

## 2161 - HOSEA'S MINISTRY - 14:1-3

**INTRO.** Hosea is about God **marrying** Israel – and Israel being **extremely unfaithful** to Him. Hosea is about God calling a young man in mid-twenties to be a prophet to Israel – his message is to **assure** Israel that they are **welcome** to return to God – Hosea has to make Israel **realise** God is full of forgiveness towards her. Hosea is a **National** call to repentance with individual application. There are **two** things that stand out in this book. (1) is that **God really does love** Israel! (2) is that God **really wants Israel to know** that He is **'all ready'** to **forgive** them and have them back. God is commissioning Hosea to **make sure** that Israel gets His message, so that if Israel fails to respond to God's offer of forgiveness, they will **never** be able to say 'We were not sure if You really wanted us back'! Because God **does** want Israel back. If this Book does not apply to **you**, it will apply to **someone you know!**

\*Some Xns have a **problem** with this book. God telling Hosea to marry a prostitute? That is because they are treating God as if He were either a **machine** without feelings/emotions, or a human being with **unforgiving spirit!** God **has** emotions! He is very **angry** with Israel. Anger may not be sinful! **Temper** is. Imagine a wife who knew her husband was being unfaithful away from home, at the club or at work - and she **wasn't bothered!** Did she really **love** her husband? What did **marriage mean** to her?

God's **anger** here is **not** over a domestic 'tiff' about whose turn it was to empty the dish-washer! Its over a **real/basic/divorceable** issue! Israel is **apathetic** about the 'agony **God** is going through' over Israel's unfaithfulness! God is in **pain** over what Israel has done, **adoring** false gods, spending **time/money/affections** on other gods! Israel does **not even notice** God's pain at this!

So God deciding to **shock** Israel! Nothing short of a **startling shock** will bring Israel to its senses. God **commands** Hosea *take to yourself a wife of **whoredom** and have **children of whoredom!*** [1:2,3] So strange! God **does** ask His faithful servants to do **very strange** things at times! Isaiah to walk naked and barefoot for 3yrs [Isa 20:2,3] Ezekiel to lie on his left side for 390 days [Ez 4:4]!!

Why is Hosea to do this? To make a **picture**, a **visual aid**, of what **they** were doing to God! To **remind** Israel of **their** sin! Every time Hosea would walk down the street with Gomer, they would be reminded of their **incongruous** marriage to God! As soon as they would mutter and gasp at the couple 'What's **he** doing married to that type of woman', Hosea would reply that 'This is what **you** are doing to God – you are unfaithful to Him!'

In order for Hosea to be **genuine** in his appeals to Israel, he needs to **experience** what God Himself is experiencing – so God asks him to take a prostitute as a wife. Unless Hosea **experiences** God's pain, he will not be able to **express** the hurt/anger God is 'going through!' **APP** God really wants **you** to know that He hurts when you ignore His pleas for your **faithful love!** Are **you** spending **time** with God? **Do** you **daily** worship Him? How **often** to **you** **commend** Him to others? **Do you deny** yourself for Him?

\*Gomer was **unfaithful** to Hosea. The 1<sup>st</sup> child was Hosea's [1:3]. But the **other two** were **not**, they had **another father** – *Upon her children...I will have **no mercy**...because they are children of whoredom...she who conceived them has **acted shamefully*** [2:4] She was unfaithful **before** marrying Hos and **after** marrying him!

Despite Gomer's unfaithfulness, Hosea does **not divorce** her! God **hates** divorce! But she **leaves** Hosea and chases *her lovers!* [2:7a] But she does **not** settle down. She **doesn't** stay with them either and concludes *I will go and return to my first husband for it was better for me then, than now* [2:7b] She begins to realise that this jumping from bed to bed **doesn't** bring **security** – something she really needs! She didn't realise the good fellow she had. God says re Israel *she did not know that it was **I** who gave her the **grain**, the **wine**, the **oil**, and who lavished on her silver and gold, which they used for **Baal*** [2:8] God gave Israel everything they had!

**APP** This is one of the great sins of our day – our nation does **not acknowledge** God's **goodness** and **patience** with us. We think it is our 'cleverness' that brings us wealth! God is lavishing on us blessing after blessing which we are expending on false Baals. As a **nation** we are very well-off! A **large majority** of us have more

more than enough - that is because of God's goodness! **Failure** to acknowledge God's goodness to us is a great sin which offends God deeply! Do **you** actually **spend time** acknowledging God?

God now **withdraws** His help from backsliding Israel. And He **waits** to see if they will return! He **longs** to have them return to Him in penitence! *the Lord waits to be **gracious** to you* [Isa 30:18] So God says *I will **return** again to My place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face, and in their distress earnestly seek Me* [5:15]! **APP** Those who are 'away' from God need to be **reassured** that God **is waiting** for them, 'waiting to be **gracious** to you' **when you acknowledge your sin!** - and **repent!**

\*God appeals again and again to Israel ***Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity...I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for My anger has turned from them*** [14:1,4]! As we mentioned, God wants a **genuine** repentance. There are so many insincere, **counterfeit** repentances! Even here Israel has an **outward** but **not** an **inward** repentance *Come, let us **return** to the Lord; for He has torn us, **that He may** heal us; He has struck us down, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before Him...let us press on to know the Lord...He **will come** to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth'* [6:1,3] But it is **presumption** - not **repentance!** It's **not genuine!** Because *your love is like the **morning mist**, like the dew that goes **early away*** [6:4b] It does not last long!

Many people think that if they go to church, **that** will give them favour with God. If they keep showing their faces at the services, everything will be all right! It makes **them** 'feel' better! But no! God wants their **heart!** Unless the sin that keeps you from **commitment** to Christ is **fully confessed** and **repented** of, your sin is still before God! Look *they do **not consider** that I remember all their evil...their deeds surround them; they are before my face The **pride** of Israel testifies to his face; yet they **do not return** to the Lord their God* [7:2,9,10] What was wrong with Israel was they were **still** going back and **seeking solace/comfort** from to their uncircumcised friends, **Egypt/Assyria!** They still had **impro-**

**per relationships** with those who did not know God! *calling to Egypt, going to Assyria* [7:11] **APP** Who do **you** seek comfort from? Where do **you** go when you need help?

Listen to God pleading for Israel: *I would **redeem** them, but they speak **lies against Me**. They do **not cry to Me** from the **heart**...they return but not upward* [7:13c,16] + *out of Egypt I called My son. **The more they were called, the more they went away*** [11:1,2]

**APP** Anyone here going further from the Lord? Do you know anyone **not attending** to their soul's salvation? Are you less **interested** in God and **praying less** than you used to do?

Well, God is in **agony** for Israel – and He is in agony for any of his covenanted people who are **estranged** from Him! He says about Israel *My people are bent on **turning away from Me*** [11:7] God is truly **serious** uninviting Israelite return to Him. **How can I give you up**...*How can I **hand you over** Israel?* [11:8]

So God now **spells out** for Israel what they must do! *Take with you words and return to the Lord, say to Him 'Take away all **iniquity**'...Assyria will not save us'* [14:2,3] He is saying turn to the Lord **in prayer and confession!** Admit your sin and **acknowledge** it before God. \*You know many people do not think the God of the OT is merciful! The God of the OT is a **Trinitarian God!** He is the very same God as in the NT! Six times we read of **God in Christ** in the NT! But God was '**in Christ**' throughout the whole OT! That is why OT believers in God were saved/forgiven!

*Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved* [Rom 10:9] Jesus said *everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven* [Mat 10:32] **APP** Great lessons from this Book? (1) God is very **jealous** of His covenant people. He really does **love** them. He would rather **send** His sinless Son to suffer hell for them than allow them perish without hearing the gospel! (2) God really wants His servants not only to **preach** the **gospel**, but to make it **very plain and clear**, so no one will **not miss** the Good News!!