

HOSEA: LOOKING BEYOND JUDGMENT TO RESTORATION

III: God's Gracious Restoration Of Israel In The Kingdom

(Hosea 2:14-23)

I. Introduction

- A. God's punishment is very painful, but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness, Hebrews 12:11.
- B. This was the theme of Hosea, the "death-bed prophet of Israel" and the last prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel before it fell to Assyria in divine judgment. (ESV Introduction to Hosea)
- C. Hosea 2:14-23 predicts God's gracious restoration of Israel in the Kingdom after His punishment for her worship of the local Baal gods. We view the passage for our insight and application (as follows):

II. God's Gracious Restoration Of Israel In The Kingdom, Hosea 2:14-23.

- A. Canaanite Baal worship was marked by gross immorality (Merrill F. Unger, Archeology and the O. T., 1973, p. 175-177), so when Israel turned from the Lord to worship false local Canaanite Baal gods, from the human perspective, it was as if God as a husband had seen his wife leave Him to commit adultery with other men.
- B. Accordingly, Hosea 2:1-13 presented God's judgment of the nation largely seen in His bringing drought on the nation (Hosea 2:3, 9-12) in critique of the worship of Baal, god of rain. (Z. P. E. B., vol. One, p. 431-433)
- C. However, in great grace, though having made Israel like a desert in judgment, Hosea 2:14 mentions God's plan to allure Israel into the desert and speak to her heart in order to renew her fellowship with Him, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1385. God had initially developed a relationship with Israel similar to how a groom does with his bride in the wilderness wanderings of the Exodus (Ibid.), and it appears that He will do so again, perhaps in the Great Tribulation when Israel is nourished for 3 ½ years in the wilderness in Revelation 12:14-16.
- D. When God leads Israel back to her land, He will restore her vineyards that were overgrown and eaten by wild animals in judgment (Hosea 2:12, 15) and turning the Valley of Achor ("trouble") -- recalling Achan's sin that jeopardized the success of Israel's initial conquest of Canaan (Joshua 7) -- into a door of hope, Hosea 2:15a.
- E. Israel will then respond favorably to the Lord as in her youth when she came out of the land of Egypt and God developed a relationship with her in the wilderness wanderings, Hosea 2:15b.
- F. At that time, Israel will call God "my Husband" (*'ishi*), not "my Master" (*ba'eli*), terms that were almost synonymous, but since "Master" translates *ba'al*, a reminder of the false Canaanite god Baal, God will prohibit the use of *ba'eli*, and Israel would not even recall the names of the Baals, Hosea 2:16-17; Ibid, p. 1385-1386.
- G. In the future Messianic Kingdom, the wild animals that had devoured the vines and fig trees (Hosea 2:12) would no longer be hostile, but friendly to people with the removal of the Adamic curse (cf. Romans 8:18-21), and God would abolish war and weapons of war, causing Israel to dwell in the Land in peace, Hosea 2:18.
- H. In that day, God will betroth Israel to Himself with the bridal price of righteousness, justice, love, compassion and faithfulness, qualities of His relationship with Israel that would never end, Hosea 2:19-20; Ibid., p. 1386.
- I. God will then provide Israel with agricultural bounty in contrast to false Baal theology, Hosea 2:21-23a:
 1. In a series of figurative calls from one entity to another, God's provision for agricultural wealth is greatly contrasted with false Baal worship: Israel personified as "Jezreel" (Ibid.) will cry out to the grain, wine and oil, these foods will cry out to the earth from which they are produced and the earth will look to the heavens, the source of the rain that makes the soil productive, and the heavens will call out to God Who will bring the rain to supply Israel the desired agricultural produce, Hosea 2:21-23a; Ibid.
 2. Thus, in place of Baal's consort, the Asherah of collected pools of water from the rain, in place of the male Baal god who brought the rain to fill the land with pools of water, all aspects of the natural world and of Israel herself would look to God for rain, and He would be viewed as the Provider of agricultural bounty!
- J. As result, God will have mercy on Israel that had been called "No Mercy" (Hosea 2:23b with 1:6-7), He will say to "Not My People" (Hosea 1:8-9) "You are my people (Hosea 2:23c) and Israel will say, "You are my God" (Hosea 2:23d) in reversal of the broken spiritual marital relationship described in Hosea 1:9b.

Lesson: *Opposite Israel's punishment for Baal worship when she was left without rain to become a wilderness, God would graciously allure Israel back to Himself in a desert setting as in Israel's origin as a nation that He might bless her with agricultural bounty, turning her from Baal worship to worship the Lord alone as her God.*

Application: *(1) If we face a trial of some notable shortage in life's provisions as did Israel, may we test ourselves to see if we have replaced the Lord with some false idol for blessing, and if so, repent. (2) May we value spiritual fellowship with the Lord above all other things in this life, for His fellowship with us is a big priority with Him.*