

## Why is the Lord So Harsh to His People Sometimes?

Hosea, Day 6

[Hosea 2:8-20](#)

Now I will uncover her lewdness  
in the sight of her lovers,  
and no one shall rescue her out of my hand.  
And I will put an end to all her mirth,  
her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths,  
and all her appointed feasts.  
And I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees,  
of which she said,  
'These are my wages,  
which my lovers have given me.'  
I will make them a forest,  
and the beasts of the field shall devour them.  
And I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals  
when she burned offerings to them  
and adorned herself with her ring and jewelry,  
and went after her lovers  
and forgot me, declares the Lord.

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her,  
and bring her into the wilderness,  
and speak tenderly to her.  
And there I will give her her vineyards  
and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.  
And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth,  
as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.

"And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal.'  
- Hosea 2:10-16, ESV

In *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye says, "I know, I know. We are Your chosen people. But, once in a while, can't You choose someone else?" Have you even wondered why the Lord can be so harsh to His own people at times? While Tevye's theology leaves much to be desired, it does seem like God appoints extra measures of hardship for His own people. If you read the prophets, God has some very harsh things to say to His people, too. Verses 8-13 of Hosea 2 contain some very harsh pronouncements against Israel. Why?

Have you ever seen an intervention? What do you do when someone you love is bent on self-destruction? Sometimes addicts have to hit rock bottom before they'll see their desperate need for help clearly enough to do whatever it takes to get freedom. Sadly, too many addicts have enablers in their lives who prop them up and allow them to keep feeding their addiction, instead of getting the real help they desperately need.

God loves His people too much to leave us alone in our sin. He loves us too much to abandon us to our idolatry. Israel was addicted to the Baals, a series of false Canaanite gods that made empty promises and demanded heavy sacrifices. Their idolatry was spiritual adultery, and God was determined to have His bride for Himself, not to share her with others.

We are in the same condition as Israel when we turn to the world instead of the Lord. As we saw on Day 2, James makes our condition very clear:

*You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?* (James 4:4-5, ESV)

Thankfully, the passage doesn't end there. R.C. Sproul said the most important word in the Bible is "but." Verse 6 begins, "But he gives more grace." In Hosea 2, the "but" turning point comes in the words "Therefore, behold" at the beginning of verse 14.

Why does God use the word "therefore" and not the word "but" here in Hosea 2? Because the Lord is telling Israel **why** He is being harsh to them. He wants them to know the reason for His discipline. He takes away what is precious to them so He can fill their emptiness with Himself. He wants to break them of their love for the Baals so He can replace that love with His own love.

If you are choosing to love the world more than your Lord, He will love you enough to break you of your idols. The breaking will be painful, but He does it in love, to win your heart back to Himself.