

Providence Reformed Baptist Church – Marble Falls
Pastor Phillip M. Way

Sunday, April 30, 2017

God's Redeeming Love – Hosea

1. Hosea's Family – Hosea 1:1-2:1

Take your Bibles and open up with me to the Book of Hosea. After Daniel, and if you get to Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, or Amos, you've gone too far. This is the first Book of the Minor Prophets in the order in which it has been put in Scripture, but it was not the first if you put them in order of date written. Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, and Amos were written before Hosea. The ministries of Isaiah, Micah, and Amos overlapped with Hosea during the same time period.

For a "Minor Prophet", Hosea had a rather long ministry. We know that the "Major Prophets", Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel all wrote lengthy books of prophecy and their ministries spanned decades. Hosea, with 14 chapters, along with Zechariah, also with 14 chapters, are the longest books by a Minor Prophet and we don't call them "Minor" because their ministry was any less, it is simply a reference to what they wrote, when you compare Hosea at 14 chapters to Isaiah at 66 chapters and Jeremiah and all of these great humongous works that I would be amazed to preach through one of those Major Prophets at some point and can only imagine how long that would take. But Hosea with his 14 chapters while he is named a Minor Prophet this is not a minor ministry. We know that Hosea's ministry covered 50 years, from 760 to 710 BC. Keep in mind the time line here because it was in 722 BC that Israel was taken captive by Assyria as judgment for their sin. So he is preaching and ministering to Israel up to and just before the time of their captivity.

Hosea 1:1 lists for us the kings of Judah and Israel who reigned during his time of ministry to the people as he preached the Word of God specifically to the people in Israel. His preaching had as its theme "God's Redeeming Love" and this book really is an amazing pageant, a living parable where God uses Hosea and his family to put on a show for the people to make a point about sin and about redemption. In the family, Hosea represents God and his wife Gomer represents Israel. Hosea is preaching and presenting a picture of salvation in the midst of judgment, and in fact, the name Hosea means "Salvation." Who else in Scripture has a name that means "Salvation", or "Deliverance?" That would be Jesus. In Hebrew, Yeshua, or in English Joshua, means "Salvation." Yeshua/Joshua in Hebrew is then Iesous in Greek, and Iesous from Greek to English is Jesus. Some people insist that we should call Jesus Yeshua Hamashiach, Yeshua the Messiah, and not "Jesus." That is really not an argument because for example, my name is Phillip, if I was French it would be Philippe, in Spanish it is Felipe, it is all the same name. The word Jesus is this transliteration directly from the Greek to us in English because of course the New Testament is written in Greek. So we have the name Jesus. The point is that Jesus has been

called by many different versions of that same name in many different languages around the world and what does it all have in common? His name means “Salvation.” That is Hosea’s name meaning as well. It is a direct reference to deliverance, to the salvation of God.

As we begin we will look this morning at chapter 1 and the first verse of chapter 2 in an examination of Hosea’s Family. We will get a lot of history and a lot of background this morning. Hosea writes for us to start:

1:1 The word of the Lord that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

Here he gives us the kings who reigned while he ministered as a prophet from Israel. **“Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.”** Remember to set the historical context here that as a result of the sins of David and Solomon the Kingdom of Israel was going to be split and under Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, in around 930 BC the nation split. Judah and Benjamin forming Judah in the south with Jerusalem as its capital, and Israel consisting of the other ten tribes to the north. Israel was also called Ephraim, as they were the largest tribe, and is also referred to in Scripture by their geographical location as Samaria. You see, we are not the first nation to have a Civil War between the north and south! The Kingdom did split and there were then two nations, two lines of kings, two capitals in two nations, Jerusalem in Judah in the south and Samaria in Israel (or Ephraim) to the north. These two nations now as God refers to them as sisters.

We have the record in Scripture of God sending prophets to His people, some prophesying to Judah, some to Israel, some to both, and one went to Nineveh (we know who that was, that was Jonah) and while most of the prophets came from Judah, two came from Israel. Hosea and Jonah both came from the north. All the other prophets came from Judah from the south. For the historical background and events that took place during this time, you can read 2 Kings 14-20 and 2 Chronicles 26-32.

Jeroboam that is mentioned here as King in Israel is Jeroboam II. Jeroboam I ruled as the nation split in 930 BC. Jeroboam the II was not his son but another King named Jeroboam, so we differentiate between them with the I and II. The text tells us he was the son of Joash. He began to reign in 793 BC, about 140 years after the civil war. Jeroboam I reacted to the fact that Judah had Jerusalem and the Temple by setting up golden calves to worship several places in Samaria. This was the beginning of the idolatry and false worship in the north and it was perpetuated and made worse by the kings that followed. Out of 19 kings who reigned in Israel after the Kingdom was divided, God says of all but one of them that they did evil in His sight. However, just because God did not specifically say that Jehu did

evil, He did say in 2 Kings 10:30-31:

“And the Lord said to Jehu, “Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.” 31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin.

So even though Jehu is not said specifically to have done evil, he still rejected God even after God used him to depose Ahab and to destroy Ahab’s descendants. We will talk about that more in a minute. But we see all 19 kings of the north were wicked kings.

So we look to Judah and think that things will be better. We are talking about the people of God with rulers appointed by God, most of them are wicked, we are told that there are only 6 kings did what was right in the eyes of God in Judah and all the rest did evil. Note, all the Kings in Judah were from the line of David. In Israel there is no family line, it is broken up there are assassinations, captains become kings, mother’s put their sons on the throne all these kinds of terrible things happen and they are not all related. In Judah they were all from the line of David.

In the list here in Hosea 1:1, we know Uzziah, Jotham, and Hezekiah were godly kings. Concerning Ahaz we are told in 2 Kings 16:2, **“Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord his God, as his father David had done.”** In 2 Chronicles 28:19 the Scripture adds this, **“For the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the Lord.”** Continuing in 2 Chronicles 28:22, **“Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the Lord. This is that King Ahaz. 23 For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, saying, “Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me.” But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel. 24 So Ahaz gathered the articles of the house of God, cut in pieces the articles of the house of God, shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. 25 And in every single city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers.”**

When his son, Hezekiah, became king, 2 Chronicles 29:3 tells us, **“In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them.”** This is similar to what Josiah had to do later, again repairing the Temple, where the Book of the Law was discovered and worship and eventually Passover were re-instituted in Josiah’s reformation.

Back to Jeroboam II, we know that he continued the pursuit of wickedness like all the kings of Israel, but while he reigned the nation was at peace for a time. There was peace and prosperity. The Bible proves for us over and over again that peace and prosperity in a nation do not mean that God is showing favor. The country was descending into corruption and into wickedness. From the people's perspective this was a very good time in Israel's history. A closer look however through the eyes of Amos and Micah and Isaiah show the seedy underside as there was injustice and corruption throughout the religious and governmental leadership in the nation and a perversion of the courts as the rich used the legal system to abuse the poor.

The people of Israel at this point were seriously failing to obey the two greatest commandments. They were not loving God or their neighbor as they should. Idolatry, injustice, and irreverence were the marks of the culture during the ministry of Hosea. And while things looked peaceful on the surface, conditions were such that of the 6 kings in Israel that ruled after Jeroboam II, 6 in the span of 20 years, 4 of those 6 became king by assassinating their predecessor. Then as we know in 722 BC, Assyria conquered Israel and Israel never returned to the land. It looked good on the outside but the land was corrupting and decaying.

Hosea warned the people, but they did not listen to him. Now he will have his life held up in front of them as an example, as a living parable, of the dangers and cost of sin and the power of God's covenantal love. As Hosea's wife, Gomer, plays the part of Israel, no one would say that she was innocent or not deserving of judgment, just as Israel had no defense against the charges brought by the Lord through His prophets.

As the curtain is raised, so to speak, let's now meet Hosea's family, let's meet this cast of characters. We begin with his wife, as mentioned, a woman named Gomer. In chapter 1:2-3 we read, **"When the Lord began to speak by Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea: 'Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry, for the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the Lord.' 3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim."** From the start God tells Hosea that as he marries this woman she will be unfaithful. After their marriage and the birth of their first child, the rest of their family life finds Hosea living in a marriage with an unfaithful spouse with the consequences and repercussions of Gomer's unfaithfulness.

As our text identifies her as a "wife of harlotry", that does not mean she was already a harlot, already living in immorality before Hosea married her. It is a reference not to the present condition but of a future condition, he married her with the knowledge that at some point she would become unfaithful and would leave him in pursuit of other men. We do not know what questions that Hosea may have asked the Lord upon learning these things. All we know is that he was obedient and did what God instructed him to do – he married Gomer. Shortly thereafter we read, **"she conceived and bore him a son."**

There is a lesson for Israel and for us from the name that Hosea is told by the Lord to name his son. **“4 Then the Lord said to him: ‘Call his name Jezreel, for in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, and bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 It shall come to pass in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.’”** This son’s name, Jezreel, every time it is said, serves as a reminder to everyone who hears it that God is going to judge His people for their sin. The name Jezreel means “God will scatter.” Jezreel is also the name of a place, a valley, which rests just south of Nazareth and 10 miles east of the Valley of Megiddo.

We all know what will happen in the Valley of Megiddo, right? In Hebrew the place called Har Megiddo, transliterated Armageddon. But what about the Valley of Jezreel? Hosea’s first child is named Jezreel to reference the fact that God will **“avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, and bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.”**

Do you remember King Ahab? Six kings before Jeroboam II, Ahab ruled in Israel, he was one of the more wicked kings, and you probably are more familiar with his wife than with him – he married the daughter of the King of Tyre and Sidon, who was also a High Priest of Baal. Her name was Jezebel. She built a palace for 400 priests of Baal who were later confronted and killed by Elijah on Mt. Carmel.

In another episode that demonstrates their wickedness, Ahab decided that he wanted a piece of land for himself. He wanted a beautiful vineyard that belonged to a man named Naboth. Ahab first offered to give Naboth another plot of land where he could have a new vineyard, swapping the land one for the other, but Naboth refused. Ahab offered to buy it outright and still Naboth said no.

Ahab whined and pouted about it, seriously, in 1 Kings 21:3-4 we read, **“3 But Naboth said to Ahab, ‘The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!’ 4 So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, ‘I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.’”** And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food. He went home and threw a fit. The story continues, **“5 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, ‘Why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?’”** When the king explained, the queen put a plan into motion.

“7 Then Jezebel his wife said to him, ‘You now exercise authority over Israel! Basically she tells him to put his big boy king pants on. Arise, eat food, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.’ 8 And she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who were dwelling in the city with Naboth. 9 She wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with high honor among the people; 10 and seat two

men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him, saying, ‘You have blasphemed God and the king.’ Then take him out, and stone him, that he may die.”

Not very subtle, but effective. After Ahab and Jezebel’s scheme in the murder of Naboth came to pass, the prophet Elijah proclaimed a Word from the Lord that Ahab was going to be judged and that he was going to die and none of his descendants would sit on the throne after him. He was going to die, as this was just a glimpse of the depths of his wickedness as king revealed in this action and the kingdom was going to be torn away from his and his family. In the prophesy about his death we also see that Jezebel would die and would be eaten by dogs.

Fulfilling the prophesy, Ahab died in battle, and then a Captain of the Army named Jehu, whom Elijah had sent a prophet to anoint with oil to be the next king, carried out the command of God to kill Ahab’s son and throw his body in the field that had belonged to Naboth. When he then went to the Valley of Jezreel where Jezebel was, he commanded her servants to throw her out of the window and then he trampled her with his horse and then he left and ate dinner and when they came back later to bury her the dogs had eaten most of her, leaving only her skull, the palms of her hands, and bottoms of her feet. There was nothing left really to bury.

Now, because of the continued sins of the people and the kings, because of the bloodshed brought about by Jehu, now God was going to scatter His people. Remember, Jezreel means “to scatter.” The word is literally a reference to flipping your hand out, as if you were sowing seed, or throwing something away. This was Hosea’s first child, his firstborn son. Jezreel, a constant reminder to the people of Israel’s wickedness and the certainty of the coming judgment at God’s hand.

Verse 5 tells us, **“5 It shall come to pass in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.”** This is a reference to a military defeat, the breaking of the bow of Israel. Well guess where Assyria defeated the armies of Israel? In the Valley of Jezreel. That is where the Assyrians came to gain entrance to the capital in Samaria. They took the people into captivity, and relocated people from Assyria putting them in the land they had conquered. The descendants of these foreigners who did intermarry with those few from Israel who remained lived in the region of Samaria and they were known in Jesus’ day as Samaritans. This was the basis (not the justification) the basis for the ethnic hatred the Jews held toward the Samaritans.

In verse 6 then we meet Gomer’s second child, her daughter. **“6 And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: “Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away.”**

I say Gomer’s second child because this child is not Hosea’s. Notice, the son, Jezreel, she

bore to him, to Hosea. **“She conceived and bore him a son.”** The second child now she bore, but not to him. That is significant. At some point after the birth of Jezreel, Gomer became unfaithful. The second child, this daughter, we just read that God told Hosea to name her and she was named Lo-Ruhamah. Her name means, “No mercy.”

God is declaring that there is a limit now to His mercy. At some point, it will stop and judgment will follow. He says, **“I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away.”** In verse 7 we continue, **“Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword or battle, by horses or horsemen.”**

As Assyria conquered Israel, they were prepared to move south and take Judah next. Twenty years later, in 701 BC, Sennacherib led the Assyrians toward Jerusalem. This was when Hezekiah was king in Judah and he cried out to the Lord for help and deliverance. In 2 Kings 19:15-19 we read Hezekiah’s prayer.

“O Lord God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16 Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. 17 Truly, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, 18 and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men’s hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. 19 Now therefore, O Lord our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, You alone.”

We also read the account of this in Isaiah 37, as Isaiah ministered to the King. The Lord assured Hezekiah that He would take care of it! 2 Kings 19 tells us, **“Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.’”** And then **“Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria: ‘He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor build a siege mound against it. 33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return; and he shall not come into this city,’ Says the Lord. 34 ‘For I will defend this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.’ 35 And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh. 37 Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.”**

This was the first time that Assyria went somewhere and lost! They were the dominant military power in the world at this time and if they wanted you they were coming to take you it was just a matter of how much time it took for them to get there and defeat you. They would burn you out and starve you out – they were going to capture you if they were coming. Hezekiah knew this and he knew their only help was going to be the Lord. And God did intervene and protected the city and Sennacherib went back defeated and while he was worshipping his false gods he was assassinated by his own sons. Assyria had been stopped.

That was God’s mercy toward Judah, while Israel was shown no mercy when the Assyrians came and attacked. How bad does it have to be for God’s mercy to run out? Yet so many today live as if it is inexhaustible. Yes, His mercy is forever. Yes, His mercy is new every morning. But there are also limits, according to His holiness and His will. The people of Israel were being warned by the name of this little girl, Lo-Ruhamah. There will be no mercy, the people will no longer be pitied. Judgement, unabated judgment was about to pour down on them.

We do have further evidence that this was not Hosea’s daughter, even though he named her and cared for her as is she was, because later in Hosea 2:4 we find God saying, **“I will not have mercy on her children, for they are the children of harlotry.”** This is not a reference to all three children, but to two as this statement is a play on words. It is a play on their names. Lo-Ruhamah, “I will have no mercy”, and the third child we are about to meet, a son named Lo-Ammi, whose name means, “Not My People,” “they are the children of harlotry,” and not Mine, God is saying. **“4 I will not have mercy on her children, for they are the children of harlotry. 5 For their mother has played the harlot; She who conceived them has behaved shamefully.”** And still Hosea names them and behaves as a father toward them.

Verse 8 introduces us to this third child, and second son. **“8 Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9 Then God said: ‘Call his name Lo-Ammi, for you are not My people, and I will not be your God.’” 10 “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ there it shall be said to them, ‘You are sons of the living God.’”**

Another child born of her unfaithfulness. God instruction is for Hosea to name him, and again we see Hosea’s faithfulness in the face of Gomer’s unfaithfulness. The progression of judgment seen in the names of these children is that God will scatter, God will show no more mercy, and finally God will declare that these people are no longer His people. God is about to disown Israel because of their spiritual adultery, because of their unfaithfulness.

This mirrors Romans 9:25-26 where God through Paul quotes Hosea. **“25 As He says also**

in Hosea: 'I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved.' 26 "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they shall be called sons of the living God."

Even as Israel rejected the Messiah and the Gospel was then sent to be proclaimed to the gentiles, to the nations, even then, there is hope for the restoration of Israel. Paul continues by quoting Isaiah, Romans 9:27-28, **"Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved. 28 For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth.'"**

Finishing chapter 1 now with verse 11 we read, **"Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and appoint for themselves one head; and they shall come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel!"**

Hosea as we will learn in the next few weeks provides an example of what it looks like in everyday life to be committed to doing things God's way and not our own. He is going to continue to love Gomer and to provide for her even though she has been unfaithful.

When we look at this scenario, I imagine that the first thing most in the church would tell Hosea today if his wife left him and had two children by other men, you can just hear the counsel offered, can't you? "She has been unfaithful, you have justification to divorce her." But look at this example. What does Hosea do? He loves his wife like God loves us, His bride!

Jesus will never leave or forsake us. For any reason. We are His and we will remain His forever. If and when we sin, when we confess He forgives us and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. If and when we are unfaithful, He remains faithful. Because of Who He is, because of His nature, nothing can separate us from the love of God given to us in Christ. Nothing.

In this living parable, where Hosea could have easily walked away from it all, instead he named and embraced these children as if they were his own and cared for them even while Gomer continued to pursue other men to the point that we will learn that she was taken captive as a slave and put up for sale on the slave market. Hosea certainly could have just let her go. He could have said she is reaping the consequences of her sin, she is reaping what she has sown. Instead he stands as a picture of God's love for His people, even as they are being judged for their sin and taken into captivity. God is still proclaiming through the prophets to them repent and return to Me and I will return to you. While you are not My people, you will be My people again.

The names of these children serve as a warning of judgment, and as we will see later, also a

promise as the names can be reversed. There we even read it in verse 10 this morning, **“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ there it shall be said to them, ‘You are sons of the living God.’ Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and appoint for themselves one head; and they shall come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel!”** Then in chapter 2 verse 1, **“Say to your brethren, ‘My people,’ and to your sisters, ‘Mercy is shown.’”** The curse will be reversed!

There is a message of hope even in the message of judgment. It is the same as the original curse for sin, in Genesis 3:15, **“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”**

God here is promising to keep the Covenant with Abraham. Remember, He told Abraham that He would make his descendants as many as the sands of the sea. Innumerable. And the good news is that we are included in that number as Paul tells us we are descendants of Abraham by faith!

Romans 9:6-8, **“For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, 7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.”** And Romans 4:13 **“For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”** And **“16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all 17 (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.”**

What good news – so often we think that there are so few who believe and follow Jesus, yet He tells us that the number of those who are His children can only be numbered by Him!

God here is assuring the people that He will honor His covenant with Abraham, even as there are threats of judgment, of being scattered, and of mercy drying up, and of the people for a time being disowned. With all of this there is the promise that God will remain faithful even when and especially when His people are not faithful.

Think about the sins of Israel here. They had other gods they were worshipping, and idols and images. They were taking God’s name in vain, defiling His worship to the point that

Amos says that God hates their worship altogether. They are defaming the Sabbath. In every way they are breaking the commands of God. The First Tablet of the Law, the first 4 of the Ten Commandments, they were living in direct opposition and rebellion to God's Law.

At some point then, verse 11 tells us that Israel will be unified and they will have one head. Who can this be? This is Jesus! This is the Messiah. Remember, again, what does Paul say about Israel? When Christ returns, Romans 11:26 **“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; 27 For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’”** In fact, when Hosea says, **“and they shall come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel!”** the phrase there for **“come up out of the land”** is a reference to the same word as was used for “to scatter”. Remember it is a flip of the hand that can mean to throw something away, or to sow seed. God has sown seed that will grow, the gospel that will show that where there once was judgment now there will be life and growth.

The people were hearing and seeing a message here – you have been unfaithful, you have committed spiritual adultery, you have broken the covenant, but here is a picture of God seen in Hosea, and He will keep His covenant promises. **“Say to your brethren, ‘My people,’ and to your sisters, ‘Mercy is shown.’”** We see a reversal of the meaning of their names.

Where then does this remnant come from? Where are they regathered from? These are those who hear the call and obey the gospel who are members not of the Old Covenant that has failed but of the New Covenant which Christ has kept on our behalf.

Just as with Israel so it is with us – there was a time we were children of wrath, not mercy. There was a time we were not His people. It is what we read in Acts 2 this morning, **“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”**

And also in Ephesians 2, **“11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”**

We were **“dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now**

works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”

“And you He made alive.”

God is making a point with the family of Hosea, but the point goes beyond judgment for sin. It is a point found even in the prophet's name. Hosea. Salvation. In light of the consequences for sin, there is the hope of salvation. His name is also Salvation. His name is Jesus.

Let us pray.