**The Journey From Judgment to Restoration!**

**Hosea 2:2-3:5**

**Hosea 1:1:** The word of the Lord came to Hosea during the reign of Jeroboam, son of Jehoash king of Israel. The year was around 7**90 B.C.,** approximately **180** years after the reign of King Solomon.

**1 Kings 9:2 and 4**, the Lord appeared to [**Solomon**] and said to him:

As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and **do all I command** and **observe my decrees** and laws, **I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever**…

* All God required of Solomon was faith. All he had to do was trust God. And his obedience would simply serve as evidence of his faith and his throne would have been established forever.
* But we need to understand that God’s Word comes with a warning.

In **1 Kings 9:5**, the Lord warned Solomon…But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off **to serve other gods and worship them**, then **I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples**.”

All the kings disobeyed the word of God and led the Israelites in rebellion against Him by worshipping other gods and following the evil practices of the nations that surrounded them—the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Sidonians.

**2 Kings 17** provides a summary of what they did…

“The Israelites secretly did things against the Lord their God that were not right… They did wicked things that provoked the Lord to anger. They worshiped idols, though the Lord had said, “You shall not do this.” The Lord warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets…But they would not listen…

They made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves and bowed down to all the starry hosts. They even sacrificed their own sons and daughters in the fire in their worship of Baal and Molech. So, the Lord was very angry with them and removed them from his presence (2 Kings 17:7-18).

**I. God was forced to judge the Israelites! Hosea 2:2-13**

\* Israel’s unfaithfulness broke God’s heart and aroused His anger.

In these verses, Hosea describes his wife’s behavior as she rejected his love, deserted him and took up with another lover.

* **Hosea** represents **God** who is described as a **wounded** and **angry husband**.
* And **Gomer**, is the **wayward wife**, and she represents **Israel**.

Hosea begins by speaking to his children who represent the Israelites… **Look at verses 2-7:**

* Hosea speaks of Israel as an **unfaithful wife**—one who has committed adultery by rejecting God and worshipping other lovers—these false gods like Baal and Molech.
* Israel was going to face the **consequences** of her sin which had been exposed to God.
* God sees all that we do and He knows all that we think. We can hide nothing from God.

**Hebrews 4:13** “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything has been uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

* In God’s pursuit of us, He often has to let us come to the end of ourselves so that we see our great need for Him. We have to get to the point where we realize that nothing in this world will ever satisfy our real inner thirst for God.

Israel had to be brought to her senses just like the prodigal son! **Look at verse 8:**

**8** **She has not acknowledged** that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold— which they used for Baal.

* The Israelites did not thank God and worship Him for all the blessings He had given them.
* They rejected God. They did not even acknowledge His name!

**Matthew 10:32-33**, Jesus says, “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”

* When we, or our nation, continue in sin without acknowledging God and without genuine repentance, God has no choice but to judge us. But we need to understand the purpose of His judgment—it is always to lead us toward repentance.
* By the time of Hosea, Israel was in desperate need of discipline and punishment. She needed a wake up call. **Look at verse 9-13:**

**Israel’s religion angered God!**

* Why? Because it was not true worship. They weren’t worshipping the one true God! They were worshipping idols made of wood and clay that did not even exist.
* Even in Jesus’ day, the religious Jews **failed to truly worship God**, who was standing right in front of them.

In **Isaiah 29:13** The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.”

**The main problem in Israel was they forgot God!**

**Romans 3:18** says, “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all."-- **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

**Israel finally faced the full wrath of God.**

* In 722 B.C., the Assyrian army destroyed the northern kingdom—Israel!
* In 586 B.C., the Babylonian army destroyed the southern kingdom—Judah!

**God was not finished with Israel!**

* The underlying subtle theme that runs through the book of Hosea is the **RELENTLESS LOVE OF GOD!** God never stopped loving Israel in spite of their unfaithfulness!

**II. Even in judgment, God’s desire was to bring Israel to a place of repentance! Look at verses 14-23:**

It was not until the birth of Christ, that Jews began to once again hear the voice of God through Jesus who was their long-awaited Messiah.

* Sadly, the vast majority of Jews rejected him.
* However, some believed and became a part of the early church. They were the natural branches that were grafted back into the Olive Tree as Paul explains in Romans 11.
* In 70 A.D., God judged the Israelites again because of their stubborn unbelief. Roman soldiers led by General Titus marched into Jerusalem to squash a Jewish rebellion.
* For almost 1900 years, the Jews were without a homeland.

On **May 14, 1948**, a miracle occurred when Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, proclaimed the establishment of the Nation of Israel at a ceremony in Tel Aviv, fulfilling the prophecy of **Isaiah 66:8**, “Can a country be born in a day?”

* Immediately, Israel was attacked by five Arab nations: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. With only 10,000 rifles, a stolen tank or two from the British, along with some other artillery, Israel miraculously won the war for their independence.
* From 1948 until now, millions of Jews have returned to their homeland due to the sovereign and providential will of God.
* For the past 76 years, they have turned a desert into lush green pastures herds of sheep and goats, and beautiful olive trees and vineyards just as Hosea prophesied:

 “I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.”

**What does God have in store for Israel?** I believe Hosea provides the answer.

**Hosea 3:1-5:** The LORD said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”

2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. 3 Then I told 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.”

4 For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods. 5 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.

**III.** **God is not finished with Israel. His love endures forever and His love will bring Israel to a place of repentance and reconciliation!**

* The only hope for Israel and the world is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Long ago, Jeremiah prophesied of a coming **New Covenant**.

**Jeremiah 31:31-34** says, “The time is coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah…This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord.

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people…because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord.

“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

* This new covenant was put into effect when Jesus shed his blood on the cross, was buried, and on three days later arose from the dead.
* Just as Hosea had to go and buy his wife back from her lover, so God had to buy us back. He did not buy us back with gold or silver but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (**1 Peter 1:18-19**).
* No one, not Jew or Gentile, can come to God except through the Son (John 14:6).
* Many theologians believe that a revival is coming in the near future in Israel.
* Many will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in these last days. The Lord will say to them, “You are my people.” And they will cry out, “The Lord Jesus is our God!”