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Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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Hosea (Pt 8) – Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah, Lo-Ammi

April 24, 2022

Sermon Text: Hosea (Review, chs 1-3)

Scripture Reading: Romans 10

Hos 1:1-11 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.

(2) When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.” (3) So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim,

and she conceived and bore him a son.

(4) And the LORD said to him, “**Call his name Jezreel**, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. (5) And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.”

(6) She conceived again and bore a daughter. **And the LORD said to him, “Call her name No Mercy**, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. (7) But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.”

(8) When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. (9) **And the LORD said,**

“Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

(10) Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.” (11) And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

This morning we return to our study of the OT minor prophet – Hosea which we left off of several months ago. Let’s begin with a review of some of the main points we covered in the first 4 chapters. Here is the background and setting of Hosea’s day and situation:

Hosea’s ministry was in the northern kingdom of Israel. Here is some background information about him:

1. His ministry extended from 756BC to 725BC. The northern kingdom fell to Assyria in 722BC.
2. He was called as a prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II and saw a succession of 6 more kings in the north and 4 in the southern kingdom of Judah (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah).
3. Hosea then was a contemporary with Amos, Isaiah, and Micah.
4. His wife, Gomer, and he had 3 children.
5. The book of Hosea is probably a compilation of sermons given by Hosea over a period of some 25 years.

We considered what is generally referred to as “the problem of Gomer.” How could God command a righteous man like Hosea to marry an adulterous woman? Various explanations are given – some suggest Gomer is just a kind of metaphor for unfaithful Israel, but not a real person. The marriage, in other words, was not real. But others argue that there is

no indication in the Scripture that would lead us to believe anything other than that Gomer was a real person and Hosea's marriage was a real marriage.

We also learned that the New Testament has several very significant passages that quote Hosea:

(Mat 2:15) and remained there until the death of Herod. **This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."**

(13) Go and learn what this means: **'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.'** For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Rom 9:24-26 even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? (25) **As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'" (26) "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,'**

there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

You see then that Hosea spoke numerous times about the Messiah and the true Israel.

Hosea began to speak to his wicked countrymen in the Northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam. It is important for us to know about those times if we are going to properly appreciate what Hosea preached.

This was not the first Jeroboam who led the separation of the northern 10 tribes from the southern kingdom of Judah just after Solomon died. This Jeroboam came on the scene later and is thus Jeroboam II. We know that he was an able ruler and under him Israel prospered. But he was an ungodly, wicked and arrogant man.

We heard John Calvin's commentary on this:

"...the Prophet testifies here in express words, that he had already threatened future vengeance to the

people, even when the kingdom of Israel flourished in wealth and power, when Jeroboam was enjoying his triumphs, and when prosperity inebriated the whole land.

...under Jeroboam the kingdom of Israel became strong, and was fortified by many strongholds and a large army, and abounded also in great riches....As, then, he had increased the kingdom, as he had become formidable to all his neighbors, as he had collected great riches, and as the people lived in ease and luxury, what Hosea declared to them seemed incredible. ‘You are not,’ he said, ‘the people of the Lord; you are adulterous children, you are born of fornication.’” [Calvin’s Commentaries]

The Lord’s instruction to Hosea to go and marry a wife of whoredom and have children who are the products of whoredom was an ugly picture message to the Israelites of how God viewed them. Because of the current prosperity, they would have everyone believe that God is accepting and blessing them no

matter how they lived. But this was a delusion – just as it is a delusion in our nation today.

Hosea’s first child was to be named *Jezreel*. Not *Israel*, the seed of Abraham through Jacob, but *Jezreel*, which means “*dispersion*” and sometimes “*seed*.” Listen to Calvin again:

“You are Israel; but in another respect, you are dispersion. For as the seed is cast in various directions, so the Lord will scatter you, and thus destroy and cast you away. You think yourselves to have been planted in this land, and to have a standing from which you can never be shaken or torn away; but the Lord will, with his own hand, lay hold on you to cast you away to the remotest regions of the world.

They call themselves Israelites, but I will show by a little change in the word, that they are degenerate and spurious, for they are Jezreelites rather than Israelites.

And it appears that Jezreel was the metropolis of the kingdom in the days of king Ahab, and was the place where that great slaughter was made by Jehu (2 Kings 10).”

As Calvin noted, Jezreel was the chief metropolis of Hosea’s day. The seat of boasting and self-congratulatory confidence. The Lord here vows that everything these wicked people placed their confidence in (their “bow” – ie, their strength, military might, wealth, etc) will be brought to nothing. This of course would happen in 722 BC when the Assyrians wiped them out.

And we applied this to our own nation today. We said that we must think soberly about the events of 9/11 and how the Lord allowed that devastation to come upon the very center of *this nation’s* Jezreel. And yet like the Israelites of Hosea’s day, such a suggestion is widely mocked and scorned and regarded as foolishness. But it was an incredible and visible visitation of the Lord upon a nation whose people have long been rebelling

against Him – and it was a warning that there would be more to come unless we repent.

We said that when God is for us, who can be against us? But when *God* is against us, who are we going to be delivered by? No one! We may enjoy economic prosperity (and that blessing may well be removed by the Lord – and it may be happening even now), we may trust in all the military gadgetry and might known to man, but *God can break our bow at any moment He pleases. He can strip us of all we are placing our trust in, and He can do it in the twinkling of an eye.* In contrast, *God can preserve and save us even when our earthly resources are weak and few, if we turn to Him, obey Him, and repent of our sin.*

The bad news did not stop with Jezreel. A second child, and then a third were born to Hosea and their names also served as verdicts of judgment against the nation – No Mercy, and Not a People. And yet, in the midst of this gloom, there is a bright ray of God’s promise to

perfectly fulfill His promise to Abraham – and ultimately, to us.

Hos 1:6-11 She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, **“Call her name No Mercy,** for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all.

(7) But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.”

(8) When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. (9) And the LORD said, **“Call his name Not My People,** for you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

(10) Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.”

(11) And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

“God’s favor was now taken away from the people....[He says] ‘I have to this point borne with you; but now your obstinacy is intolerable. I will not then bear with you anymore.’ God had borne with them until the state of things proved that they were altogether incurable....My mercy has til now preserved you. When I withdraw my favor from you, your ruin will be inevitable and you must necessarily perish and be brought to nothing.” [Calvin]

And these children of judgment proceeded from Gomer, an adulterous wife as a picture of God’s judgment – *dispersion, no mercy, not My people* – proceeding from another adulterous wife – the Israelites who belonged to God by covenant. Yet they chased after other gods.

The finality. The people of God are divorced. The covenant was withdrawn due to their habitual, hard-hearted violation of their vows. The only reason Israel was a nation, the only reason they were God's people, is because they stood in covenant relation to God. We are God's people because in Christ we are in covenant – the New Covenant – with God. It is a covenant which cannot be broken because its terms have been perfectly fulfilled by Christ.

But Israel made the old covenant null and void by their sinning. God divorced them and they would literally cease to exist as a nation or even as a distinct people. Yet the remnant is preserved. Here is Matthew Henry commenting on chapter 2 -

“Now it is here threatened that they shall be both stripped and starved. They thought their idols gave them their bread and their water, their wool and their flax, but God, by taking them away, will let them know that it was He who gave

them....God would raise up difficulties and troubles in their way, so that their public counsels and affairs shall have no success, nor shall they be able to get forward with them....God would show by these punishments how heinous, odious, and offensive they were in His sight.

“Sin will have shame; let those who pursue sin shamefully expect it. Sin will bring shame.”

And we heard this great comment from Matthew Henry too:

“Many who lie under guilt and God's wrath are yet very jocund and merry, and live jovially; but, whether in their laughter their hearts be sad or not, it is certain that the end of their mirth will be heaviness; for God will cause all their mirth to cease....Sin and mirth can never hold long together; but, if men will not take away sin from their mirth, God will take away mirth from their sin.”

After this bleak and dark exposure of Israel's sin, we can see that *man*

left to himself will never repent. The hardness of the sinful heart is astonishing. And this is why salvation is entirely of the Lord – or no one would be saved:

Understand? It is only by God’s electing grace that any of us are saved. It is the Lord’s doing. If He had not decreed that His elect would be saved and if He had not chosen us and made us new creations, giving us faith and causing us to be born again, *we would all have ended like Sodom and Gomorrah.* If Christ had not effectually accomplished the salvation of His elect on the cross, if the cross were only an open invitation to everyone, we would all be lost.

But instead, we are made His children and we are given new hearts by which we love Him and love His Word. The way that we travel is narrow and *few are they who find it.*

And that is why we have the rest of this chapter:

Hos 2:14-23 “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. (15) 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.

(16) “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. (20) 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.’”

See it? This is the New Covenant in Christ. It is the complete reversal of the curse. It is the New Heavens and Earth. This is the true Israel in Christ, and the ONLY way we will ever be real Israelites is, *we must be born again*.

Next time we will plan to summarize Hosea chapters 3 & 4 and then we will be ready to move into some new ground in the 5th chapter. For now, consider these words from Jonathan Edwards –

truths that Hosea’s countrymen almost to a man fell short of:

“Christ will not refuse to save the greatest sinners who, in a right manner, come to God for mercy, for this is His work. It is His business to be a Savior of sinners; it is the work for which He came into the world, and therefore He will not object to it. He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Sin is the very evil which He came into the world to remedy; therefore He will not object to any man that he is very sinful. The more sinful he is, the more need he has of Christ. The redemption of Christ is sufficient for the pardon of the greatest sinners.

But to come to Christ, we must see our misery, and be sensible of our need of mercy. And we must be sensible that we are not worthy that God should have mercy upon us. We must come to Him as beggars, not as creditors demanding what is owed us. And finally, we must come to God for mercy in and through Jesus Christ alone. What HE is. What HE has done. If a

person comes in this manner to God for mercy, the greatness of his sins will be no impediment to pardon. Let his sins be ever so many, ever so great, and ever so aggravated, it will not make God in the least more reluctant to pardon them. [The True Believer, Soli Deo Gloria Publishing, Jonathan Edwards]