



BETHEL  
PRESBYTERIAN

# MINISTRY OF THE WORD

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## The Book of Hosea, A Survey, Part 8

Hosea 2:14-23 (ESV), “Therefore, behold, I will allure her,  
and bring her into the wilderness,  
and speak tenderly to her.

<sup>15</sup> And there I will give her her vineyards  
and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.  
And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth,  
as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.

<sup>16</sup> “And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’ <sup>17</sup> For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. <sup>18</sup> And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. <sup>19</sup> And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. <sup>20</sup> I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.

21 “And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD,  
I will answer the heavens,  
and they shall answer the earth,  
22 and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and they shall answer Jezreel,  
23 and I will sow her for myself in the land.  
And I will have mercy on No Mercy,  
and I will say to Not My People, ‘You are my people’;  
and he shall say, ‘You are my God.’ ”

Trial and difficulty is an all-too real part of life in this present state;

John 16:33b, “...In the world you have tribulation...”

2 Timothy 3:12, “And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Philippians 1:29, “For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake... to suffer for His sake.”

Truly, none of us are going to get out of this life unscathed by difficulty. Yet in Christ we have the incredible promise that any trial is but a great and glorious opportunity for fellowshiping with the Lord.

Malachi 4:1-2, “‘For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.’”

This was the consolation God gave to His people in Hosea when they were facing a very dark future.

Hosea 2:15, “Then I will give her her vineyards from there, and the valley of Achor [that is, the forth-coming judgment will be...] as a door of hope. And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.”

Truly awaiting the people of God in Hosea’s day was the trial and horror of warfare in which the Assyrians would destroy Israel. Yet as dark as the future was for His people, God’s grace nevertheless would triumph! In fact, our passage is a description of this triumph:

- The Valley of Weeping would become a Spring, Hosea 2:14-15.
- Intimacy and Communion would be Deepened, Hosea 2:16-17.
- The Miseries of Life would be Transcended, Hosea 2:18.

And still there are two more ways in which God’s grace triumphs in the face of personal disaster. The next of these is that our relationship with God becomes more personal.

## Relationship with God

Hosea 2:19-20, “And I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord.”

This passage contains the promise of a radical shift in man’s relationship with God. This change is centered around the promise that God would “betroth you to Me...”

In Bible times, marriage involved three phases: the betrothal, the interval, and the wedding feast. The betrothal obviously is that which is being referenced here. As a legal bond, it represented a joining together of two people for life. It is akin to how we view marriage in our culture except the two parties did not live together (as it is in our relationship with God now; we are not in the New Heavens and Earth).

Now the establishment of a betrothal typically involved negotiations which included a settlement on the “bride-price” which the man was to pay for the privilege of marriage (compare 2 Samuel 3:14). It is this that is in view in Hosea 2. Notice the “bride-price” is God promised five gifts to His suffering people:

1. Righteousness,
2. Justice,
3. Lovingkindness,
4. Compassion,
5. Faithfulness.

That is the dowry God brought to redemption! Now to understand the significance of this “bride-price” together with its “betrothal,” we need to be familiar with the redemptive context. Toward this end, let me give you a quick overview of redemptive history heretofore. Recall that when God created the world He entered into a bi-lateral relationship with man called a covenant (Genesis 2:15-17). The basis for this relationship revolved around both God and man’s obedience to the stipulations of the covenant. If man obeyed God by not eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then God would give man life. If man disobeyed, the consequence would be death.

Of course we know that Adam broke the covenant and partook of the forbidden fruit. As a result, mankind became subject to the wrath of God which could only be satisfied by the death of man. Yet God in His grace was unwilling to destroy His people. So, He initiated another covenant. This time God instituted a unilateral covenant, one in which God:

- deigned to become a man born under the obligation of the initial covenant,
- upheld the confines of the original covenant- He obeyed perfectly,
- gave Himself in the place of those condemned to die on account of their sin- He died on the cross, and then
- rose from the dead whereby He imparted life to those who had died in Adam.

Now what I just described will be the subject of our study, awe, worship, and reflection for the rest of

eternity, it is that big! Accordingly to instruct His people who could not at the time begin to understand it all, the Lord taught them via a series of “lectures”— if you will— each one building upon the other.

- Immediately following Adam’s rebellion, God instituted what we call the Adamic aspect of the Covenant of Grace whereby the Lord simply introduced the gospel of Jesus Christ to His people (Genesis 3:15). We call this the Proto-evangelism, the first gospel. And then He waited as man appropriated the teaching and so came to understand it.
- Then, as a second lecture, God instituted what we call the Noahic aspect of the Covenant of Grace whereby God demonstrated both the wages of sin and yet the conquest of His grace whereby the world was judged and 8 people were saved in an ark (1 Peter 3:20). And then, as before, He waited as man appropriated the teaching and so came to understand it.
- For His third lecture, God instituted what we call the Abrahamic aspect of the Covenant of Grace whereby He limited His saving activity to a family and so taught us the principles of headship, solidarity, community, and much, much more. Here, the gospel was clearly presented (cf. Galatians 3:8) and a people was born. And as before, man was left to appropriate the teaching and so come to understand it.
- His fourth lecture revolved around the concept of a “nation” as God organized His people into a national entity in what we call the Mosaic Aspect of the Covenant of Grace. Herein, man’s relationship with God was expanded to include conditional elements which related to them only as they were a nation: (1) if as a nation they rebelled against the Lord, the nation would be destroyed. (2) But so long as they served the Lord with fidelity, they would enjoy the blessings of a land flowing with milk and honey. It was at this time the Exodus occurred and God’s people once again were reminded of blood sacrifice as households were protected from the angel of death through the blood of a lamb. Once again, God’s people were left for many years to contemplate and so understand the teaching.
- With David came the fifth lecture and the Davidic aspect of the Covenant of Grace. Here God’s people were introduced to the concept of a King and so a Kingdom. They learned what it meant (1) to be an army and so a soldier of the Lord, (2) to follow and so be served by a king, (3) to submit to rule and authority, and much, much more. And as before, God’s people were left to meditate upon and so contemplate the nature of God’s Kingdom, His rule and reign, and so the majesty and glory of the coming Messiah!

Now through all of this time and history, God’s people had yet to comprehend at least two things: (1) the extent of God’s Kingdom and so His rule (that someday it would encompass every people, land, and tongue), and (2) the intimacy with which God deigned to relate to man- individually and personally.

You say, “But at the time of Abraham both elements were present: we have God entering personally into a relationship with Abraham and we have the promise that all nations would be blessed through him.” While this is true, nevertheless the promise was convoluted by competing principles. For example, in the Old Testament, in order for a Gentile to be saved, he first had to become a Jew. Gentiles couldn’t be saved as Gentiles. Furthermore, for a woman to be saved, she had to be related to the body of Christ through a man — either her father, brother, husband, uncle, nephew, and the like. Like the Gentile, a woman couldn’t be saved simply as a woman.

So while the covenant was individual, at this time it wasn't very personal (God was my God insofar as I was a member of His people)! And so herein we have God's sixth lecture which wouldn't begin until the arrival of Christ and the New Covenant, but nevertheless was introduced to us during the prophetic age in such prophets as Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, AND HOSEA!

In fact, this sixth lecture in introduced in the midst of the upcoming trial, God would betroth Himself to the individual whereby He would pay a five-fold bride-price of "righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, compassion, and faithfulness." Now don't misunderstand. Again, it wasn't that God's redemptive work wasn't individual prior to this time. It is that this hadn't been the emphasis (and so in many places it was missed). Yet in the upcoming trial by which the nation of Israel would be destroyed, God deigned to emphasize this point to His people.

And this is the message given to all God's people in the midst of trial. When you are sore afflicted, listen to the word of God: "I will betroth you to Me- you and I will enjoy a relationship together- in which I will give you five promises."

Hosea 2:19, "I will betroth you to Me in righteousness..."

This speaks of God's right-wiseness and so His character. God would not and could not be anything other to the individual than sinless, spotless, and so true to His promises. And yet, man in return couldn't be anything less to God. The relationship had to be a relationship of righteousness. Yet this was a problem. For from the fall we learn that man is not righteous. He is a sinner who loves his sin. But herein is the glorious news, in redemption, through the work of Jesus Christ, God gives as a gift to His people, His very own right-standing! What a wedding gift!

2 Corinthians 5:21, "He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Through the cross of Jesus Christ, God demonstrated the fact that He is "...just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (Romans 3:26). Christ is both righteous and a righteous-maker!

Hosea 2:19b, "I will betroth you to Me... in justice..."

This speaks of God's fairness. He would not be capricious in His dealings with His people. Rather, He would exercise justice in and through all things. Now as sinners, this is rather frightening. Yet as one's who have been made righteous in Christ, this means that God could never disown us or forsake us- regardless of what we might do.

Hosea 2:19c, "I will betroth you to Me... in lovingkindness..."

This speaks of the unconditional love of God by which He blesses the sinner. In its most essential form it is covenant loyalty which means because we are His blood-bought children, He will always be true to us regardless of what we might do.

Hosea 2:19d, "I will betroth you to Me... in compassion..."

This is akin to the word used for a woman's womb and so speaks of the tender love of a mother for her child. This is that characteristic in God which understands our weakness and yet remains steadfast in love for us.

Hosea 2:20a, "And I will betroth you to me in faithfulness..."

The fact that God is able to be trusted. The word speaks to the dependability of God and the fact that He is always true to His covenant promises. Accordingly we need never doubt the Lord; He is able to be trusted! Such are the glorious gifts God gives to each and everyone whom He saves. Now, what is the expected result? (And this is the meat of this main point) notice the ending of Hosea 2:20.

Hosea 2:20b, "...then you will know the Lord."

The word used here speaks of an intimacy and closeness.

Genesis 4:1a (NKJV), "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain..."

John 17:3, "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

Do you see the point? In the upcoming trial, God's people would come to know the Lord in a way that most of them had never fathomed before. They would individually and personally relate to God. The Lord would draw near to them in the midst of the flame, and in return they would draw near to God. Now clearly this involves a deepening in our intimacy with God (which was Hosea's second point Hosea 2:16-17, but it goes beyond that. Here it included a transformation in how God's people would relate to their Lord!

And so it is with us. While redemption brings the child of God into a personal/individual relationship with the Lord, nevertheless on account of our sinfulness and humanness, many things can get in the way.

- There's our default programming which endeavors to relate to God on the basis of our conduct (cf. Romans 10:2-5).
- There's our love of religion by which so often we prefer the ritual to the relationship. Think of it: when Christ came to His own and threatened their man-made religious system, what did His people do? They sought to kill Him!
- There's our wealth which tends to make our heart's cold (Proverbs 30:7-9).
- There are the cares of the world which can choke out spiritual vitality (Matthew 13:22).

So what does God do in the fire? He reminds us of His betrothal and His five-fold dowry by which He affirms to us that (1) we are His, (2) nothing can separate us from His love, (3) though we are faithless, He will remain faithful. And this draws us to Him and enables us to "know Him"/relate to Him as we have not before.

Psalm 119:71, "It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Thy statutes."

The “learning” here is not head knowledge- all Jews had this. It was the knowledge of personal conviction! In the fire, the word of God became alive to the Psalmist. And yet, it not just the word, it also involves our understanding of the love of God. Speaking in the context of trial wherein God preserves us, David said this:

Psalm 36:7, “How precious is Thy lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Thy wings.”

Clearly when the child enters into the fire, their understanding of the love of God is transformed and so leads them to hope/optimism as they view the future. Thus Paul could say this:

2 Corinthians 4:8-10, “*We are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.”

This is the “new and living way” spoken about in Hebrews (cf. Hebrews 10:20, 22), a promise given to us in the Old Testament, realized in the coming of Christ, and internalized in the fiery furnace. And this leads to Hosea’s final description of the triumph of grace.

### **The Reversal of the Former State**

This fifth way our greatest hopes and dreams are realized is the reversal of the former state.

Hosea 2: 21-23, ““And 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, and the earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine, and to the oil, and they will respond to Jezreel. And I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, and I will say to those who were not My people, “You are My people!” And they will say, “*Thou art my God!*”””

Simply stated here, this fifth and final promise alludes to the final state and so that time when the curse that came to this earth on account of our sin is removed! Notice the reversal as it pertains to the earth.

Hosea 2:21-22a, ““And 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, and the earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine, and to the oil...””

The key term in this passage is “respond” which is the Hebrew word for “answer.” The idea is that of a generous answer that overwhelms the inquirer, which here is Israel (v. 22b). In the future God’s people would look to the Lord for provision and the Lord would overwhelm them in response.

- The heavens would pour forth its rain.
- The earth will yield its crop.
- The grain will grow in abundance.

- The crops will yield its fruit.

Do you see the incredible turnaround? This speaks of a time when the curse that our sin brought to the earth is removed. At this time we shall live in abundance and plenty, and know no want! That is the glorious future that awaits us in Christ. And it is this that comes to the forefront when we descend into the valley of the shadow of death!

Notice this reversal as it pertains to our shame.

Hosea 2:22b, “And the earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine, and to the oil, and they will respond to Jezreel.”

Recall at this time that the mentioning of the name “Jezreel” evoked the idea of a blood bath as it was in Jezreel that Jehu thoroughly and violently wiped out the children of Ahab as well as the servants of Baal. Now according to Hosea 1:4-5, it was this that lay in the future for Israel on account of their sin. Yet as we have seen, grace transforms our sorrow and shame. Recall the words of Hosea speaking of the blessings of the final state:

Hosea 1:11, “And they will appoint for themselves one leader, and they will go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.”

Recall that “Jezreel” is a verb which means “to sow” as in farming. Heretofore it has been used of the consequence of sowing to sin- which is death. Yet when used of God, it denotes the sowing of a bumper crop of blessing and victory. And yet it also is a name used in the place of “Israel” (the two names are virtually identical in their sound in the Hebrew) which when read in Hosea 1:11 yields this idea.

Hosea 1:11b, “...for great will be the day of Israel- the sowing of the Lord.”

From this we see the radical nature of saving grace it takes our greatest shame and uses it as a springboard into joy, gladness, and praise. Heretofore the mentioning of “Jezreel” evoked horror; yet in Christ it now would remind us of His victory! Accordingly in Christ, Israel’s new name would become Jezreel, the glorious product of the sowing of God in redemption! And so from this point forward when the name “Jezreel” was mentioned, Israel no longer would cringe, but rather would anticipate the blessing of God!

And so it is with our shame, sorrow, and sin. When viewed by themselves we are moved to shame. But when viewed in the shadow of the cross, we rejoice for Christ has overcome, “...giving... a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting” (Isaiah 61:3b).

Notice this reversal as it pertains to our name.

Hosea 2:23, “And I will sow her for Myself in the land [the New Heavens and Earth]. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, and I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they will say, ‘*Thou art my God!*’”



Each of the names of Hosea's children- which were given to be a living message to Israel of the doom that awaited them, are mentioned here such that we conclude that the curse of Israel's sin has been lifted! What were the names? Recall:

- Jezreel (Hosea 1:4): which means "to sow," and so again referenced the blood bath of Jehu.
- Lo-ruhamah (Hosea 1:6): which means "no compassion."
- Lo-ammi (Hosea 1:9): which means "not my people."

Recall the combined message of the children of Hosea, "A bloodbath is awaiting Israel. In that day they will not receive compassion for they no longer are my people." Well each of these names is referenced here yet with a glorious twist. Because of the saving work of Christ:

- God would "jezreel"- sow, plant- Israel for His own purpose and pleasure in the earth.
- Once again compassion would rest upon her such that...
- She would forever be called, "The people of God."

Such is the glorious promise that has been given to us in Christ. In fact, it reminds us of the words of the Apostle John.

Revelation 21:3-4, "And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be *any* death; there shall no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.'"

That is the identity which drives us in and through all things. We are the people whom God has established; we are the embodiment of God's compassion; we are the People of God!

Who has the greatest longing for Christ's return? I would guess that there are few if any here who woke up this morning longing for Christ to come back. Yet think of the last time you were in the crucible, how would you answer the question?

Understand the role of trial in our lives. It is the great equalizer. It is the glasses that enable us to see the things of life aright! Now to those in the crucible, what we've just heard and beheld ought to warm your heart, give you the mentality of a pilgrim and so a stranger in this land, and so make you long, as did the saints of old, for a country of our own.

Hebrews 11:13, "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."

Such is the mindset which trial and difficulty gives the child of God. In the crucible, our grip on this life is loosened, and we find ourselves longing for a Kingdom whose foundation is not of this world.

Henry Lyte wrote a poem which has become a Pilgrim Hymn sung by many a dying saint this past century, in fact those upon the Titanic sang this hymn while the ship went down.

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide; the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide: when other helpers fail, and comforts flee, help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day; earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away; change and decay in all around I see; O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour; what but thy grace can foil the tempter's power? Who like thyself my guide and stay can be? Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless: ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness. Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory? I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes; shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies: heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee: in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

## **VISIT US WHEN IN Broomfield, COLORADO**

Feel free to visit Bethel Presbyterian Church when in Broomfield, Colorado. Bethel Presbyterian Church meets at Broomfield High School, Eagle (10<sup>th</sup> Street) and Main, Broomfield, Colorado. The telephone number of the church is 303-469-6912. The worship services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. each Sunday. Bethel Presbyterian Church is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

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### **About the Preacher**

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