

Hosea Chapter 2

Hosea 2:1 "Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah."

"Say ye unto your brethren": Many interpreters consider this verse as being connected with the preceding chapter, thus: When that general restoration of the Jewish nation shall take place, you may change your language in speaking to those of your brethren and sisters whom I had before disowned, and you may call them Ammi, my people, and Ruhamah, she that hath obtained mercy.

The words form a climax of the love of God. First, the people scattered, unpitied, and disowned by God, is re-born of God; and then it is declared to be in continued relation to God, "My people;" then to be the object of his yearning love.

Verses 2-5: "Plead with your mother:" The Hebrew text begins chapter 2 (with what is 1:10 in the English text). The prophet uses his personal domestic tragedy as a means of addressing not only his own children (and through them their physical mother), but also the believing remnant, who in turn are to plead with their mother (the nation Israel), to return to God.

Hosea 2:2 "Plead with your mother, plead: for she [is] not my wife, neither [am] I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts;"

"Plead with your mother": Although the language is applicable to Gomer, it depicts a courtroom scene in which the Lord, as the plaintiff, brings charges against the defendant. Individual Israelites, depicted as the children, are commanded to bring charges against their mother, Israel as a nation. The physical immorality of Gomer pictures the spiritual idolatry of Israel.

The same message is in this chapter (that was in chapter one). It is just expressed more fully. The "mother" is speaking of the harlot wife, Israel. Christians must remember that Jesus is coming back for a bride that is without spot or wrinkle. He does not want a bride that is committing spiritual adultery either. The worship of false gods is spiritual adultery. We must be faithful to Him, if we are to be His bride. The "adulteries from between her breasts", possibly, speaks of hidden sin. This is just another warning to keep the first commandment.

Mark 12:30 "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this [is] the first commandment."

To not keep this commandment is spiritual adultery. Sins that are hidden are just as bad as those out in the open.

Hosea 2:3 "Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst."

“Set her as in the day ... born”: (Ezek. 16:4; 23:25-26, 28-29). The day of her political "birth" was when God delivered her from the bondage of Egypt, and set up the theocracy.

“Make her as a wilderness” (Jer. 6:8; Zeph. 2:13). Translate, "make her as the wilderness," namely, that in which she passed forty years on her way to her goodly possession of Canaan. With this agrees the mention of "thirst" (compare Jer. 2:6).

The house of Jacob was in this condition, when God sent Moses to bring them out of Egypt to the Promised Land. They had nothing. They became the wife of God when they made covenant with Him to keep His commandments. This was also, the condition of a sinner, before he was saved. We make covenant, when we receive Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

The righteous do not hunger and thirst, they are filled. Those who wander away from God do not benefit from the things of God, because He withdraws from them. This is what this is saying here. They must repent or God will let them get back into the condition He found them in.

Hosea 2:4 "And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they [be] the children of whoredoms."

The children are like their mother: not only are they born of doubtful parentage, but are personally defiled. Not only is idolatry enshrined in the national sanctuary and the royal palace, but the people love to have it so. They endorse the degradation of their mother.

God greatly blesses the children of those who are faithful to Him. Let us see what happened to those who worshipped false gods.

Exodus 20:5 "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation] of them that hate me;"

We see then (what verse 4 above is speaking of). These children can repent and come to God on their own, however. The mother generally has a great deal to do with the moral character of her children. She has not taught them correctly in this particular instance. Sometimes, the mother could be speaking of the church. In that case, a church which does not teach truth could cause the members to fail.

Verses 5-8: The Canaanites attributed Baal with providing gifts such as “bread, linen,” and oil. They also believed that Baal controlled the weather and fertility. Sadly, many Israelites adopted these beliefs (Isa. 54:5-8; Jer. 3:1).

Hosea 2:5 "For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give [me] my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink."

“I will go”: Literally “Let me go,” it denotes strong desire and bent. Israel attributed her prosperity to the idols of her heathen neighbors; her “lovers” (compare verses 7, 10, 12). She would not be deterred from pursuing them.

The "mother" here is Israel. It could also be the church. Israel had been unfaithful to God. The lovers here are possibly speaking of the countries around them. God did not want Israel mixing with the heathen nations around them because they would pick up bad habits from them. The worship of false gods was introduced to them by the people around them. They made treaties with these nations and picked up much of their culture.

Israel belonged to God and He had provided for all of her needs, and had even fought her battles for her. Now she is turning from God's help to worldly people's help. God was sufficient for them and He is sufficient for us today as well. There is no need to look to the world for answers, the world does not have answers. Only God has answers to our problems.

Hosea 2:6 "Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths."

Jehovah addresses the adulterous wife: “I will erect impassable barriers that shall pierce and mangle her flesh. The path of evil shall be a path of thorns.”

She was determined to go her own way. She does not follow in the path God has made for her. When she decides to do this, God covers His path that He had left for her with thorns. She will not be able to find her way back, unless God removes the thorns. Christians know that Jesus is the Way. To try to get to heaven other than by Jesus is impossible. To walk in sin even now, obscures the path that leads to God.

Verses 7-13: Israel had not only forgotten God but abandoned Him by choosing to worship idols. A vivid picture of this abandonment can be seen (in 2 Kings 17:7-18). Hosea used the word “return” to describe what Gomer did, what God wanted His people to do (3:5; 12:6; 14:1-2, 7), and what God would do when His people truly turned from their sin (5:15; 14:4).

Hosea 2:7 "And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find [them]: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then [was it] better with me than now."

With earnest travel, and with wearisome toil, she shall attempt every way to get to them, but to no purpose: afflictions and sorrows surround Israel; these Israel can by no means break out of to these lovers, and they, like false lovers, hasten as fast and as far from this adulteress as they can.

Her lovers are idols and idolaters, her false friends, and false gods.

“She shall not overtake them”: They which hasten after such strange gods and helps, as this shameless harlot, shall meet with sorrow, but never overtake their desired help.

“She shall seek them”: As is the manner of immodest strumpets; it speaks also her obstinate resolution in her way: so Israel forsook a God that would have sought him to do him good, and by no disappointments would be (for a long time), taken off from this frantic wildness, of seeking to idols that could do him no good.

“But shall not find them”: The final issue of all is at last, she is wearied in her folly, tired with fruitless labor, and sits down hopeless of ever finding help from idols and idolaters.

“I will go and return”: Restless, she will try one way more; if she only had tried this sooner, this would have been successful. She will return, come back, and seek to her Husband.

“To my first Husband”: i.e. God, who had married Israel to himself, who was her Husband indeed: all others were as adulterers, as deceivers and seducers, who abuse the credulity of wanton women first, and next abuse their husbands’ beds.

For then was it better with me than now: how much the tune is changed! (In Hosea 2:5), all her gallantry, her feasts, her rich apparel, these are gifts of her lovers; not a word of her Husband’s greatest kindnesses. But now she sees and confesses that the least of her Husband’s kindnesses was better than the greatest kindness of these her paramours, and at worst with her Husband she was better than at best with adulterers.

You cannot try out the world and then come back to God anytime you want to. That is what Israel found out, and it is what Christians find out also. God did not want part of their love, He wanted all. Loyalty to God involves forsaking the entire world. Israel suddenly realizes that she was much better off when she was with God.

Verses 8-13: God withheld rain and productivity to show Israel that the Canaanite god Baal was not the god of rain and fertility.

Hosea 2:8 "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, [which] they prepared for Baal."

“Prepared for Baal”: Baal (the Phoenician sun-god) worship, already present during the time of the judges (Judges 2:17; 3:3; 8:33), became established in Israel when King Ahab married Jezebel, who attempted to obliterate Israelite worship of the true God (1 Kings Chapter 19). Offering to Baal actually came from God’s dowry to Israel (Ezek. 16:10-14).

It was God that had provided her with all her needs. He had loved Israel so much that He gave her far beyond her need. He had showered her with silver and gold as well. Since we are looking at this spiritually, we must remember that "silver" symbolizes redemption and "gold" symbolizes God.

God had redeemed her, and provided all of her needs. She repaid Him by giving that gold to the false god Baal. She had great wealth, but did not appreciate the fact God had showered the

wealth upon her. She took God for granted. The saddest thing was that she used the gold and silver to worship a false god.

Hosea 2:9 "Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax [given] to cover her nakedness."

The Hebrew form of saying, "Therefore I will take back." Jehovah resumes all that had been misappropriated. The king of Assyria (Tiglath-pileser, 734 B.C.), was the agency whereby this was to be accomplished (compare Isaiah 10:5). The raiment (wool and flax), was Jehovah's gift to cover her nakedness, i.e., to meet the actual necessities of Israel. This He will tear away, and the idol-gods whom she has courted shall see her prostration, and their own helplessness to deliver or relieve.

Her unfaithfulness to God causes Him to remove all the blessings she had known before. She will be in the same condition she was in, when He saved her out of Egypt.

Hosea 2:10 "And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand."

"I will discover her lewdness": God pledged to expose Israel's wickedness. The phrase is linked to being taken forcibly into captivity (in Ezek. 16:37-40).

"Her lovers": The idols were personified as if they could see, though they could offer no help.

"Lewdness" means disgrace. God does not want her anymore, because she has been unfaithful. No husband wants an unfaithful wife. He will bring punishment upon her for her sins. She deserves His punishment.

Hosea 2:11 "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts."

"Feasts": Ever since the Exodus from Egypt, Israel had intermingled the worship of the Lord with the worship of false gods (compare Amos 5:26; Acts 7:43).

All of these times were when she communed with God. All communication with God is cut off. These had been times set aside, when God and His people fellowshiped.

Hosea 2:12 "And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These [are] my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them."

Before, God had threatened to take away the fruits in their seasons; now He says that he will take away all hope for the future; not the fruit only, but the trees which bare it.

It was the plague, which God in former times laid upon those, out of the midst of whom He took them to be His people (Psalm 105:33; see Jeremiah 5:17). "He smote their vines also and their fig trees, and brake the trees of their coasts."

Now that they had become like the pagan, He dealt with them as with the pagan.

Of which she said, "These are my rewards": Literally "my hire." It is the special word, used of the payment to the adulteress, or degraded woman, and so continues the likeness, by which he had set forth the foulness of her desertion of God.

"And I will make them a forest": The vines and fig-trees which had aforetime been their wealth, and full of beauty, should, when neglected, run wild, and become the harbor of the wild beasts Which should prey upon them.

God had given them the vines and fig trees. Since they had abandoned Him, He takes away the blessings He had given them. God will not cause them to be fruitful anymore. All of these things belong to God. He can do with them whatever He wishes.

Hosea 2:13 "And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgat me, saith the LORD."

"Forgat me" (compare 2 Kings 17:7-18), for a detailed description of what their abandonment of God involved.

The "days of Baalim" is speaking of the time when they were practicing idolatry. They had given the love that belonged to God to these false gods. The "burning of incense" in the temple of God symbolized the prayers of the saints rising to heaven. It appears, they had been praying to false gods.

Outward show of beauty is not Godliness. True beauty comes from within. You may appear to the world to be in right standing with God, but God looks on the heart. They had become worldly and forgotten God. They were lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God.

Verses 14-17: "The valley of Achor:" In this valley, located near Jericho, Achan's sin was discovered, judged, punished and put away. In like manner, if Israel and Gomer will deal with their sin and put it away, that very act will result in God's blessing and bring restoration and hope. The names "Ishi ("My Husband"), and "Baali" ("My Master"), are significant. The former is a term of affection and represents the closest loving relationship. The latter indicates servitude and inferiority.

Hosea 2:14 "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her."

“Speak comfortably unto her”: The phrase was used of wooing (Gen. 34:3; Judges 19:3; Ruth 2:13). God will restore Israel to Himself.

God will draw her to Him again, is the message in this verse. God punishes His own, when they have sinned, but He is quick to forgive and restore them. He is like a loving parent, who whips a child who is in error, then forgives him and restores him, because he is his own.

Hosea 2:15 "And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."

The “Valley of Achor” (“Valley of Trouble”), was where Achan disobeyed God and kept the enemy’s plunder, resulting in great devastation for the Israelites (Joshua chapter 7). Yet God promised to turn this valley into “a door of hope” for His people. He does this for all His children who actively seek the hope He has provided (Rev. 3:20).

God's forgiveness is not just in words, He restores her vineyards again. He pours out His blessings on her again. There is hope. Just as God was the hope of the family of Jacob in Egypt, He is the hope of the Israelites here. Achor is not very far from the fertile land of Jericho. Achor is the entrance to that land. In Jericho today, the fruit and vegetables are far more than they need for themselves. It is so fruitful that they sell much of it. This is a prosperous area.

Hosea 2:16 "And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, [that] thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali."

In Hebrew, the word husband can be translated using two words, one that means “My Husband” (denoting affection and intimacy), and one that means My Master (literally, “my Baal”), speaking of rulership. God was once again urging His people to worship Him for who He is and not to be ruled by false gods.

The fact that she is to call Him Ishi, indicates that she is recognizing Him as her husband. She had acted like the false gods were her husband before. This will be no more. She is the wife of God.

Hosea 2:17 "For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name."

(In verse 13), Israel forgot her true God; God said she would forget her false gods. What the outward conformity to the Mosaic Covenant could not do, God does through a new, regenerated heart in the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Zech. 13:1-2).

Just as God discredited the false gods of Egypt, He takes the names of her false gods away here and will remember them no more. She will have totally forgotten them.

Hosea 2:18 "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and [with] the creeping things of the ground: and I will break

the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely."

“A covenant”: This depicts a millennial scene (compare Isaiah 2:4; 11:6-9; Micah 4:3), when God’s people become subject to God and creation becomes subject to them.

Zechariah 2:11 "And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee."

This is speaking of that time when the Root of Jesse shall rule. This is that time of perfect peace, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall reign. The 11th chapter of Isaiah explains it in detail. There will no longer be one nation that belongs to God, but He will rule over all. Everyone who believes in Christ will be His bride.

Revelation 21:3 " And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God."

Verses 19-20: In the future, Israel would be married to the Lord under the terms of “righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, mercy,” and “faithfulness” (Jer. 31:33-34).

“I will betroth thee”: Repeated three times, the term emphasizes the intensity of God’s restoring love for the nation. In that day, Israel will no longer be thought of as a prostitute. Israel brings nothing to the marriage; God makes all the promises and provides all the dowry. These verses are recited by every orthodox Jew as he places the phylacteries on his hand and forehead (Deut. 11:18). The regeneration/conversion of the nation is much like that of an individual (compare 2 Cor. 5:16-19).

Hosea 2:19 "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies."

Then Jehovah, turning again to the wife of His youth, says to her, “I will betroth thee” (as at the first, when maiden undefiled). Three times this phrase is repeated.

“Righteousness” and “judgment” indicate the equitable terms on which God would accept the penitent; and lest this thought should crush her with fear, “lovingkindness” and “tender mercies” follow; and lest this should seem too good, He adds “with faithfulness” (to myself).

The law of commandments will be no more.

Ephesians 2:15 "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, [so] making peace;"

Read the rest of the chapter to get the full picture. "This is when He writes the law on the heart of man.

Hebrews 10:16 "This [is] the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;"

"Righteousness" is being put in right standing with God. Jesus did it for us and all we have to do is believe. All of these; righteousness, judgment, lovingkindness, and mercy come from God to man.

Hosea 2:20 "I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD."

Keeping the marriage contract inviolable, Christ will never suffer his faithfulness to fail, nor break his covenant. As he is faithful to his Father that appointed him, so he is, and will be, to his church and people, and to every believer, to whom he is espoused.

And it is he that makes them faithful unto him, and gives them faith to believe in him, receive, embrace, own, and acknowledge him as their husband: and in this sense, some understand it, rendering it, "in faith".

This is the third time the word "betroth" is used, or this promise made; which, according to Jerome, refers to them espousing of the Jews in Abraham, at Mount Sinai, and in the times of Christ.

"And thou shalt know the Lord": That the Messiah is Jehovah, and that he is their husband; they shall all know him, from the least to the greatest; they shall have a saving knowledge of him, which will issue in eternal life; they shall own him, and acknowledge him, serve and obey him, as their Lord, Head, and Husband, as well as love him, and believe in him.

Hebrews 8:11 "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."

This knowing is a free gift from God.

Hosea 2:21 "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth;"

A reversal of circumstances (compare 1:4, 6, 9).

This is speaking of the time when the door to heaven is opened. God has access to the people, and we have access to Him.

Verses 22-23: "Jezreel" ("God scatters"), speaks to the way God would transform His people: they would not be scattered in judgment but scattered as seed for God, in their land, where they would enjoy a renewed covenantal relationship with Him (Zech. 13:9; Rom. 9:25-26).

Hosea 2:22 "And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel."

"Jezreel" (as in 1:11), used here in the positive sense of scattering seed to sow it.

The relationship with God and Israel is restored. This time, it will never be separated again. When this great day comes, there will be no enemy. The land will abundantly produce for Israel.

Hosea 2:23 "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to [them which were] not my people, Thou [art] my people; and they shall say, [Thou art] my God."

(Quoted by Paul in Romans 9:25).

This could be the wife of God, Israel, who had been rejected of God. All relations had become new. God is starting all over again with Israel. This could also, be speaking of the unbelieving world, which has been offered the opportunity to be God's people. Whosoever will, regardless of nationality or blood line, shall have the opportunity to be God's people, and Him be their God.

Romans 3:29 "[Is he] the God of the Jews only? [is he] not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:"

Romans 9:26 "And it shall come to pass, [that] in the place where it was said unto them, Ye [are] not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God."

Hosea Chapter 2 Questions

1. What do the two names, in verse 1, tell us?
2. Who is the warning to?
3. The mother is speaking of the _____.
4. Jesus is coming back for a bride that is without _____, or _____.
5. The worship of false gods is _____.
6. What speaks of hidden sin?
7. What was the condition of Jacob's family in Egypt?

8. When did they become the wife of God?
9. Why did God not have mercy upon her children?
10. Who could the mother of verse 4 be, besides physical Israel?
11. Who are Israel's lovers in verse 5?
12. What was wrong with them turning to the nations around them for help?
13. Why can she not find the path?
14. To walk in sin, even now, _____ the path that leads to God.
15. When does she decide to come back to God?
16. Who had provided her with silver and gold?
17. "Silver" symbolizes _____.
18. Does God allow her, to come back, when she wants to?
19. What does "lewdness" mean?
20. What were the feast days, new moons, and sabbaths?
21. What does God do with her vines and fig trees?
22. What is the "days of Baalim" speaking of?
23. What did the "burning of incense" in the temple symbolize?
24. True beauty comes from _____.
25. They were lovers of _____, more than lovers of _____.
26. What change takes place in verse 14?
27. Besides just saying He has forgiven her, what does God do?
28. What does her calling Him "Ishi" mean?
29. What is this time?
30. Where can we find a detailed explanation of this?
31. What is righteousness?
32. Who are the people who belong to God?