

Hos 1.1-2.1—The prophet, the parable, & the promise-keeper

Hosea the prophet, vv.1-2

- I. Hosea's timeline, v.1.
 - A. Hosea began his prophetic ministry late in Jeroboam's reign (sometime before 753 BC) and completed it early in Hezekiah's reign (around 725 BC) before Israel's exile by Assyria in 722 BC.
 - B. It was a time of relative calm and great prosperity under Jeroboam's long reign, but it was also a time of great apostasy in which God's judgment was fast approaching.
- II. Hosea's call, vv.1-2.
 - A. Hosea was called by God to go to the people of God with a Word from God, just as every other prophet in Scripture, Heb 1.1-2; cf. Jer 35.15; Zech 7.12.
 - B. Particularly, Hosea was called by God to bring His message to Israel (v.4), the Northern Kingdom of 10 tribes that rejected Judah in 1Kgs 12.
- III. Hosea's message, as the prophet of the broken heart, v.2.
 - A. Hosea's not only going to speak the Lord's message in his sermons (chapters 4-14), but he's also going to illustrate the Lord's message in his own life (chapters 1-3). His life will be as much of a sermon as his ministry.
 1. Thus, Hosea's preaching occurs in the context and over the course of his painful biography.
 - B. Hosea's marriage would serve as such a fitting analogy because just as Israel proved unfaithful in her marriage to Yahweh (cf. Ex 24.3, 7; 1Kgs 12.16-20) so Gomer would prove unfaithful in her marriage to Hosea (cf. Hos 1.2; 3.1).
 - C. By a series of painful experiences, Hosea is caused to enter into fellowship with Yahweh's unrequited love for unfaithful Israel.

Hosea the living parable, vv.2-9

- I. Hosea married a woman whom God told him would break his heart by committing adultery, v.2. Just as God married Israel (Ex 24) despite His knowledge of her future betrayal (Dt 31.16-22), so Hosea married Gomer despite his knowledge of her future betrayal.
- II. Hosea's children are an important part of the living parable as God gives each of them a name to send a message to Israel, vv.4-9.
 - A. Jezreel means *God scatters* and it told them that God was about to scatter the Kingdom of Israel. They had rejected the gospel of God's covenant and walked in the ways of Jeroboam I, therefore the Lord was going to exile them, cf. 2Kgs 17.6-23.

- B. Lo-ruhama means *no mercy* and it told them that there'd be no more mercy for the 10 tribes of Israel, because there can be no mercy for those who reject the covenant in which God's mercy is found, cf. Ex 34.6-7 (compare Hos 1.7 and 2Kgs 19.19-36).
 - C. Lo-ammi means *not my people* and it told them that God was rejecting them. They would be a people with no God to care for them, cf. Eph 2.12.
- III. This was a devastating message for Israel to hear. In God's grace, however, this was not the whole of Hosea's message.
 - A. One of the persistent messages that comes through the OT prophets is that while our unfaithfulness to God can bring devastating, divine chastisements, it can never annul God's faithfulness to redeem a people and bring them into His Kingdom of grace.
 - B. Therefore v.10 begins with a "Yet [God]" (cf. Eph 2.4; 1Jn 2.1).

God the promise-keeper, 1.10-2.1

- I. Israel would be exiled and never again brought back to the Lord, and yet God would keep the Abrahamic covenant, v.10. They would be rejected as His people, and yet God would keep the Davidic covenant and raise up children/sons of God, v.10; 2.1; Ps 89.19-37. They would be scattered, and yet God would keep the Abrahamic covenant and gather a people to Himself, v.11. They would not receive mercy, and yet God would keep the Mosaic covenant and show mercy again, 2.1; Ex 34.6-7.
- II. How will God do this? How will God reverse the curse on sinners?
 - A. By gathering them under one head (v.11), even Jesus Christ, the true King and Messiah of God's true Israel, Jn 6.37; Rev 5.9-10.
 - B. The Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants will all be fulfilled in the Messiah, 2Cor 1.20. He will keep covenant and never forsake the Lord, cp. v.2; Dt 31.16.
 - C. In the context of judgment, Hosea preaches hope and salvation for the penitent in the coming Messiah. And what he preached was fulfilled in the days of the NT when both Jews and Gentiles were gathered to God, 1Pet 2.10; Rom 9.25-26.
 - D. This, then, is Hosea's message for us today: the only saving hope for sinners and idolaters who deserve to be exiled from God as a people without mercy who break covenant is to find refuge in Jesus, because He is the Covenant-Keeper in whom we can find God's grace, 2Cor 5.19; Eph 2.19; Heb 4.14-16.