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Hosea (Pt 6) – The Latter Days

November 14, 2021

Sermon Text: Hosea 3:1-5

Scripture Reading: Daniel 12

We come now to the third chapter of Hosea. It consists of only 5 verses –

Hos 3:1-5 And the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” (2) So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. (3) And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.” (4) For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. (5) Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their

king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

The last half of chapter 2, you might recall, pointed very obviously to the time of Christ and the New Covenant era – the time in which we live.

Hos 2:16-19 “And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’ (17) For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. (18) 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. (19) 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.

This is still the theme here in chapter 3. Hosea is commanded by the Lord to go and love (marry?) an adulteress woman

as a continuing image of the Lord's faithfulness to unfaithful Israel. I don't know if this is Gomer or a different woman. John Calvin, as we saw earlier, maintained that these marriages of Hosea's were only seen by him in a vision and that he did not or could not actually marry an adulteress. I do not agree with Calvin on this.

The point of this is of course once again a picture of God's faithfulness to idolatrous Israel, though He would divorce them by declaring His covenant with them null and void. However, His covenant or Promise to Abraham could never be broken and that is the subject in view here. God was going to allow the Assyrians to wipe out Israel, as He would also allow the Babylonians to destroy Judah some 150 years later. This is what this language here pertains to:

- Many days without king or prince
- Without sacrifice or pillar (ie, without the temple)
- Without ephod (no priesthood)
- Without household gods – this is difficult to understand. It may refer to the captivity remedying the Jews' habitual lust for idols.

What then do we have here? In the short term Hosea is speaking of the captivity of Israel – and perhaps even of Judah?

– which would end when the Jews returned to Jerusalem in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. But the primary focus of Hosea's words here is identified in the last verse of this chapter-

(5) Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

In other words, God is providing encouragement to the faithful remnant in Israel that His promise to Abraham would certainly be fulfilled one day. We know this because this term – *the latter days* – is used in the Old Testament for the last days of the New Testament – that is, this church age which began with Christ's resurrection and will continue until He returns again.

This is when the children of Israel will return and seek the Lord. It is when they will seek David as their king – which is clearly a reference to Christ, the Son of David. Israel, the northern kingdom you remember, had rejected David as their king – that is, they rejected the Davidic line in Jerusalem and made their own king and worship center. This was nothing less than a rejection of Christ, the Messiah.

We should take careful notice here then that *no one can seek God unless they seek Christ.*

Joh 5:22-23 For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, (23) that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

God's elect, His remnant, the true Israel, would come in the fear of the Lord and give thanks to Him *in the latter days.*

Let me show you that this phrase, the latter days, does in fact refer to the time of Christ and the present age in which we live and that therefore Hosea's main purpose here is to *encourage the remnant, the true Jews who were faithful in the midst of all the evil of their countrymen.* Though Israel (and Judah) had broken the Mosaic Covenant, as Paul said – *that did not nullify the Promise:*

Gal 3:16-18 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. (17) This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified

by God, so as to make the promise void. (18) For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

Therefore, the promise was to be fulfilled in Christ in *the latter days:*

(Num 24:14) And now, behold, I am going to my people. Come, I will let you know what this people will do to your people in **the latter days.**"

(Deu 4:30) When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice.

(Isa 2:2) It shall come to pass in the **latter days** that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it,

(Jer 23:20) The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his heart. In **the latter days** you will understand it clearly.

(Jer 30:24) The fierce anger of the LORD will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intentions of his mind. **In the latter days** you will understand this.

(Jer 48:47) Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab **in the latter days**, declares the LORD.” Thus far is the judgment on Moab.

(Jer 49:39) “But **in the latter days** I will restore the fortunes of Elam, declares the LORD.”

(Dan 2:28) but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be **in the latter days**. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these:

(Dan 10:14) and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people **in the latter days**. For the vision is for days yet to come.”

(Mic 4:1) It shall come to pass **in the latter days** that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it,

Now, let’s take the time to look more closely at Daniel 2 because it proves that the Micah and Isaiah passages here, that refer to the mountain of the house of the Lord being established, is the kingdom of God in its fullness *in the latter days* (which have begun now) –

(Dan 2:26) The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?”

(Dan 2:27) Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked,

(Dan 2:28) but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these:

(Dan 2:29) To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be.

(Dan 2:30) But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

(Dan 2:31) “You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening.

(Dan 2:32) The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze,

(Dan 2:33) its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

(Dan 2:34) As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

(Dan 2:35) Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. **But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.**

(Dan 2:36) “This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation.

(Dan 2:37) You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory,

(Dan 2:38) and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold.

(Dan 2:39) Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

(Dan 2:40) And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.

(Dan 2:41) And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of

iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay.

(Dan 2:42) And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.

(Dan 2:43) As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.

(Dan 2:44) And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,

(Dan 2:45) just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

Therefore, when Hosea says:

(3:5) Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

...he is talking about the New Covenant and what the New Testament calls – *the last days*:

(Act 2:17) “And **in the last days** it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

(2Ti 3:1) But understand this, that **in the last days** there will come times of difficulty.

(Heb 1:2) but **in these last days** he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

(2Pe 3:3) knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come **in the last days** with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

So, look again now with this background at Hosea’s words:

Hos 3:5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness **in the latter days**.

As Calvin notes: “*Everywhere in Scripture, especially in the New Testament, the manifestation of Christ is placed in the last times.*”

Do you see, to repeat this again, that it is impossible to understand the Bible if we fail to understand that the true Israel of God is the church, the elect, His remnant that He faithfully preserves through the ages until Christ comes again? And that OT Israel is a picture of that true Israel, all of her feasts and her temple and her priesthood and the promised land and more were all given to point us to Christ and His kingdom and the true Israel of God and the true temple, and so on.

This is why you read the OT prophets, for example, and they are pronouncing judgment against the unrepentant Israelites, and then in almost the next breath they will break out into a prophecy of great blessing, of God’s mercy, of genuine repentance and obedience by the people and so on. Because while the Law brought condemnation upon Israel for her sin (as it does upon all who walk in sin and refuse to obey Christ), God’s Promise to save a people for Himself in His Son cannot be broken and can only bring blessing.

Let me show you a couple more examples of this very thing. This is how Isaiah begins:

Isa 1:1-31 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. (2) Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken: “Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. (3) The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.”

(4) Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.

(5) Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. (6) From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil. (7) Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence foreigners devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners. (8) And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a

vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. (9) If the LORD of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we should have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.

(10) Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! (11) “What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. (12) “When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts?

(13) Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. (14) Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. (15) When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

(16) Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, (17) learn to do good; seek

justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. (18) "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (19) If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; (20) but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

(21) How the faithful city has become a whore, she who was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. (22) Your silver has become dross, your best wine mixed with water. (23) Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not bring justice to the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them. (24) Therefore the Lord declares, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: "Ah, I will get relief from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes. (25) I will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy.

(26) And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." (27) Zion shall be

redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness.

(28) But rebels and sinners shall be broken together, and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed. (29) For they shall be ashamed of the oaks that you desired; and you shall blush for the gardens that you have chosen. (30) For you shall be like an oak whose leaf withers, and like a garden without water. (31) And the strong shall become tinder, and his work a spark, and both of them shall burn together, with none to quench them.

And then as Isaiah comes to a close there is an intense concentration of this kind of language:

Isa 61:1-11 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; (2) to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; (3) to grant **to those who mourn** in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of

the LORD, that he may be glorified.

(4) They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. (5) Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers; (6) but you shall be called the priests of the LORD; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast.

(7) Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy. (8) For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

(9) Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed.

(10) I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the

robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (11) For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

We may not understand all the nuances of the imagery used in Scriptures like this, but we do see the big picture very clearly. Christ has come and we live in the latter days. That stone cut without hands has come. It is the kingdom of God and it is growing and growing. It will never be destroyed. It will never come to an end. The King will reign forever. And all of this misery which is the history of this fallen world will be no more. No more tyrannical despots, no more wars, no more evil of any kind – *and it will never, never, never end.*

All because of God's faithfulness to His promise to save His people in Christ, effecting a New Covenant that can never be broken because His Son has met all of His holy demands by which we were once cursed.