

Hosea, The Man and His Vision

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I. Introduction

- a. Note on dates: They are estimates and differing sources may give different dates
- b. The nature of prophecy
 - i. Successive fulfillment-some prophecies are fulfilled in more than one way and time period
 1. Matthew 2:15 speaking of Jesus being called out of Egypt is first used in Hosea 11:1 as a reference to God calling the Hebrews out of bondage
 - ii. Prophecies even when completely fulfilled may contain principles that teach us how God will act in our times
 - iii. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Peter 1:21
- c. The prophets in general
 - i. The books of prophetic books of the Old Testament are divided into two groups, Major and Minor Prophets
 1. Minor prophets are not so called because of the importance of their prophecies but the length of the scriptures that contain them
 - ii. The whole body of prophetic works may instead be divided into four groups
 1. The prophets of the Northern Kingdom, Hosea, Amos, Joel and Jonah (covering the years 800 BC till 722 BC)
 2. The prophets of the Southern Kingdom: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah (covering the years 800 BC till 597 BC)
 3. The prophets in exile: Ezekiel and Daniel (approximately 597 BC till 538 BC)
 4. The prophets of the return: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi (covering 538 BC till 397 BC)
 - a. Ezra and Nehemiah would fit into this time period though the books bearing their names are not grouped with the prophets
 5. There were other prophets besides those listed, such as Elijah and Elisha to name two of the more famous, this is a list only of those prophets to whom a book of the Bible has been attributed
- d. Brief History of the Divided Kingdoms
 - i. After the death of Solomon the kingdom was given to Rehoboam (975 BC)
 1. His policies led to a rebellion and 10 tribes took Jeroboam I as their king 1st Kings 12:1-20
 2. Only Judah and Benjamin remained faithful to Rehoboam
 3. Those who remained faithful to Rehoboam came to be known as Judah, the 10 tribes were known either as Israel, Samaria or Ephraim
 4. Judah's kings were about evenly divided between good and bad kings (as defined by God)
 5. All of Israel's kings were bad (again based on their fidelity to God)
 6. Jeroboam I worshiped the Baalim, an idol of the calf. This sin was carried on by all of the Kings of Israel

II. Hosea's call to ministry

- a. From Hosea 1: we learn that Hosea's prophetic office lasted through the reign of four Kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah
 - i. Uzziah was also known as Azariah
- b. Only one king of Israel was listed, Jeroboam the second
 - i. Hosea 8:4 perhaps because the latter kings were not set up by God

- ii. In order for Hosea to have served as prophet during the reigns of all the kings of Judah listed, however, he must have also prophesied during at least part of the reign of the three kings who succeeded
 - iii. Despite the fact that Jeroboam did much evil, God had blessed Israel
 - 1. Sometimes blessings cause us to have a false sense of security
 - c. Most likely time frame is 785 BC to 725 BC
 - d. Hosea's ministry seems to have been limited to Israel though he at times has a message for Judah
 - e. Hosea did not take this office upon himself
- III. General Tone And Scope of Hosea's Prophecies
 - a. The Destruction of Israel which was completed circa 740 BC
 - i. There is no promised return of Israel.
 - 1. Judah would return from the Babylonian captivity as a nation
 - 2. Remnants of Israel would return but she would never again be a separate nation from Judah
 - ii. The figures representing Israel's sins
 - 1. The unfaithful wife, Gomer, representing Israel's idolatry especially in serving the Balaam
 - 2. When wounded she turns to Assyria for help
 - 3. An oven heated by the baker which causes the leaven to rise
 - 4. A half-baked cake, burning on one side and raw on the other, useless
 - 5. A silly dove turning to Egypt and Assyria for help
 - 6. A faulty bow that breaks or misses the mark
 - 7. The two calves, not actually a figure, they were real idols set up at Bethel and Dan by Jeroboam the first.
 - 8. A wild ass gone up by himself
 - 9. They have hired lovers (Assyria) to do for them what God once did, namely keep them safe. Ironically this same lover was the one that destroyed them.
 - iii. The figures representing God's relationship with Israel
 - 1. Hosea, the faithful husband representing God's long suffering nation with an unfaithful wife, especially chapters 1-3
 - 2. As a father
 - iv. The figures representing God's judgment of Israel
 - 1. The three children of Gomer
 - 2. God will be as a moth
 - 3. Will be as a young lion that tears the flesh
 - 4. He will bind up the wounds if the people will come to him
 - 5. Like an axe he has hewed them through the prophets for the purpose of healing them
 - 6. They have sown the wind they will reap the whirlwind
 - 7. Israel will bring forth her children to the murderer, Assyria
 - 8. Israel will be an empty vine, what they bring forth God will take away
 - 9. He will not destroy them as Admah and Zeboim, two cities overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah (Deuteronomy 29:23)
 - 10. Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff *that* is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney. Hosea 13:3
 - 11. As a bear defending her cubs God will come against Israel
 - 12. Yet God will heal them and they shall be as a lily or cedar of Lebanon
 - 13. Ephraim will say what have I to do with Idols, after the Babylonian captivity of Judah and the return the Jews were healed of their desire to worship idols
 - v. Plain statements
 - 1. God will not destroy Jews from off the face of the earth
 - 2. The cause of their destruction is sin

3. Their sin is because of a lack of knowledge
4. They have sown the wind they will reap the whirlwind
5. God will send Israel back to Egypt, a dual meaning of similar bondage and also the actual return of some of the Jews to Egypt
6. The rest will be carried to Assyria
7. Though God has sent watchmen false prophets have risen up
8. They have corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah indicating the whole of Israel will suffer a fate similar to the tribe of Benjamin
9. The calf of Bethaven will be carried away too (Bethaven, meaning house of vanity, is the name given in derision to that which was once called Bethel, the House of God)
10. As in the days of Gilgal I will hate them, Gilgal is where the people first demanded a king and thus rejected God

b. The prophecies to Judah

- i. Many of the prophecies given to Israel were also applied to Judah
- ii. Judah, however, was destined to return as a nation from Babylon

IV. The Wife and Kids Chapters One –Three, the sinful nature of Israel strikingly portrayed as well as God's judgments against the nation

a. Chapter One

- i. Verses 10 and 11: Yet this chapter contains a promise that though Israel will be destroyed but God will save Judah by divine intervention
 1. The 10 tribes never regained their national identity but Judah did after the seventy years
 2. This may also be a reference to the true nation of Israel who are children not after the flesh but after the spirit
- ii. Hosea's very wife and children were prophetic
 1. Hosea told to take a wife of whoredom because the land hath committed whoredom
 2. Is the marriage only a vision or did Hosea really marry a woman of whoredoms? Objections to and reasons for the literal understanding of these chapters
 - a. There is no internal evidence to suggest that these chapters are allegorical only
 - b. A holy prophet marries the most unholy of women? Is there a better way to make a living example of how Israel was trampling the sacred covenant that bound them to God?
 - c. Hosea's holiness precludes his association but Jesus was the friend of sinners
 3. While there is no doubt that a wife of whoredom means an unchaste woman the land that hath committed whoredom must be a reference to the nations spiritual adultery
 4. Some take the three children to represent three generations between Jehu and the end of his line
- iii. A wife named Gomer, daughter of Diblaim
 1. Gomer is completion and Diblaim may be understood as grape cakes or figs
 2. Generally understood to convey the idea that a sensual nature leads to destruction
 3. Her sin would have to have been generally known for the allegory to sink in
- iv. When sin has conceived it brings forth death
- v. The first born: A son named Jezreel, God will scatter
 1. Jezreel was also a valley where both great good and great evil would had been done
 2. In particular Jezreel was where Gideon had his great victory
 3. But it was also where Jehu (great grandfather of Jeroboam II) killed Joram after being anointed King. Though Jehu was used as in instrument in the hand of God he was still judged by God for his cruelty as well as for failing to end idolatry (2nd Kings 9:16-24)
 4. It is also where Zachariah, son of Jeroboam and last king of the line of Jehu, would be slain by Shallum after a reign of only six months (2nd Kings 15:10)
- vi. The second born: A daughter named Loruhamah, For I will have no mercy

- vii. The third and last child: A son named Loammi: for ye *are* not my people, and I will not be your *God*
- b. Chapter 2
 - i. While chapter one must be seen as literal, there is room for chapter two to be understood as figurative only, however I still contend it is a continuation of chapter one
 - ii. Say to your brothers, Ammi -my people
 - iii. And to your sisters, Ruhamah- those who have received mercy
 - iv. Evidently the wife has run off to chase her lovers, who she can never overtake
 - v. She also fails to understand it was not her lovers who were providing for her but Hosea in mercy and love
 - vi. What he was providing for her was being given to worship idols
 - vii. There would come a time when he would provide no more and nor would her lovers
 - viii. Having nowhere to turn she is left in the wilderness to die
 - ix. In that time she would come to understand that he was more than a master (Baali) but my husband (Ishi)
- c. Chapter 3
 - i. As chapter two enlarged on and continued the story of chapter one, chapter three enlarges on chapter two
 - ii. The woman, though no longer useful or attractive to her former lovers has been sold into slavery or made into a slave
 - iii. Hosea buys her back for 15 shekels of silver half the price of common slave (Exodus 21:32) and one and a half homers of barley (the lowest type of grain, reserved for the adulterer or animals and their living allowance)
 - iv. Yet she is not immediately returned to her former state of wife, she must live without any other man until she prove herself and he would live without any other woman until such time as she proved herself
 - v. Again, many have made this chapter a reference to a future restoration of Israel, this restoration theory I reject.
 - 1. God no longer needs national Israel He now has the church
 - 2. Just as there was no longer a need for the goats of atonement when Jesus came there is now no longer a need for national Israel.
 - 3. When that which is foreshadowed comes there is no longer any need for the shadow

V. Conclusion, What We Can Learn For Our Times

- a. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2 Timothy 3:16
- b. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. Luke 12:48
- c. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. Ecclesiastes 12:13