

Life-Study of Hosea Summary – Messages 6-9

The Idolatry of Israel Against Jehovah and the Punishments of Jehovah Upon Israel

The **idolatry** of Israel against Jehovah was like a **wife's harlotries against her husband**. Hosea's thought here is very deep because it indicates **God's organic union with His people**. However, the wife's situation was exceedingly ugly.

Jehovah found Israel like grapes in the wilderness, and saw their fathers as the first ripe fruit on the fig tree at its beginning. This refers to the time of God's "honeymoon" with Israel. At the time of the exodus from Egypt, God considered Israel a **young wife**. However, when this wife grew up, she **left God** for Baal-peor and sanctified herself unto the shameful thing and became an abomination, like the thing that she loved.

Hosea charged the children of Israel to **sow unto righteousness**. If they did this, they would **reap according to lovingkindness**. Otherwise, if they **plowed wickedness**, they would **reap injustice**. In verse 12, Hosea uses the expression "**fallow ground**." This is ground that has been plowed but has not been sown with anything. The children of Israel were the fallow ground. They had been plowed by God, but had not been sown with righteousness. They were to break up the fallow ground; that is, they were to **seek God** until **Christ came as righteousness** to rain righteousness upon them. However, **Israel did not sow properly**. They trusted in their own way and in the multitude of their might men. Therefore, God caused them to be **utterly destroyed**.

Jehovah's Unchanging Love Versus Israel's Stubborn Unchastity

From the time Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the temple until now, God has not raised up any prophets among the Jews. This is God's doing. In the church God has raised up many **prophets**. Furthermore, in the church every reborn one is a **priest**. As long as we are children of God, we are priests. **In addition to being God's priests serving Him in the gospel, we all need to endeavor to prophesy**. Every Lord's Day, after remembering the Lord and worshipping the Father at the Lord's table, all the members of the church should prophesy. This means that they all should speak for the Lord and speak forth the Lord.

The **first main emphasis** of the book of Hosea is the metaphor of **Hosea's marriage with the harlot Gomer**. Their three children were also metaphors. The son Jezreel symbolized that God would avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu and would bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. Lo-ruhamah symbolized that God would no longer have compassion on the house of Israel. And Lo-ammi symbolized that Israel was not God's people. The **second emphasis** in the book of Hosea is **the evils of Israel as the unchaste wife of Jehovah**. Once a wife becomes unchaste, all kind of evils follow. Once we forsake God, we too can do any kind of evil. Chapters 11-14 describes **Israel's stubborn unchastity** and also **Jehovah's unchanging love**.

God's everlasting love is not a love in affection, like the love of a husband toward a wife, but a **love in life**, like the love of a father toward a son. Love toward a wife is love in affection, but love toward a son is love in life. On the one hand, **God loves us as His wife**, and the Lord Jesus is our Husband. On the other hand, **God is our Father**, and we are sons of the Father.

Hos. 11:4 – I drew them with cords of a man,/With bands of love;/And I was to them like those/Who life off the yoke on their jaws;/And I gently caused them to eat.

Verse 4 indicates that God loves us with His **divine love**, not on the level of His divinity but **on the level of His humanity**. God's love in teaching Ephraim to walk and in taking Ephraim in His arms shows us that God's love is divine but on a human level. **If He loved us on the divine level, we could not touch His love**. His divine love reaches us on a human level. This is what it means to say that He drew Israel with the cords of a man, with bands of love.

It is important for us to realize that verse 4 speak of *cords*. These cords **include Christ's incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection**. This means that the cords mentioned have different segment and that each segment involves Christ's humanity. The bands of love are the cords of a man. **The love of God, the divine love, comes to us through Christ's humanity**.

In chapter 14 we have a picture of Israel in the restoration. Jehovah will heal their apostasy; He will love them freely, for His anger will have turned away from them. He will be like the dew to Israel. Israel will bud like the **lily** (pure life trusting in God) and will sent forth his roots like the **trees of Lebanon** (standing steadily in the uplifted humanity). His shoots will go forth (flourishing and spreading); his splendor will be like that of the **olive tree** (glory in fruitfulness); and his fragrance will be like that of trees of Lebanon (the sweet odour of life in the uplifted humanity). Those who sit under his shade (those overshadowed by the sufficient grace enjoyed by them) will return. They will revive like **grain** (being full of life for producing the satisfying food) and will bud like the **vine** (blossoming for producing the cheering drink). Israel's renown will be like the **wine of Lebanon** (a good name spreading like tasteful wine). May this be the situation in all the local churches. Instead of being unturned cakes, silly doves, or a deceitful bow, we will be like lilies, trees of Lebanon, olive trees, and budding vines.

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