



## Study 10 : "In That Day" (Hosea 2:2-23)

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**BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH**

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### Introducing the Study

**HOSEA THE PROPHET** - a contemporary of Isaiah, Amos and Micah in the mid 8th Century BC. The unique "shape" of Hosea's ministry was that the relationship between he and his wife, Gomer, is a commentary (a "parable?") on the relationship between Israel and God.

When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD." **Hosea 1:2**

There are two features to this "picture" of God's relationship to his people:

**1. GOD AS HUSBAND:** We are used to the New Testament imagery of the Church being the "Bride" of Christ, but this idea is also a feature of the Old Testament:

For your Maker is your husband - the LORD Almighty is his name - the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer. **Isaiah 54:5** (See also Jer3:14, 3:20, 31:32, Ezek16:8)

The basis of this imagery is that the Covenant Relationship between God and Israel (See Deut 26:17-19) has the same elements as that of a Marriage between a husband and wife. For example, Ezekiel uses the language of his day regarding marriage to describe the forming of the relationship between God and his people :

... when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine. **Ezekiel 16:8**

**2. GOD'S COVENANT PEOPLE AS ADULTERERS**

2 Kings 17:10-17 is a summary of Israel's "faithfulness" to the God who had rescued them from slavery in Egypt and had entered into Covenant with them:

They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree, burning incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done ... They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless ... They forsook all the commands of the LORD their God ... They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire ... and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

If "marriage" illustrates the relationship between God and his people, then "adultery" is the fitting term for such behaviour. Ezekiel, for example, uses this imagery to pronounce judgement on the nation:

"You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband!" ... This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "Because you poured out your wealth and exposed your nakedness in your promiscuity with your lovers, and because of all your detestable idols, and because you gave them your children's blood ... I will bring upon you ... my wrath and jealous anger ... I will hand you over to your lovers, and they will tear down your mounds and destroy your lofty shrines. They will strip you of your clothes and take your fine jewellery and leave you naked and bare." ... from **Ezekiel 16:34-39**

**TODAY'S READING :** Hosea 2: 2-23 begins with the same language in Ezekiel 16, above. Hosea begins by passing judgement on his own adulterous wife, but midway through verse 5, the language "morphs" so that he begins to speak judgement on behalf of God against Israel:

I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery. Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. **(Morph)** She said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.'

This is an issue of style - of how the prophet expresses his message, But at verse 14 there is a much more substantial, and unexpected change ....

## A. JUDGEMENT IS NOT THE LAST WORD

Hosea, in a mind to judge his wife, Gomer, and cast her off, is instructed by God to take a vastly different course. (Hosea 3:1)

The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods.

The course of COMPASSION .... more than that, ROMANCE! ... and FORGIVENESS.

But note the sheer underlying GRACE. Neither Gomer, or Israel, have expressed any desire to change or have demonstrated any actual change ... but God takes the initiative - and acts. What he asks of Hosea, he does toward Israel. So at verse 14 of Chapter 2, the stream of judgement abruptly stops, and the process of restoration begins:

"... I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewellery, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot," declares the LORD. **(13/14)** "Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her."

The grace of God, present in the Old Testament, is sharply focused in Christ in the New:

*Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* **Romans 5:7-8**

## B. FUTURE BLESSING

What follows from Hosea 2:14 is a series of promises of what God will do under the repeated use of the phrase "in that day." The promises are in two categories:

1. The COMMUNITY of God's People. They will be FAITHFUL, and SECURE in God's love.

"In that day," declares the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband' **Hosea 2:16**

I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.' I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God.' **Hosea 2:23**

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.* **1 Peter 2:9-10 (see also Rom9:24-25)**

2. The SETTING of the Community: In an ABUNDANT world, free from SUFFERING

"In that day ... I will respond to the skies, and they will respond to the earth; and the earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and oil. **Hosea 2:21-22**

In that day ... Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety. **Hosea 2:18**

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth ... I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ... "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

**Revelation 21:1-4**

The prophets spoke in detail about the coming of Jesus. Isaiah, for example, speaks of Jesus as the Eternal King on David's Throne (Is9:6-7), and as the Suffering Servant bringing forgiveness. (Is53:4-6)

While Hosea does not make any explicit references to the coming of Jesus, the New Testament (as highlighted above) sees the future promises God made through him as being fulfilled in Jesus

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" (So be it) is spoken by us to the glory of God.

**2 Corinthians 1:20**