



Hosea 1-3

One Leader Who is David their King

Hosea is a book of love in the Old Testament, and it is a beautiful illustration of grace. When we draw near to Hosea, we come very near to Christ.

He is the prophet of a broken heart who learned how Yahweh suffers over the sins of His people. The dominant theme of the book is God's love. The shattered romance of his own life led him to see a divine romance. Because of the tragedy in his own personal life Hosea was able to see God's infinite love as no other prophet had understood and experienced it. Hosea is the champion lover of the Hebrew Scriptures. He takes his place among the greatest lovers of all time. He also learned God's sorrow out of his own sorrow. With each pang of suffering Hosea came to know the infinite heart of a holy God more clearly.

Yahweh had married Israel in His covenant of grace. However, Israel was like an unfaithful wife who had broken her covenant with God. She chose to go after idols of the neighboring nations like an adulterous wife. Yahweh, because He is holy and righteous, must punish her unfaithfulness.

The time covered by the prophecy of Hosea is undoubtedly the darkest in the history of the kingdom of Israel. It was a period of military dictatorships, despotism, murder, political intrigue, anarchy, bloodshed, misrule, mass confusion and idolatry. It was a day full of broken covenants.

Against this backdrop, writes the Hebrew scholar Keil; "This love bursts out in the flame of holy wrath A gentle sound of divine grace and mercy is ever heard in the midst of the flame, so that the wrath gives expression to the deepest anguish at the perversity of the nation" Her salvation rests on Yahweh alone and His deliverer. Their deliverance will be a divine deliverance (1:7).

The kingdom of Israel had fallen away from Yahweh and had sunken into idolatry. She had become an adulterous nation. Hosea paints a vivid picture of the ugliness of sin. His language is graphic because Israel had thoroughly perfected her adultery. "The land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking Yahweh" (v. 2).

Because of her deliberate disobedience the LORD said, ". . . I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel" (vv. 4-5).

Judgment will fall upon the nation. "For great will be the day of Jezreel" (v. 11). The name Jezreel means "judgment," or the "threatened judgment." The first son of Hosea was named Jezreel after the fruitful plain of Jezreel. There

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first son of Hosea was named Jezreel after the fruitful plain of Jezreel. There king Ahab had murdered Naboth and stole his vineyard. The result was the extermination of his dynasty. It was there that many acts of unrighteousness had been committed and Hosea says judgment will fall on Israel at Jezreel. "The day of Jezreel" would be the day the nation was broken in the valley (v. 4). It will have great consequences on the nation.

But it also becomes a reminder of God's salvation (vv. 10-11). There they will be weaned off their idols and trust in "the living God" as their only hope as in opposition to dead, lifeless, brainless idols.

One Leader will Unite the People

E. W. Hengstenberg says, "The peculiarity of the Messianic prophecies of Hosea, as compared with those of the time of David and Solomon, consists in the connection of the promise with the threatening of judgments, and in the Messiah's appearing as the light of those who walk in the deepest darkness of the divine judgments." He adds, "In Hosea the Messianic announcement meets us in its most developed form."

The messianic predictions uttered by the Hebrew prophets are closely connected with the messages of coming judgment. It is the LORD God in opposition to the heathen gods that is boldly proclaimed. The all powerful Messiah is seen as the invincible conqueror of the heathen world. He will subject the whole earth to the kingdom of God as we see in Daniel. He will be the "one leader" who will unite His people under the LORD God.

Something wonderful is going to happen where "You are not My people," it will be said to them "you are the sons of the living God" (v. 10). The children of Israel and Judah will be reunited together under "one leader" (v. 11). It will be one single head, or one prince king who will bring the people together. The bringing together of the people will be under Yahweh and David their king. It will take place under messianic times. Only a small number have come to Him which "furnish a pledge of their complete fulfillment in the last times, when the hardening of Israel will cease and all Israel be converted to Christ (Romans 11:25-26" (Keil and Delitzsch).

It is obvious this is the correct application when we turn to 1 Peter 2:10 and Romans 9:24-26. Both Peter and Paul quote the passage as proof of the calling of Gentiles to be the children of God in Christ. Israel had become like non-Jews and had fallen from the covenant of Yahweh. The apostles affirm that God had adopted the Gentiles as His children. This promise to Hosea is that after the Gentiles have been saved a large number of Jews will respond to God's saving grace in the Messiah. However, Israel's heart is still "hardened."

The Hebrew scholars Keil and Delitzsch came to this conclusion:

The fulfillment of the promise must also include the incorporation of believing Gentiles into the congregation of the Lord (Isaiah 44:5). This incorporation commenced with the preaching of the

congregation of the Lord (Isaiah 44:5). This incorporation commenced with the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles by the apostles; it has continued through all the centuries in which the church has been spreading in the world; and it will receive its final accomplishment when the fullness of the Gentiles shall enter into the kingdom of God. As the number of the children of Israel is thus continually increased, this multiplication will complete when the descendants of the children of Israel, who are still hardened in their hearts, shall turn to Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Redeemer (Romans 11:25-26).

Hosea 1:10 is quoted by the apostle Paul in Romans 9:26. Paul gives us further light on the meaning of this verse. The sovereignty of God is the theme in Romans nine. God in His sovereign grace has included the Gentiles.

And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, *even us*, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. As He says also in Hosea,

"I will call those who were not My people, My people, '
And her who was not beloved, beloved. '"

"And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them,
you are not My people, '
There they shall be called sons of the living God."

Israel will be reinstated, but in the mean time Gentiles will believe and become "the sons of the living God." Blessings will come to the non-Jewish people.

The apostle Paul did not want believers in the church at Rome to be ignorant of what God was doing with His people. He wrote, "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved . . ." (Romans 11:25-26a). Then he goes on to quote Isaiah 59:20, 21 to remind us that it will be "the Deliverer," the Messiah who will accomplish this great event. There is no ground for spiritualizing the reference to the Jewish people, "Israel," in verse twenty-six. A. T. Robertson and Charles Hodge insist that Paul is referring to the whole nation. Keep in mind the rejection of Israel is not permanent.

The "partial hardening" need not mean "every Jew without a single exception," but Israel as a whole, the nation, the eternal objects of God's electing love. The emphasis is on God's sovereign saving grace. These Jewish people will be saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. It will no longer be just a small remnant who will be saved but many will be saved as a result of the hardening being terminated.

The "hardening" is the "covering with a callus" (Thayer). It is "mental dullness, dulled spiritual perception." But remember it will be a "partial hardening." A day will come in God's perfect timing when they will respond and be saved by His grace. That will take place Paul says when "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in." When the church is completed and every Gentile has entered into the kingdom and the total number of the elect are saved God will once again turn to the Jewish people and their hearts will respond to His wooing love and they will believe on Him and be saved. "How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! (v. 33).

This will not be a political movement, but the sovereign hand of Yahweh and His anointed One.

Who is "David their king?"

Some expositors think Hosea 3:5 was fulfilled in the return of the remnant to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel. However, the great day of Jezreel has not yet come. That will occur when the Messiah, Jesus Christ returns and Judah and Israel will be gathered together under "one leader." By far the greater number of interpreters understand Him to be the Messiah, therefore, verse eleven still remains unfulfilled.

The "one leader" is a ruler who would be able to bring about a change in the attitude of the people of Israel toward both the northern and southern tribes. This "new head" would be the unifying force that could lead the nation to reestablish itself as in the days of ancient David. They would return from exile, repossess the land and become a great nation as when David was their great king.

David had long been dead and buried in Jerusalem; but Hosea represents this person in his everlasting dominion, which the Jews knew would "last as long as the sun and moon."

There is nothing against these events being realized in the messianic age. Hosea may have equated all of these accomplishments with the messianic age and the reign of the second David when the great day of Jezreel would be accomplished. It would be a day of victory for Yahweh. The Messiah would accomplish his work in the messianic age. In Christ we see most fully concentrated the mercy of God. In His appearance and everlasting dominion the promises given to David were first to be fully realized.

This same refrain is picked up again in Hosea 3:4-5. "For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or *sacred* pillar and without ephod or household idols" (v. 4).

Verse four finds fulfillment in the Assyrian exile in 722 B.C. and the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C. The city of Jerusalem and the Temple were completely destroyed in A.D. 70.

"Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the Lord and to His goodness in the last days" (v. 5). This verse reminds us of 1:11. Keil writes, "The true return to the Lord can not take place without a return to David their king, since God has promised the kingdom to David and his seed forever (2 Samuel 7:13, 16), and therefore David is the only king of Israel (their king). This King David, however, is no other than the Messiah."

These events will not take place until "in the last days." This expression is not a reference to a future time generally, but "always the closing future of the kingdom of God, commencing with the coming Messiah (Genesis 49:1; Isaiah 2:2)." These days are always associated with the messianic age. It never occurs in any other sense than the messianic times. This is a theme stressed through out the prophetic books in the Old Testament. These days anticipated the suffering, punishment and the return of the golden age of David. The prophets used the expression "the latter days" to refer to the messianic age when the throne of David would be reoccupied by one of his descendants.

The future of Israel is a returning and seeking the LORD their God and David their King who is Christ. This is the way the ancient Jewish writers understood Hosea 3:5. It can not be referring to King David who died and was buried in Jerusalem. It is David's greater Son and David's Lord, Jesus Christ (Ezekiel 37:23, 24). When Christ returns many in Israel will be converted to Christ. They will respond to His saving grace and put their faith in Him for salvation.

The greatest authorities among the Jewish religious leaders declared, "The last days means the days of the Messiah." The ancient Jewish Targum of Jonathan says, "This is the King Messiah; which he be from among

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Messiah." The ancient Jewish Targum of Jonathan says, "This is the King Messiah; which he be from among the living or from the dead. His name is Messiah."

God is so deeply in love with His people that He will not be turned aside in His search for His people. His love will not fail. We can leave the logistics of the future up to Him.

Hosea sees a vision of God patiently waiting, longing, pursuing, wooing, appealing, redeeming and restoring His wandering wife.

God in His redeeming grace has made a way for wandering depraved sinful men and women. He is pleading, yearning, pursuing and reaching down to everyone who will confess their need to Him and believe on Jesus the messiah as their only Lord and Savior. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ”

Indeed, He has in the all-sufficient work Jesus Christ accomplished on our behalf. Have you received His free gift of eternal life by grace through faith in Christ alone? Here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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