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C0933 – September 2, 2009 – Hosea 2:16-23 – The Blessing Of Restored Marriage

Tonight if you'll open your Bible to Hosea chapter 2 we want to finish that chapter tonight. Again, to recap the emphasis of Hosea: Hosea is about the greatness of the love of God and the greatness of the grace of God. And therefore Hosea becomes the best OT ammunition for answering the average person on the streets today who attacks the God of the Bible saying, "The God of the OT is a God of wrath and the God of the NT is a God of love, and never the twain shall meet." If that's the kind of attack you're dealing with then just say have you ever read Hosea? And probably they're going to say, Who? Because 99.9% of these critics have never read the Bible anyway. They just read that someone else read that someone else read that's what the Bible says. So, if you think the love of God is absent from the OT, I encourage you to read one of the greatest love stories of all time, the Book of Hosea.

Hosea ministered during the 8th century BC and we've been tracing his first commission to go marry a prostitute. The Lord had His prophets undergo a number of, shall we say, interesting techniques, often accompanied by tremendous suffering, but necessary to communicate to the nation Israel. And Hosea is injected into one such suffering situation. The big point of course was to put on visual display what the nation was doing to God by prostituting herself out to Baal, the false god of fertility. What the Lord has Hosea do is marry a professional prostitute who then returns to her prostitution. The parallel is between Hosea and Gomer on one hand in a real life situation, and God and Israel on the other hand.

Now let's look at how things have progressed so far. When Hosea was a young man he married this prostitute named Gomer. She already had several children from her prostitution business so Hosea marries into a dysfunctional

situation. The parallel with the nation Israel is that God married a dysfunctional nation; the twelve tribes are descended from four different women, that's Exod 1, so both Hosea and God married into dysfunctional situations. After Hosea married the prostitute Gomer and all her kids, they have a second set of kids inside the marriage contract. We met the three kids in chapter 1. They all have these weird names. In v 4 they have a son named Jezreel which was a valley of bloodshed so every block this kid walks down he's a harbinger of doom. His name communicates that the nation Israel is going to be defeated militarily in the valley of Jezreel right where all the other wicked, wicked people of Israel met their fate. The second kid is a girl, v 6, they name her Lo-ruhamah which means "no mercy," so she's also a harbinger of doom. Everywhere she goes the nation is reminded that when she's defeated in the Jezreel valley God's not going to have one ounce of mercy for her, it's going to be total defeat. And finally they have a third child, this one a son in v 9, and his name is Lo-ammi which means "not my people." And that's the height of God's anger when He casts them off in Exile. So these three children all predict, in a way that communicates what their near future holds. These things came to pass in 721BC as the 5th degree of discipline upon the nation.

Now, after Hosea and Gomer had these three children she abandoned the family. She went on negative volition to her right man Hosea and when she did that she created a vacuum in her soul and began to respond to other men. This is the way of the sin nature. If you want a term for this principle you might call it exchange. That's the term Paul uses in Rom 1. They exchanged this for that. Well, the woman was made to respond to a man and she's going to respond. So if she rejects her husband she'll exchange him for someone else, which is exactly what Gomer did. She went back to her customers. The nation Israel, by parallel went negative volition to her right God and when she did that she created a vacuum in her soul and began to worship other gods. This is also the way of the sin nature. People were made to worship God and they're going to worship somewhere, and someplace they will give their allegiance. And so if they reject the Creator God they're going to worship creation, always and everywhere man worships some aspect of creation, which is exactly what the nation Israel did, she went to worshipping Baal, the fertility god of nature. And therefore there is no such thing as a true atheist. There are such people as anti-theists which are radically opposed to

the God of Creation, but in every case they've merely re-located their allegiance somewhere in creation.

Now I alert you to this principle of exchange again because next week we'll see it holds true for all history except in one instance, the nation Israel. The nation Israel is the only break in this pattern and therefore we want to look very closely at the break in the pattern because a break means pay attention. Anytime you see a break in a historical pattern you want to say, aha, that's what I'm supposed to be looking at, that's important, and I want to find out what's going on there. This break is there for the entire world to see. It's public information and yet it drives people nuts because they can never understand it; it breaks all the rules of economics, it breaks the rules of politics, it breaks the rules of war, it breaks the rules of religion and since one or more of these forces is always ultimate in the pagan mind as determining the course of history, they have no answer for the nation Israel, apart from submitting to the word of God.

Last time we worked with Hos 2:14-15, the great seduction. God is going to allure or seduce the nation Israel in the latter days. Everything from vv 14-23 is prophecy. Scholars call that eschatology or the study of last things. So in the *eschatos* God is going to seduce the nation Israel. She's been a prostitute nation but God is going to forgive all that and begin to woo her back to Himself. The three ways He's going to do it are first He's going to take her into the wilderness, which means take her somewhere where they can be alone. The nation Israel will be taken SE of the land of Israel to Bozrah, which some scholars identify as Petra, the great rock fortress of the Nabateans that you saw in the Indiana Jones series. So He's going to take her out there alone. Second, He's going to speak upon her heart. He's going to reveal His character to her. This gives her something to respond to. And third, He's going to give her vineyards, enjoyment of capital investment and make the valley of Achor a door of hope. He's going to complete the Conquest that was left incomplete when the Lord announced Doom at Bochim in Judg 2. And when the Lord does all this for her she's going to do what every man was made to do, respond. The nation is going to respond to Him in a very powerful, affectionate way. The picture, of course, is just like a girl in her youth responding to her right man, she's affectionate for him, she's drawn to him, she can't think about anyone else but him. And so it will be for the

nation Israel, she will fall in love with her God. She will be His and His alone.

Now we covered v 16-17 but let's look again at the structure. When this comes about and the nation Israel is responding to her right God then there are going to be three things the Lord is going to do for her. The first thing is vv 16-17, the second thing is vv 18-20 and the third thing is vv 21-23. Notice the beginning of each of those sections you see the phrase, "in that day..." Notice v 16 "in that day," v 18 "in that day" and v 20 "in that day." Three things will happen in that day. What day? The day Israel responds to her God. In that day the Lord will fulfill the New Covenant. Turn to Jer 31:31. This is the most misunderstood of all the biblical covenants. We turned here last week to show that it was essentially different from the Mosaic Covenant. This week we'll work with it a bit more. This is given after Hosea. Jeremiah ministered around 586BC - the nation was going into Exile and he makes this announcement of hope in the midst of a suffering situation. "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," not with the Church, but with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²"not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt," In other words, not an if...then covenant. That didn't work out so hot, "My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴"They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." In other words, no evangelism tracts in the millennium, no need to proclaim the gospel in the streets, every Jew is going to be a believer. Now this emphasizes what God's going to do for Israel and Judah. In other words, Jeremiah says the parties of the new contract are man, and in particular, that branch of the human race known as the house of Israel and the house of Judah. But now turn to Hosea, who wrote earlier and let's see what he says about the new covenant.

Hos 2:18, In that day I will also make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, The birds of the sky And the creeping things of

the ground. So from that clause alone we know that nature is also a party to the contract. And so the new covenant is made with both man and nature. There are changes in the anthropological and zoological realms. **And I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land, And will make them lie down in safety.** ¹⁹**“I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion,** ²⁰**And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD.**

Now the question is when is this covenant fulfilled. We know it was scheduled to be fulfilled in the 1st century on the Day of Pentecost. Remember, Israel had a calendar; they had a spring calendar and a fall calendar. In the spring you have, usually in April, the Feast of Passover generated from the Exodus generation, signifying the necessity of blood atonement they put blood over the door. And they did this year after year after year. Then came Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He's slain as the Passover Lamb and therefore He's the fulfillment of the Feast of Passover. Jesus is the Passover Lamb. Then three days later they celebrated the Feast of Firstfruits, which is when they would go out in the field and take the first of the harvest down to the Temple and they'd wave it before the Lord and this was to thank the Lord for the harvest, trusting that He would bring more to follow. Jesus Christ fulfilled this Feast three days after the cross when He rose from the dead. Jesus is the Firstfruits of the resurrection and therefore the guarantee that more would be resurrected on the Feast of Pentecost. The Feast of Pentecost came fifty days later. And so obviously when the Day of Pentecost arrives in Acts 2, everything was happening right on schedule. The Feast of Passover has been literally fulfilled in Jesus' death, the Feast of Firstfruits has been literally fulfilled in Jesus' resurrection and now in Acts 2 the Holy Spirit arrives right on schedule for the resurrection of the Jewish nation. Problem: the nation Israel is still in rebellion. So it's as if God's plan is trucking along at 90 miles per hour and the whole thing comes to a halt in Acts 2. The Spirit arrives right on schedule and the New Covenant could be fulfilled and Joel 2 come to pass but the nation is not ready, they have rejected their Messiah, Jesus. So what Joel 2 prophecies would happen doesn't happen. Joel 2 says the sun would be darkened, the moon turned to blood and there would be cosmic disturbances. And yet none of that happened in Acts 2. The thing that happened in Acts 2 was tongues and Joel doesn't even talk about tongues.

Isaiah talks about tongues and tongues were a sign of judgment on the nation. When they heard the Hebrew truths in the Gentile languages which is what they heard, they should have known uh oh, we're in trouble. Because Isaiah said when you hear that you better know that the fifth degree of discipline is on the horizon, you're going to be disciplined severely. Tongues was never a sign of blessing, it was always a sign of cursing. And that's why Peter makes such a passionate appeal to his country in Acts 2 and 3: oh, Israel, if you would receive Jesus the Nazarene as your Messiah, if you'll repent and return to Him then your kingdom will come and all this disaster predicted by the prophet Isaiah will be avoided. But the nation said, no, we don't want Jesus to rule over us, we want Caesar to rule over us. And boy did they ever get Caesar in AD70. The armies of Rome crushed them and sent them in exile to the four corners of the globe.

So the New Covenant has yet to be fulfilled. And therefore when v 18 says, **In that day**, that's the far future when it will be fulfilled. It will be fulfilled because the nation Israel is responding to her God, they will have believed in Jesus as the Messiah. Now we know it's the future but prophecy scholars are divided on when exactly the Jews believe in Jesus as the Messiah. I take it that the two witnesses are sent in the first half of the Tribulation and they're ministry is like Paul's ministry in Ephesus, there's tremendous Bible teaching and this has tremendous impact and their ministry only lasts for the first three and a half years, so by the mid-point of the tribulation you have most Jews in the land having believed in Jesus as the Messiah. They will heed the warning of Matt 24:15, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken by Daniel the prophet, let the reader understand, flee to the mountains. And we gather that only if they believe in Jesus would they heed Jesus' warning. So the believing remnant will flee to the wilderness for the last half of the Tribulation, that's where Hosea 2:14 came in. God's going to take the believing remnant of Israel out there in the wilderness so He can be alone with them for three and a half years. And then at the end of the Tribulation the national leaders will decide to call on Jesus to rescue them and that's when Jesus will return and fulfill this covenant. It's at that moment Hosea's words in v 18 will come into effect. **In that day I will make a covenant for them**, that's for Israel, **I will make a covenant for Israel With**, and here are the parties of the covenant, **With the beasts of the field, The birds of the sky And the creeping things of the ground.**" And you say, that's strange, the parties of the covenant are nature. God's

going to make a covenant with beasts, birds and creeping things. Yet it shouldn't be too strange because the archetype of all covenants was made with both man and nature. What is it? What's the first covenant in the bible? The Noahic Covenant. Who are the parties of the Noahic Contract. God on one side and man and nature on the other. The New Covenant is the same. God on one side, man and nature on the other.

So turn to Gen 9:2 because this list in Hos 2:18 is a word for word parallel with Gen 9:2. Now, it will save you a tremendous amount of time and confusion if you will always go back to the basic structures of Scripture. And the basic structure of a covenant is laid down in the Noahic Covenant. The Noahic Covenant is the very first covenant in Scripture so it sets the mold and then when you read about a covenant in Hosea if you'll have the Noahic mold in mind then you'll have no problem. Otherwise you'll be lost. Tonight is a tremendous illustration of how helpful it is. The New Covenant is fashioned after the Noahic Covenant. The Noahic Covenant was made with both man and nature and the New Covenant is made with both man and nature. And the link is particularly obvious in Gen 9:2, "The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given." Now there it is, every beast...every bird, everything that creeps on the ground," is the same language of Hosea.

So what is happening in Gen 9:2 is God is increasing the curse on nature. If we were to go back before this what happened was God originally created the world very good. There was no suffering, no death, no evil, no sickness, no crying. It was perfect when it left the fingertips of God. And during that original period man's diet was the plant kingdom. The human kingdom was vegetarian and the zoological kingdom was vegetarian. There was no meat eating because meat eating requires the shedding of blood and Leviticus tells us the life is in the blood. And therefore to shed blood would be to take life and that wouldn't be very good. So in the original creation they didn't eat meat, they ate vegetation.

Then came the Fall and with the Fall man and nature were cursed and so entered death and suffering and there were negative spiritual and physical effects of the curse upon both man and nature. Chromosomal mutations were introduced causing anatomical and physiological changes in man and nature.

For example, man began to sweat, nature was disagreeable and began to produce thorns and thistles and other changes worked into the zoological domain. But, although there was death and suffering the full effects of the Fall were not allowed to work out in man or nature. Man still lived in an environment that was basically very good, the food was highly nutritious, far beyond anything we call organic today, and this food was able to sustain man's longevity over 900 years so obviously the environment was much better than what we experience today.

Now during this period man's diet was still vegetarian; there was no shift in the diet between the Fall and the Flood. During this period of history vegetation had everything man's body needed to function in that environment. It was this period when man lived among the dinosaurs, contrary to the hypothesis of evolution man. And if you want to trot up to Glen Rose, TX you can walk down in the Paluxy River beds and see in the same strata both dinosaur and human footprints. Or the discovery of dinosaur soft tissue in recent years by paleontologist Mary Schweitzer. Soft tissue isn't supposed to survive more than a few ten-thousand years according to known processes of soft tissue decay. So how do you explain it if it's not just a few thousand years old? And if it is then again dinosaurs and man lived contemporaneously which is far outside the evolutionary paradigm. What the Scriptures are saying is that during this period sin had not run its full course and man and nature basically lived at peace with one another, both man and animals ate vegetation. So there was a tremendous amount of vegetation on the earth during this time, it was luxurious and the animals, including dinosaurs were vegetarian. In fact, you needed these kinds of animals to keep back the tremendous amount of vegetation before the Flood. If you find it hard to accept that dinosaurs ate vegetation, studies show that the roots of their teeth are very shallow and if they pulled a Jurassic Park stunt all their teeth would just fall right out of their mouth and they'd need some extreme dental work. They didn't eat animals they ate plants.¹ That is why chemical analysis conducted on dinosaur teeth often shows chlorophyll which is the main component plants use in photosynthesis. Why do you find this plant molecule in their teeth? Because that's what they ate! Well, why then did they have such big ferocious looking teeth? Have you ever studied the animal kingdom? There are a number of animals that have very ferocious teeth and yet they only use them to break into hard nuts and

seeds. So we have to stress this very hard in our day because the evolutionary opposition is very strongly attacking the historic value of the word of God.

So, all during this time you had tremendous differences in the botanical and zoological kingdoms from what you and I do this side of the Flood. Obviously, at the Flood two of every kind of animal and bird were taken on the Ark. They were taken across the great deluge and they weren't eating each other up on the Ark; every living thing on the Ark survived but after the Flood the dinosaurs either died off because they couldn't live in the new environment or they're still with us in the reptile kingdom. Even some evolutionists today think the reptiles are the descendents of the dinosaurs. But, in any case, Gen 9:2 is an announcement that a radical change occurred at the Flood. Now the animals are deeply afraid of man; now there is war between man and animal and now man can eat meat.

We don't know all the changes that took place but Gen 9:2 is saying that all the changes were due to an increase in the curse such that now we have two major cursings on man and nature. The first curse occurred at the Fall and the second curse occurred at the Flood. So radical was this second curse that Peter in his epistle says the world before the Flood and the world after the Flood are two separate worlds. And I imagine that if we could take a time machine back to that universe before the Flood and we got off our time machine we wouldn't recognize we were on planet earth. It would be that different. There were hydrodynamic differences, atmospheric differences, geological differences, physiological differences, anatomical differences and so forth. Now with all those large-scale differences came tremendous changes in the relation of man to nature. Whereas, for example, before the Flood you could walk right up to a lion and pet it, after the Flood you'd be stupid to do that. So there's a change and now there's war between man and animal.

And what Hos 2:18 is saying is that the pre-Flood world is coming again in the future as a part of the New Covenant. If you're an animal lover this will be the time for you because you'll be able to firsthand investigate up-close and personal any creature on earth and there will be absolutely no danger. So first, God will retransform both the botanical and zoological realms back to apparently pre-Flood conditions throughout the millennium. Now how He does it I don't know, but obviously it's a tremendous improvement on what we have today that brings about peace between man and animal. So these verses

are not some kind of a symbolic blah, blah, heaven is going to be a wonderful place thing. Heaven is a wonderful place but this is describing the millennial earth. And this is the first branch of what the New Covenant will produce when fulfilled.

Having said all that what would you say to someone who said the New Covenant was being fulfilled today in the Church? Where's the change in nature? Why do we still have war between man and nature? You see Hosea is never discussed when the subject of the New Covenant is broached. But here it is, plain as day, and obviously it's not being fulfilled in the Church, it awaits a future fulfillment.

But interestingly, before this transformation in nature something else must be transformed, v 18; not animals, not plants, but man, because the **bow** and the **sword** and the battle, the war, must be done away with, and here is where war and the military are eliminated from history. Not in the present but in the future. For a parallel turn to Isa 2, this is the hallmark verse of the United Nations building; and of course they take it out of context. Isa 2:4, "And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war." Now the weapons there are phrased in the language of the day to communicate a coming era of world peace. In many senses the nation Israel is the key to world peace, but not in the way most political analysts think. The analysts think if we can just get rid of Israel all together then we'll have world peace. That's a satanic idea that actually comes from Satan himself who hates the Jewish people and wants to exterminate them from history because if he can do that then God can't fulfill His promises to them and so Satan would rule history and bring his plan to pass. But the Jew is the key to world peace in that when they repent then the peace will come. And therefore, when the peace comes there will be no longer any need for military science, weapons science, all of that will become obsolete. And it all comes in context of the Lord reigning over all from Jerusalem. So the vision of the OT is that a period of disarmament was coming, but it was coming when the Messiah returns to a repentant Israel and not before. So don't give up your guns yet. Today is an age of war not peace. Much to the chagrin of the United Nations, World Peace Initiatives and all the Road Maps you can draw, Isa 2:4 is not now, Isa 2:4 is the future.

And if you really want world peace you'll take the gospel to the nation Israel, they're the key to world peace.

So go back to Hos 2:18 and notice something. We've got a change in the botanical and zoological realms; we have disarmament. But notice how at the end of verse 18 the two themes are tied together. **I will make them to lie down together**, and the antecedent of **them** is hard to determine; does it mean Israel? Or does it mean the animals? And apparently the two just kind of blend together here. With this we have a profound and very highly consistent Biblical insight. And what this means is that man and animal will lie down together. In other words man and nature are no longer at war with one another. The fear of man that God put in the animals in Gen 9 will be removed and man and animal will get along again. And a corollary to this is no more hunting; we'll revert back to a vegetarian diet, much to the chagrin of many of you I'm sure. But not to be concerned, God knows better than any of us what we'll need to eat and the vegetables you'll eat then will far outclass anything you've ever tasted, so don't get too upset, we return to a pre-Flood environment with increased longevity, atmospheric changes, the whole nine yards.

Now Hos 2:19,ⁱⁱ God turns to the nation, **I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes I will betroth you to Me**, and in v 20, **I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness**. Three times the phrase **I will betroth**. Now the Hebrew word for **betroth** means to woo a virgin. If you're a married man think back to what it was like when you were pursuing the girl that is now your wife; she was so pretty, everything was new and you said a lot of nice things to her then. That's the picture here of God and Israel. Israel is like a virgin being pursued. How can she be a virgin in light of all her prostitutions? Well, by this point she's believed in Jesus as the Messiah and therefore He has cleansed her of all unrighteousness and put His righteousness in its place. So she is a pure and spotless virgin and not a whore. And the three-fold expression **I will betroth you to Me** indicates permanence of affection. Forever they will be like a boy and a girl in courtship, we'd say, the perfect marriage.

And then he lists a series of characteristics of the relationship. Now since we have operated down through here in the area of analogy, we have Hosea's marriage, then we have God's marriage with Israel. Notice the attributes of

the marriage relationship in verses 19-20. These attributes that characterize God's marriage relationship to Israel are the same attributes you want to have in your marriage. So once again, men, women, husbands, wives, these you want to pay attention too. **Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness**, the word righteousness means the standard which is the word of God. That's the first thing in marriage that the partner is willing to submit to the standards of God's word in every area of life. If you don't have that you have very little base to work from. The NT puts it this way: be not unequally yoked? It is stupid for a believer to marry an unbeliever. You have absolutely nothing in common. The second characteristic **and in justice** is the idea that if you find something in the marriage that doesn't meet the righteous standard it will be purged out. And so the couple who would have the most stable marriage will be the couple that is intent on purging out that which does not fit the standards of the word of God. The third thing, **In lovingkindness**, and the word "lovingkindness" is the word *chesed*; there are three words for love in the Hebrew, *ahav*, *chesed* and *dod*. *dod* is the kind of love that is exercised after a covenant has been made; in other words, it is sexual love, after the marriage. *Ahav* love is a love that starts before the marriage. Its elective love, I choose to love this woman, or I choose to love this man, that's a choice and a choosing; that's *ahav*. But when the *ahav* love is expressed by means of the second divine institution of marriage, then you have *chesed* love because *chesed* love means I'm going to be loyal to you, I'm going to be loyal the terms of the marriage contract. And so, a third characteristic of the successful marriage will be loyalty. You'll notice, none of these are particularly emotional. It doesn't mean that emotions don't follow in marriage, but the point is the stability of the marriage doesn't rest on your emotions. So we have a standard, the word of God, we have impurities that will be purged from the marriage, we have a covenant made before God and the universe and I'm not going to break the covenant. Then we have a fourth one, **and in compassion**, and this word means tenderness of affection and anyone who's been married two weeks knows you better have a lot of tenderness toward one another or else there's going to be problems. You may think before you get married that you don't see how you could ever have problems, you're so in love, and if that's you, just get married and you'll find out.

Hos 2:20, **And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness** - now here's the word from which we get the pillars of the Temple. The pillars were what

brought stability to that structure and so what it's saying is it's a stable relationship, and that's another quality of the successful marriage. Again, it's not particularly an emotional word, it just means stability. And the result, **then you will know the Lord.**

Now look at this: let's look first in terms of the simple marriage relationship and then we'll go back to the nation. Here's the man, he's the initiator, and he shapes the marriage. He marries his right woman and adds these characteristics to the marriage. That's what he's seeking to bring about in the marriage relationship: righteousness, judgment, loyalty, tenderness and stability. Now the result; all this looks like a lot of work, but the result is that the woman, she will know the man, and the word *yada* means she will know him intimately, affectionately, she will respond to him from her very soul and will submit to him and make love to him. This is how it works, this is not a gimmick, this is real life.

Now let's look at it nationally, here is YHWH wooing the nation Israel. He adds all those characteristics to His relationship with Israel. Now the result is that when Israel sees all these things, Israel *yada's*, she knows God intimately, she's affectionate toward Him and she will respond to Him in true obedience, true submission. She's going to respond to His authority.

Alright, we come to the third stage in Hosea 2:21, **It will come about in that day that I will respond, declares the Lord. "I will respond to the heavens and they will respond to the earth, 22And they earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine and to the oil, And they will respond to Jezreel.** Now what's all this talking about? The word **respond**, *ana*, is used a number of times here for the response mechanism. And you'll notice it's a chain of responses. We used to have to memorize in chemistry classes things like the Krebs cycle which was a complex chain of reactions. Blood clotting is a chain of reactions where one reaction has to precede the second reaction which has to precede the third and so forth to get the clot. And this is the picture here, a chain of responses. Now you'll notice it all starts at the end of v 22 with man and works up to God through nature, so we have man to nature and nature to God, that's the chain. The problems we face environmentally is just horrific, we have too many toxins, we have not enough rain, we have pesky insects, this is saying all that is going to be resolved. This is what is so astounding about Scripture; the prophecy forms a

framework for even environmental matters. Salvation is more than just what goes on inside your heart, salvation effects the environment. You may never have thought about it before but for a Christian to think biblically he must think about the environment.

And here in verses 21-22 you have a near perfect environment functioning. **Jezeel** is pronounced Yizrael and is a pun for the word Israel. And like we said the initial reaction starts with who? **Jezeel**. Who's **Jezeel**? Well, they're Hebrew farmers in the millennium. So here the Hebrew farmers want to grow something. And so they'll go out and they'll talk to the **grain, the wine and the oil**, so this is talking about the agricultural produce responding to the Hebrew farmers. So at last nature won't be rebelling against man. It will be responding to man. Notice there's still work. Man doesn't get a permanent vacation when he enters the kingdom or even when we enter the new creation, it's just that some of the impediments that limited productivity are removed. Now we're getting the response we were always looking for, now the produce is really coming in and it's as though he walks out in the field and starts talking to the **grain** in the fields; it's deeply personal. I've heard of people playing music for their plants and I don't know if this is a built in response mechanism that works but there may be something to it, at least in the millennium. So the Hebrew farmers talk to the grain and the grain talks to the earth, follow the sequence, and the earth talks to the heavens? Why does the earth talk to the heavens? Because the heavens give the water. So the earth talks to heaven. And the heavens talk to God. And again please notice the tremendous materialism, in the good sense of the word, there's nothing carnal about it, it's God's universe, God's heaven, God's earth, God's grain, God's people and they're all working in harmony. The physical world is producing the way God designed it to produce.

We know why these things become personal in Hos 2:21-22 because we live in a personal universe. Our ultimate environment is a Person, not a force, not a mysterious obelisk; a Person, an infinite Person who created a universe with personal beings. So there's involvement.

Hosea 2:23, **I will sow her for Myself in the land**, now that's a pun on the word Jezeel, and this is another truth, one of those little truths that come from one little Hebrew word, but this is one of those truths that again, applies to the Christian life. Jezeel from Yzr which means "to sow, to

scatter” and el which means “God.” So Jezreel means “God sows or scatters.” Now if I said I was going to scatter you that would be a cursing. I’d be sending you into exile and we’ve seen that meaning before in Hos 1:4. What was the name of that first son? Jezreel, meaning God scatters. And that’s a prophecy of the military defeat and scattering that occurred to the nation Israel in 721BC. But if I said I’m going to sow you that would be a blessing because it means I’m going to plant you in the field such that you’ll take root and flourish.

So we have both uses in Hosea, in the historic usage the nation Israel would be like seed in the hand of a farmer who was just slinging the seed all over the place, sending Israel into Exile. But in Hos 2:23 it’s used in the sense of I will sow her in the land, I will put her in her land where she can take root. In other words, **I will have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion** and also there will be a reversal of Hosea’s kids names, **I will say to those who were not My people, You are My people!’ And they will say, ‘You are my God!’**ⁱⁱⁱ And so chapter two concludes with a total reversal of fortunes for the nation Israel. They suffered in the past; they will be blessed in the future.

ⁱ Some creation experts argue that after the Fall dinosaurs may have eaten meat and call to our attention a fossil of two dinosaurs locked in combat. While it is true that most fossils are from the Flood it is plausible that some fossils were from aftershock catastrophes that happened after the Flood. I’m not 100% on this issue but lean in the direction that the dinosaurs did not become predatory till after the Flood.

ⁱⁱ Vv 19-20 are recited when orthodox Jews put on their phylacteries. They remind the Jew of the revelation on Mt Sinai when God effected a ‘spiritual marriage’ with the nation Israel, with the Torah as the dowry.

ⁱⁱⁱ The faithful remnant will merge with the entire nation; those that were in rebellion will have been purged.

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