement in vs. 10 points to the time of Christ (1 Peter 2:10; Romans 9:26). "The day of Jezreel" refers back to 1:4; for inasmuch as the kingdom had been brought to an end, now Israel and Judah (and the Gentiles) could be brought together as one.
 - At present the relationship was symbolized by the names Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi; but in the future the appropriate names will be "my people" and "my loved one."
- The application of the adultery of Gomer (2:2-23).
 - Israel's sin of spiritual adultery (2:2-5).
 - That which Hosea had experienced in his unfaithful wife, Gomer, God had experienced in the unfaithful nation, Israel. Because of their idolatry, God cannot be to her a husband and nor she to Him a wife.
 - The nation had praised the baalim as the source of her blessings. She had served them for the hire of material prosperity. For this, God would hedge up her paths, making it impossible for her to escape.
 - The judgment of God (2:6-13).
 - Though Israel's path would be blocked, she would still try to chase after her lovers in futility.
 - Because of this unfaithfulness to Himself, God would take back that which He had bestowed upon the nation. This would leave the nation destitute.
 - The restoration of Israel (2:14-23).
 - Israel had wandered far away in pursuit of her lovers, but God would allure her back to Himself.

- Once more the right relationship between God and Israel would be restored, as when Israel came up out of Egypt.
- The new covenant would restore the relationship between God and His people; a spirit of peace would characterize them. Under this covenant, the animal nature of man would be brought under subjection. He has bestowed all spiritual blessings on them in Christ.
- The restoration of Gomer to Hosea (3:1-5).
 - In taking her back, Hosea would be illustrating God's continuing love for Israel, who had turned to "other gods" and lusted after "flagons of wine."
 - Until she could prove herself, she would not be as a wife to him, nor would he be to her a husband; there would be no conjugal relation between them.
 - As Israel had gone so far from God and had sunk so low, so Gomer had gone so far from Hosea and had sunk so low that she was no longer desired and had become a slave to be bought from a master.

Hosea 4:1-14:9

- The spiritual adultery of Israel (4:1-6:3).
 - The sins of Israel (4:1-19).
 - Rejection of the knowledge of God (4:1-10).
 - With a burdened heart and fierce indignation because of the sins of the nation, the prophet stepped from the moral ruin of his own destroyed home into the atmosphere of a degenerate people. They were untrustworthy, failed to show compassion toward others and lacked a true knowledge of the being and nature of God.
 - Because of this moral decay, desolation would come on the land, a desolation so terrible that even all nature would be affected by it.
 - Hosea laid the blame for their condition upon the priests; they, primarily, were responsible. Knowledge of God and of His ways is essential to the life of any people.
 - Those responsible for the teaching of righteousness were encouraging sin so that they themselves could profit!
 - Idolatry of Israel (4:11-19).
 - The priests had been the leaders in wrongdoing, but the people had followed them all too closely.
 - The altars to false gods were usually erected on the tops of high elevations and hills, and under trees of heavy foliage on the plains or level sections. Idolatrous worship was terribly immoral and depraved.

- The Ephraimites were the most influential tribe of the northern nation and were often referred to as representative of that nation. They were so far gone into idolatry that they had become hopeless.
- Judgment on Israel (5:1-14).
 - Corruption was discovered in all phases of life and made punishment inevitable. Idolatry was found not only among the people of the nation, but among the priests, in the house of the king and among the princes of his household.
 - Any attempt to hide from God would be ridiculous. Ephraim, the ruling house, and Israel, the people, in all their idolatry and defilement are ever before His eyes.
 - When Israel went up out of Egypt they took their flocks and herds with them to meet God. Now they will go forth with their flocks and herds to seek Him, but will be unable to find Him because He will have withdrawn Himself.
 - Upon realizing the situation, Ephraim sought help from Assyria rather than from God -- perhaps the time when Menahem paid tribute to Assyria (2 Kings 15:19-20; cf. 2 Kings 16:5-9). Ephraim's troubles were internal ones and indeed incurable.
- Eventual restoration of Israel (5:15-6:3).
 - When the punishment had been inflicted, God would withdraw to await the desired results.
 - The people urged one another to return truly to God in the confidence that He who had punished them would heal them and bind up their wounds.
 - God, they can be sure, will respond to their persistence in seeking Him; He would come to them as surely "as the morning," a coming as delightfully welcome as the winter rains and the spring rains.
- The refusal of Israel to repent of its adultery (6:4-8:14).
 - Willful transgression of the covenant (6:4-11).
 - The word "goodness" connotes continued faithful love; but the people fell lamentably short when it came to sustaining it. As a result, God had sent His prophets to speak words of warning, which included predictions of doom.
 - The whole land of Israel had become as a haunt for wicked men, stained with the blood of their crimes. Again the priests are charged with conduct characteristic of gangsters who lie in wait to murder and rob. They committed great deeds of lust and wickedness.

- Willful refusal to return to the Lord (7:1-16).
 - The wickedness of Israel seemed endless. Israel the nation, Ephraim the ruling tribe and Samaria the capital are all involved. As God would heal one, the wickedness of another was brought to light.
 - The saddest part of the picture was seen in the statement of God, there was "none among them that calleth unto me."
 - In addition to the internal moral corruption of the people, the nation was cursed with a corrupt and destructive foreign policy. The strength of Israel was to have been the people's trust in God and their separateness and seclusion from all other nations.
 - Though God was seeking to redeem them through His prophets, they lied about Him. They deny His sole deity by turning to idols, and they lied to Him in word and action.
- Willful idolatry (8:1-14).
 - God bade Hosea to trumpet a warning. An eagle (i.e., Assyria) was ready to descend on "the house of the Lord."
 - In reality, they did not know God. They had cast Him off, their only true good; and now the enemy would pursue them. It was too late to cry. His "good" is only for those who respect Him and keep His covenant.
 - "The calf of Samaria," the calf of gold erected at Bethel, had come from the hands of Israel. It was a product of human creation, and as such it was not God nor could it represent God.
 - In the Pentateuch God had given the people "great things" (lit., "ten thousand things") of His law so that they could know His will. They had thought of His law as something strange. Thus the fault lay with the people, not with God.
- The judgment of Israel by God (9:1-10:15).
 - Judgment of dispersion (9:1-9).
 - The people were enjoying a period of temporary prosperity that led them into premature rejoicing.
 - Bread of mourning was bread eaten in mourning for the dead, or as one shares grief with others over the sorrow of death (cf. Jeremiah 16:7; Deuteronomy 24:16).
 - Israel would be made to realize that the prophet, the man who claimed the Spirit of God and who had aroused false hopes in the hearts of the people, was a fool (cf. Micah 2:11).
 - Judgment of barrenness (9:10-17).
 - When God first found Israel in the desert (Deuteronomy 32:10), it was like finding delicacies, but that soon changed. Already at Baal-peor, before even entering Canaan (Numbers 25:3-18), the people slipped into the worship of the local Baal.

- God would turn His favor from Israel because of her unfaithfulness. The population decline would precede the captivity to Assyria, and the captivity itself would bring it to its climax.
- In vs. 16, a play is made on the word "Ephraim." From "double-fruit" they would become fruitless, dried up, bearing no fruit; and what would be born would be destroyed.
- Judgment of destruction (10:1-15).
 - Israel is described as a luxuriant vine, a running vine that puts out its shoots and bears abundant fruit. As such a vine it should have filled God's land and should have borne a satisfying harvest to God.
 - The people of Samaria (representative of all Israel), seeing the ominous signs of the impending punishment, are said to be anxious about their "calves of Bethaven" (Bethel; cf. 4:15) rather than about their own sin.
 - Once more the prophet refers to the sin at Gibeah (cf. 9:9). Since that tragic sin, Israel had defiantly continued in the same basic sin, and the appropriate punishment had not yet been experienced but is now due.
 - The threat of judgment was followed by a call to repentance announced or given by the prophet in the form of three commands. Admittedly, just as plowing is hard work, so it would be hard for the people to change their lifestyle; but they must do so. Only by searching for the Lord would they be delivered from the coming punishment.
- The restoration of Israel to the Lord (11:1-14:9).
 - God's love for Israel (11:1-11).
 - Once more the prophet looks back to the beginning of Israel's history (cf. 9:9; 10:9). When Israel was but a child God had called him out of Egypt. However, the more God sent prophets to warn and call the people back to Himself, the more they had served the baalim and burned incense to the images.
 - Hosea clearly declared where they would go into captivity; it would not be Egypt, but Assyria. Egypt was the symbol or type of bondage, and so they will go into Egypt in a figurative way (8:13; 9:3, 6).
 - They will return to bondage because they had not returned to God; the Assyrian will be their king because they had refused to have God as their King.
 - Two poignant questions reveal the depth of God's love for His people in vs. 8. Despite the sure judgment that was soon to come on unfaithful Israel, He could not bear to give up His chosen peo-

ple forever. God would not execute the fulness of His wrath by annihilating them as their deeds deserved.

- Israel's continuing sin (11:12-13:16).
 - God charged Ephraim with having surrounded the Lord with falsehood, and the house of Israel with having compassed Him with deceit.
 - Ephraim is said to "feedeth on the wind," meaning that her efforts were to no worthwhile purpose. One aspect of this effort was the treaties they made with Assyria and Egypt (cf. 2 Kings 17:4; 18:21; Isaiah 30:7), which were seldom of benefit to Israel.
 - The power of Jacob to prevail was the power for Israel of Hosea's day if they would only avail themselves of it. This power was in the name of God, and was to be obtained by weeping and making supplication before Him. The prophet made an appeal to the people to turn to the God of Jacob, the God in whose name he had prevailed, and in Him find their power to live.
- God's promise to restore Israel (14:1-9).
 - From the dark picture of judgment and destruction of the sinful kingdom, the prophet looks with hope to the future when the faithful few will return.
 - They were to take with them words, not empty, half-hearted words, but words expressing the deep penitence of the heart. Their words should be pleas for forgiveness.
 - Their sin of apostasy would be considered as a terrible disease which God will heal. Their reward would be His great love which He would bestow upon them; all the while His anger would be turned away.
 - Ephraim, now the fruitful one, would have nothing more to do with idols. He would have learned his lesson. God would be the source of his protection. The ways of God are right and those that walk in them will not stumble.