

A LOVE FULFILLED; STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF HOSEA

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I. INTRODUCTORY NOTES: fairly long!

A. The Minor Prophets:

1. Why "minor"
2. Place in the Scriptures
3. Essential messages:

--Trust God in all aspects of life, live for Him, depend on His justice and judgment, enjoy his fellowship and love, but fear His wrath and do not feed His displeasure.

B. Hosea

1. Technical data
 - authorship
 - date of action and writing
 - message: Live in God's love
2. Recommended reading: Francine Rivers: Redeeming Love (novel)
3. The concept of the book:

--How God's people were called, treated, and given assurances even though they rebelled, fought against Him, and defied His mercies. Conceptually the book tells how God contended for them and promises to bring them to a place of blessing. That is a love fulfilled: God united with His people!

C. The story of Hosea's personal history: rehearsed briefly

1. his times 1:1
2. his peculiar instruction: 1:2--the point of the drama
3. his obedience
4. his son 1:3-5
5. his daughter 1:6-7 (a predictive name)
6. his second son 1:8-9 (a declaration)
7. a family tragedy 2:1-5
8. an ordered decision 3:1-5
9. the prophetic ministry 4:1 ff

I should be using the pronoun "their" but he is the person of address.

D. God and the Hebrew peoples:

1. The selection: Deuteronomy 4:37, 7:6; 10:15, etc.
There is no full explanation...the rhyme by....well,
I will just quote it....
2. The provisions

Right 2
the setting
spiritual adultery

Reuben Speck 1/11

3. The guidance
4. The divided nation:
Judah
Israel (Ephraim)
5. Quick summary of national histories...very quick:
Israel apostatized in an unbelievable manner and became a teaching lesson to Judah although Judah did not profit and fell into captivity as did Ephraim. But Judah was to be restored in a relatively short period....Ephraim would indeed be brought into God's love...but it would be a long, long process. The prophet is pleading with Ephraim and making applications to Judah. From our point of view it was a thankless task but he was doing what God told him to do and that is a lesson for us as well. We cannot govern every outcome or beg every situation...We can be obedient and find that the love of God is the victorious message that gives us both direction and peace.

E. The Significance of the Drama (Illustrative material, etc)

1. A literal backdrop that anyone can understand!
2. A depiction of sorrow, grief, judgment with a horizon of hope

but God still loves! (14)

F. The Message:

1. God's People are guilty of spiritual adultery -
 - a. They have forgotten their history *4:1-5*
 - b. They have served false gods *4:12*
 - c. They have been seemingly unrepentant *4:17*
 - d. The divine marriage is "over" for the time. Will it be restored *5:7-9*
 - e. In view of the stress of judgment, what has happened to the "love of God"?
2. A very rapid analysis of the Book section by section:
 - a. The plot, chapter 1
 - b. The pain...chapter 2
 - c. A choice...chapter 3
 - d. A prophetic fulfillment...chapters 4-5
 - e. The challenge...chapters 6-8
 - f. The resultant sin...chapters 9-10
 - g. Hopes of recovery and renewal 11-14

what the poor people feel

God is truly great

G. Initial Summary:

A love fulfilled will not let go--it will deal with reality, will exercise truth, will honor integrity and rebuke deceit. It will see proper achievement in the face of difficulties, perhaps, and in situations that are virtually incomprehensible...

II. Comprehensive Studies in Hosea on Our Them

- A. Studies on the love of God. I will take some topics I think critical and review them in the light of selected Scriptures in the book; I will not attempt to list all the texts that apply....the concerned student may read and find many more for every category---I think!

1. How Love Works

- a. Defining Love: Love is the unselfish seeking of what for others is best in the will of God. All usages of "love" find significance in that.
- b. 11:1-4, it advances the cause of the subject
- c. 11:9-11, it administers correction for health
- d. 11:8, it does not give up!
- e. 12:5-6, it invites confidence
- f. 12:12-14, it seeks to restore
- g. 13:9-14, it offers alternatives
- h. 14:1-4, it keeps the door (s) open

Take what love does in these Scriptures and read it into the text of 1 Corinthians 13. I have only sketched some positive aspects and have not shown how love disciplines --a very important point to be discussed.

At a recent panel one of the questions concerned the difference in romantic love, brotherly love, etc. The application may vary due to the persons involved but all love is essentially the same. It is not selfish, etc., etc.

2. What frustrates love?

- a. 4:1-5, disobedience to the character and declared will of God
- b. 4:6-11, spiritual ignorance leading to neglect of God
- c. 4:12-14, spiritual adultery (some examples from the past and the present)
- d. 4:15=19, regression to a fallen state
- e. 6:6 ff, covenantal violations (Exodus 19)
- f. 8:1-4, pretense
- g. 8:14, a wicked memory

3. What is the result of spiritual adultery?

- a. 8:5-11, loss of identity
- b. 9:13-17, temporal judgment
- c. 13:15-16, destruction

4. Summary:

Please note that God's love is not unconditional. It reaffirms both the promises of blessing as well as those of judgment.

B. The character of the Lord

It is not easy to assess the Lord's character...we tend to see him in light of people and people we have known...or in the light of our circumstances or just in an imaginative way built out of our own desires. But in Hosea we learn a lot about the character of God and I am trying to enumerate it (partially) in this listing. Reading the Book we become aware of the personal interest of the Lord in His people and His identification with them. The following items stand out for me and we will "run over them" lightly.

1 God is *compassionate*

Hosea 2

--1-4, the scene

--5-13, Ephraim's departure

--14-23, God's compassion

2. God is *consistent (constant)*

His attitude does not change day by day...His openness and considered instructions are steady. There are no sudden attitudinal changes with the Lord.

Hosea 5:17 is a good starting point

3. God is *omniscient*

This is a more formal theological term and it simply means that God knows all...even what we would like to hide.

Hosea 7:-5

Ephraim had much for which the nation should have been ashamed...but God knew it all...and loved the people still.

4. God is *persistent*

Hosea 7:11-16..we know He does not give up but the manner in which He works to His ends is often not easily seen by us.

5. God is *zealous* for His people. The real word is jealous but that is poorly understood in our culture so we run the risk of explaining the approximate synonym. Study it in

Hosea 10-----vs 1-8 Ephraim's state

9-15 God's charge and challenge

6. God is *merciful*.

Hosea 11:5-9.....In our culture mercy is often confused with casuality or indulgence. These terms do not define the Lord. He has mercy and pardon...He does not simply look the other way and walk away from that which is wrong.

7, God is *omnipotent*

Hosea 13:9-14 ..all powerful is the Lord...Ephraim thought to challenge Him but not challenges are threatening to God.

8. God is *righteous and loving*

Hosea 14...This is the very heart of God and if we listed the characteristic in the order in which they affect us we would probably list these at the top of the page. "Just" is the word that we use for righteous and it teaches not only what God is in character but what He also is in performance. This chapter is beautiful and I will walk through it for a few minutes to indicate its breakdown including the time when Ephraim will be fully restored and will realize that God alone is the God of the people. In this chapter we see **love fulfilled** as I have indicated in our series title. After all the deceit, treachery, apostasies, and spiritual adulteries, Israel is returned forever to the joy of the Lord. Love is maximized. We learn a lot from this and I will ramble for awhile and tell a few stories observed in the family...so, either you should brace yourself or prepare for a long siesta.

C. The Ways of God

And we know that the ways of God are inscrutable.....we cannot understand them all and cannot predict exactly how things will work out. But from Hosea we learn some important and instructive things:

1. God acts in *sovereignty*.

In Hosea we see that He chooses

He blesses

He administers

from a position of authority. He hears and responds to the needs of His people but He is not under orders from them or any other power. In His sovereignty He allocates to us a lot of decision making powers (He told Hosea to marry a woman of ill-repute but, as far as we can see, He did not name the woman. Hosea had to find her "on his own" so to speak)

2. God *chastises* to restore.

Hosea 5:1-15 helps us to see the methods of chastisement... some of them, at least. His chastising tools are:

economic: the crops may fail, etc.

political: an enemy may come

sociological: the people may be in a revolting mood.

This is not a complete listing but for the moment we may say that any adversity may be a means of correction in the hand of God. It made the nation (or will make us) think of the Divine will and that thinking may be corrective in time and action. God

does not chastise out of pique or spite...it is always with the instructional purpose of restoration. In the New Testament His discipline is seen in the case of Ananias and his wife who lied to God about their giving. We are also advised on some of His disciplinary efforts in 1 Corinthians 11. Reading Hebrews 12 is very meaningful in understanding New Testament discipline but the fact is that God chastises to restore--not to be mean or vengeful.

3. God ***programs deliverance***

There is no need to discuss the necessity of this since it is apparent that neither we nor Hosea could work out our own deliverance. The development of God's deliverance is on this line in our book:

- a. 6:1-3...yield to the Lord
- b. 8:2...confess Him as He is
- c. 12:6...turn to Him
- d. 13:4...know only Him
- e. 13:10...recognize Him as King
- f. 13:14...receive the promises of health
- g. 14:1...turn again and again to Him
- h. 14:8...accept His oversight..

The mechanics may not be so full in every case but deliverance comes through yieldedness to God and is fortified by obedience to Him. He sets the terms and as compliance is made, deliverance is certain in that He will receive and honor the suppliant.

4. He ***teaches*** His people by the community examples. In the case of Hosea God is telling Judah to profit by the mistakes of Ephraim and not to fall into the errors of the sister nation.
- a. 1:7...Judah must trust God for salvation, not her own strength.
 - b. 1:10-11...they need to heal the breach
 - c. 5:5....Judah must avoid the sin of pride
 - d. 5:13-14,...Judah must look to the right source for help
 - e. 8:14..Judah must not forget the Lord
 - f. 11:12...Judah must remain faithful.

5. And in a general note, He ***allows independence*** (I will try to explain it) while ***holding accountability*** to the covenant.

D. The Plan of God: to restore and reunite His people:

- 1. 1:10-11

2. 3:4-5

3. chapter 14

It appears the Lord is not happy with a divided people. Most of this book is to Ephraim....it is the "divided" kingdom. But as part of the people of God, the Lord wants them together... not in a sinful militant society but as a people worshipping and witnessing for Him.

III. Beyond Hosea:

Jm 4:7-12

A. The Love of God

B. The response of man

*The Parable
of the
Chickens
2:4*

*James 4
1 John 2:15*

C. A Love Fulfilled

We are made whole by His love, he is seen satisfied with ours. There is probably a better way to say it but I have not gotten it into my writing. To believe on the Lord Jesus is to enter the great love of God....to love and worship God is to enter the joys of heaven and saving grace. Both parties are made complete in the love that is generated by the grace of God and the enabling of His Spirit.

Our hope at this time is that all in this class may know the assurance of the love of God through trusting the Lord Jesus. If you do not know that love....you are losing everything. If you will accept that love you will be eternally enriched.

A beautiful state of life is living in a love fulfilled.