

Hosea

Lesson 2: Justice and Mercy in Conflict!

Hosea 2:2 – 3:5

Note: *This is a longer but very important lesson. Stick with it. Don't give up!*

Parents are often caught between the need to punish their child who has done wrong and their desire to show their love for them. In any relationship, it's a tension and dilemma where someone violates the commitment and wrongs the other person. The story of people relating to God is littered with instances of this problem. God wants his people to understand what it feels like and what the consequences are, so He tells his messenger, Hosea, to enter into a relationship with an adulterous woman, Gomer, that reflects how God's people are relating to him. In these chapters, we see the intensity of God's wrath and mercy as he challenges his people.

JUDGEMENT

Read Hosea 2:2-13

1. How does the term 'adultery' reveal the ugliness of their sin, given God's special love and blessings towards them (think of the intimate relationship between husband and wife)?
2. How does the wanton depravity of their day (1 Kings 16:16-31 - worship of Baal; 2 Kings 16:3; 17:16-17; 21:5 - burned their children alive before the gods Baal and Molech; 2 Kings 21:6 - sorcery and divination), compare to the increasing moral degeneration and debauchery of our day?
3. Refer back to 2 Kings 17. To what or to whom did Israel turn to be her "lovers," which replaced the affection and security that God offered (2 Kings 3:4-7; 15:19-20; 17:16-17)?
4. How did God respond when Israel turned to neighboring nations for help instead of looking to Him (2:9-13)? Note the 'therefore' in verses 6 and 9. What connection do you notice between the sins and the judgments?
5. What is the overall tone of the Lord's response to His people's sin in verses 2-13?
6. Are his responses fair and just (Deuteronomy 32:4)?

7. In what ways do God’s people today commit the same sins that God’s people did then? What do we turn to for our help and security instead of God?

MERCY—The Coming Day of Restoration

Read Hosea 2:14-23

8. [CHALLENGE QUESTION] Be sure to read all references as they offer insight into the promises of God. Note the extraordinary reversals predicted in this section. List the things God says He will do for his people. What do each of these phrases (promises) mean for Israel?
- **Verse 14:** Lure her into the desert (a desert of fellowship with Yahweh) and speak tenderly to her (Revelation 3:20; 1 Corinthians 1:9)
 - **Verse 15:** The Valley of Achor (literally “Valley of Trouble,” the site of Achan’s sin and where he was cursed in Joshua 7:24-26 [near Jericho]; this is where Israel entered when it began to possess the Promised Land) will be a door of hope (John 14:6; Romans 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17 – Just as God reversed the meaning of the names of Hosea’s children, so He reverses the meaning of Achor: Achor now becomes the gateway to a new opportunity)
 - **Verse 16:** “you will call me ‘my husband.’” (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 21:9-10; Romans 2:28-29; 4:11-12; 9:9 – believers belong to the true church and are referred to as the bride of Christ)
 - **Verse 18:** “In that day I will make a covenant for them” (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25)
 - **Verse 19-20:** “I will betroth you in righteousness (Romans 1:17; 3:21-22 - right standing before God) and justice (Romans 3:23-24 - a forensic or legal declaration of righteousness); and love (Ephesians 2:8-9 - unmerited favor) and compassion (Psalm 103:8 - tender affection) in faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22–23 - dependability, loyalty, commitment); “You will acknowledge the Lord” (Zechariah 13:9; John 17:3 - Israel will declare that the Lord is their God!)

- **Verse 23:** “I will show my mercy to the one I called ‘Not my loved one’” (cf. Hosea 1:6; Micah 7:18-19 – God will withhold that which we deserve, condemnation and judgment)
- **Verse 23:** Not My People will become my people and respond by acknowledging ‘You are my God’ (cf. Hosea 1: 9; Romans 9:25-26 - Paul quotes Hosea) – the Jews will become sons of the living God)

9. Read Romans 11:25-26. When were or will the above prophecies be fulfilled?

10. The response by the Lord in these verses is very different from the response in verses 2-13. Are the responses (judgment and mercy) compatible with each other, or with God’s character? How so? How do you see God’s judgment and mercy at the cross of Christ?

LOVE ... AS THE LORD LOVES

Read Hosea 3:1-5

It seems that by this time, Gomer had become someone’s sex slave (verse 3).

11. What does the Lord tell Hosea to do (v. 1)? Imagine yourself in Hosea’s shoes. How would you feel about this idea?
12. Verses 2-3 state, “So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer (a substantial quantity) and a lethek (about 10 bushels) of barley. Then I said to her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with you.”
- a. Read 1 Peter 1:18-21. What did your salvation cost God?
 - b. Read John 8:11 and 14:21. How do we show our love for God?

Augustus was the founder of the Roman Empire, which lasted until 70 A.D. Power passed through several emperors until the rule of Vespasian, who was appointed Emperor in 69 A.D.

A revolt began in 66 A.D., led by Jewish rebels who gained control of Jerusalem as they overwhelmed the Roman garrison there. Then, in 70 A.D., the Roman army led by General Titus, the son of Vespasian, attacked Jerusalem and, in the process, massacred and crucified tens of thousands of Jews. The Roman army totally destroyed the Temple, fulfilling the prophetic words of Jesus as he walked by the Temple with his disciples and said, "Do you see all these great buildings? Not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down" (Mark 13:2).

Thus began the 2nd Jewish diaspora (dispersion) when the fleeing Jews were scattered throughout the nations. From 70 A.D. until 1948 A.D., the Jewish land, once again, was controlled by successive nations, empires, and rulers.

The history of the land of Israel following the destruction of Jerusalem:

The fulfillment of verse 4 is also evident from 70 A.D. to May 14, 1948, a period of 1,878 years (the 2nd Diaspora, or scattering).

- From 70 A.D. until 640 A.D., the Roman Empire was in decline as THE world power. In 395 A.D., the Roman Empire split in two: the Eastern Roman Empire was ruled by Arcadius, the son of Emperor Theodosius I, who was the last Emperor to rule over the united Empire, and the Western Roman Empire was ruled by the other son of Theodosius, Honorius. The Western Empire came to an end in 476 A.D. when the Germanic Army overthrew them.
- The Eastern Roman Empire transitioned into the Byzantine Empire over centuries, ending in 640 A.D.
- From 640 A.D. to 1099 A.D., the region of Judea was conquered by an Arab Caliphate and, subsequently, was ruled by Islamic dynasties.
- In 1096 A.D., the First Crusade was launched by the order of Pope Urban II to reclaim the Holy Land from the Muslims. In 1099 A.D., the city of Jerusalem was captured by Crusader forces. For the next couple of centuries until 1291 A.D., several more Crusades were carried out by the Papacy, European kingdoms, and other so-called Christian powers. These Crusades resulted in lasting tension between Muslims, Jews, and Christians. This tension has grown more violent and widespread as radical Muslims have grown in number and power.
- From 1291 A.D. to 1516 A.D., an Egyptian Islamic empire conquered and ruled over the region until the Ottoman Empire took control.
- From 1516 A.D. to 1917 A.D., the Ottoman Empire ruled over the land until its defeat in WWI.
- From 1917 A.D. until 1948 A.D., after WWI, the British Empire was given control over the land by the League of Nations mandate, known as the British Mandate for Palestine. It is important to note, given the current state of Israel, that a country named Palestine has never existed.

At 4:00 PM, on May 14, 1948, at the Tel Aviv Museum, David Ben-Gurion read Israel's Declaration of Independence. At 11 minutes after midnight on May 14, 1948, the United States became the first country to recognize the independent state of Israel. A miracle had occurred as Israel became a nation born in a day fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 66:8, which says: "Who has ever heard of such things? Who has ever seen things like this? Can a country be born in a day, or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children."

On May 15, 1948, following the declaration of the State of Israel, five Arab nations, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon, declared war against Israel. What became known as the 1948 Arab-Israeli War lasted until 1949 and resulted in a miraculous victory for a far-outmatched Israeli army.

From 1948 until the present, Israel has had to defend itself against its surrounding Arab nations, including Iraq and Iran. Since the War of Independence was fought in 1948, Israel has had to fight two major wars, The Six-Day War of 1967 and the Yom-Kippur War of 1973, as well as other wars, countless terrorist attacks by suicide bombers, and two Intifadas (Palestinian uprisings).

Currently, Israel is engaged in a war with Hamas due to their horrific attack on October 7, 2023. Additionally, Iran proxy, Hezbollah, who is armed with more than 150,000 missiles, has been attacking from the north. The Middle East is a pounder keg just waiting for the fuse to be lit.

15. Read Hosea 3:4-5; Isaiah 11:14; Zechariah 12:1-10; 13:1, 9; and Romans 11:25-26.

Verse 4 states, "For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, with ephod or idol."

Verse 5 states, "Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to His blessings in the last days."

a. Do you see the fulfillment of these verses in the modern state of Israel? Explain your answer (sometimes prophecies in the Old Testament have multiple fulfillments—"prophetic dualism").

b. If yes, how does this make you feel about the Word of God (the Bible)?