Bible Study
Hosea 2

SIN, JUDGMENT, AND RESTORATION

A. Israel's sin.

1. (Hos 2:2-3) Charges against Israel.

"Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; for she *is* not My wife, nor *am* I her Husband! Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; lest I strip her naked and expose her, as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst."

a. **For she is not My wife**: God paints Israel as an adulterous wife, who is no longer worthy to be compared to a wife. This shows that *relationship* is broken.

i. Israel lewdly offered herself to other gods, in the way that a woman lewdly offers herself to lovers. This is communicated by the phrase **her adulteries from between her breasts**. "The reference to her 'breasts' may imply that she had laid bare her bosom to

entice her lovers … If she did not change, she would be stripped naked."

b. **Lest I strip her naked and expose her … and make her like a wilderness**: God warns Israel that if she will not put away her harlot-like ways, she will be judged. Though *relationship* is broken, *blessing* continues - but will be taken away if Israel does not turn.

2. (Hos 2:4-5) Israel tries to justify her harlotry.

"I will not have mercy on her children, for they *are* the children of harlotry. For their mother has played the harlot; she who conceived them has behaved shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give *me* my bread and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.'"

a. **I will not have mercy on her children**: If Israel as a whole is represented as an unfaithful wife, then her children represent the individual people of Israel. If they do not turn back to the LORD, they will personally experience His judgment.

b. **I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my linen**: Israel justified her harlotry because she received things from her "**lovers**." She looked at all the good she

seemed to get from her sin, and it seemed like a good deal. Israel didn't understand the *passing pleasures of sin* (Hebrews 11:25).

B. God's judgment.

1. (Hos 2:6-8) How God will draw Israel back.

"Therefore, behold, I will hedge up your way with thorns, and wall her in, so that she cannot find her paths. She will chase her lovers, but not overtake them; yes, she will seek them, but not find *them.* Then she will say, 'I will go and return to my first husband, for then *it was* better for me than now.' For she did not know that I gave her grain, new wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold; *which* they prepared for Baal."

a. **I will hedge up your way with thorns**: To bring Israel to repentance, God promised to set a hedge of thorns on the sides of her path, so that it would hurt whenever Israel went off the correct path, and so the wrong paths would be hard to find.

i. When God hedges our **way with thorns**, we usually don't like it. We sometimes think God is against us when the thorns hurt and we can't find the wrong paths. But it is really one of the sweetest expressions of God's love to **hedge up your way with thorns** and to **wall** us **in**.

b. **I will go and return to my first husband**: When God allows the passing pleasures of sin to pass, we often then see how good it was to follow the LORD. In a marriage sometimes the grass can seem greener even with the best spouse; in our walk with the LORD our idols seem attractive until God exposes them. Then we are ready to **return to** our **first husband**, the LORD.

c. **For she did not know that I gave her grain**: Even when Israel went after other gods, the Lord still provided for her. This showed His great, unselfish love to Israel. Even though Israel took what God provided and **prepared** it **for Baal**, He still loved them.

i. When Hosea provided for Gomer, she spent it on her adulterous lovers. It's as if Hosea went to the house of Gomer's lover, where she lived apart from her husband and in adultery. He knew that this scoundrel of a man couldn't provide for Gomer, and that she lived in poverty and rags. Hosea knocked at the door. He spoke to the man who answered, "Are you the man living with Gomer?" The man wondered what business it was of Hosea's; then he revealed: "I'm Hosea, her husband. I've brought these groceries and money so she can be provided for." When Hosea left, Gomer and her lover must have thought he was a fool. What a great dinner they had

together with the food Hosea brought! But this is how the Lord loves us, lavishing blessing on us even when we are worshipping idols, providing us with blessings we waste on other gods.

c. **Which they prepared for Baal**: This principle shows how offensive idolatry really is to God. Whatever we give to an idol, we have received from God.

i. God gives to man the trees of the forest and the iron in the ground. He gives man the brains to make an axe and nails from the iron, and the energy to cut down the tree, the skill to fashion the wood into beams. God gives man the cleverness to make a handle from the wood, and head from the iron, and combine it into an effective hammer. Then man takes the beams, the nails, and the hammer and he nails God to the cross - where God *willingly stretched out His arms*, dying on the cross to take the guilt and penalty man's sin deserved - and to make a new, restored relationship between God and man possible.

2. (Hos 2:9-13) How God will punish Israel.

"Therefore, I will return and take away My grain in its time and My new wine in its season, and will take back My wool and My linen, *given* to cover her nakedness. Now I will uncover her lewdness in

the sight of her lovers, and no one shall deliver her from My hand. I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her New Moons, her Sabbaths; all her appointed feasts. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, of which she has said, 'These *are* my wages that my lovers have given me.' So I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. I will punish her for the days of the Baals to which she burned incense. She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry and went after her lovers; but Me she forgot," says the LORD.

a. **I will return and take away My grain**: God gave grain to Israel, and she gave what He provided in sacrifice to Baal. So God will take away this provision, and as Israel feels her need and deprivation - perhaps she will turn back to the LORD.

b. **But Me she forgot**: During the time of Jeroboam II, Israel enjoyed great prosperity. But she used her prosperity for idolatry and the pursuit of ungodly pleasures, so God will take away her prosperity.

C. The restoration of Israel.

1. (Hos 2:14-15) Abundance and joy restored.

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt."

a. **I will allure her … speak comfort to her**: Once Israel has felt the discomfort of her deprivation, then she will listen to the voice of God once again, and He will **allure** her back to Himself.

i. Spurgeon on **I will allure her**: "This is a singular kind of power: 'I will allure her;' not, 'I will drive her' not even, 'I will draw her,' or, 'I will drag her;' or, 'I will force her.' No, 'I will allure her.' It is a very remarkable word, and it teaches us that *the allurement of love surpasses in power all other forces.* That is how the devil ruins us; he tempts us with honeyed words, sweet utterances, with the baits of pleasure and the like; and the Lord in mercy determines that, in all truthfulness, he will outbid the devil, and he will win us to himself by fascinations, enticements, and allurements which shall be

stronger than any force of resistance we may offer. This is a wonderfully precious word: 'I will *allure* her.'"

b. **The Valley of Achor as a door of hope**: **Achor** means "trouble," so the **Valley of Achor** is the "Valley of Trouble." It was a place of trouble, where Achan's sin was discovered and judged (Joshua 7:26). God's restoration is so great that He will transform the "Valley of Trouble" into **a door of hope**.

c. **She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth**: When Israel is restored, she will be restored to joy. The passing pleasures of sin are forgotten and the true pleasures of God are restored.

2. (Hos 2:16-20) Relationship restored.

"And it shall be, in that day," says the LORD, *"That* you will call Me 'My Husband,' and no longer call Me 'My Master,' For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, and they shall be remembered by their name no more. In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and *with* the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, to make them lie down safely. I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and

justice, In lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD.

a. **You will call Me "My Husband"**: With great anticipation, God looks forward to the day when relationship is genuinely restored with His people. *He wants* an intimate love-relationship with His people, and longs for the day when His people will have a marriage-like love and commitment to their God.

b. **And no longer call Me "My Master"**: God was not satisfied with a fear-based, obedience-focused relationship with His people where they thought of Him primarily as **Master**. He wanted a relationship where they thought of Him primarily as **Husband**.

c. **I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals**: In Hebrew, the name "Baal" comes from the word "**Master**" and the two words sound alike. It was the **Baals**, the idols of the nations, that wanted this "master-slave" relationship with man. But not the LORD God; He wants a love-based, commitment-based relationship with His people.

d. **Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth**: Ultimately, this blessing of restored relationship will result in a transformed earth, changed both ecologically (**beasts of the field … birds of the air**) and politically. This blessing will be fulfilled in the millennial earth, but

we can come to know the transforming power of restored relationship right now.

e. **I will betroth you to Me forever**: When relationship with the LORD is ultimately restored, it will never be broken again. Relationship will be restored on a solid foundation (**In righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy**), and will result in deeper and deeper relationship (**you shall know the LORD**).

3. (Hos 2:21-23) Blessing restored.

"It shall come to pass in that day *that* I will answer," says the LORD; "I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth. The earth shall answer with grain, with new wine, and with oil; they shall answer Jezreel. Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, and I will have mercy on *her who had* not obtained mercy; then I will say to *those who were* not My people, 'You *are* My people!' and they shall say, *'You are* my God!'"

a. **I will answer**: This is great blessing of real, vibrant relationship with God. Our hearts beat in rhythm to His, and so we want what He wants. So when we ask God to do things, we already ask what He wants to do - so He **will answer**.

i. This is the same principle Jesus taught: *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you*. (John 15:7)

b. **The earth shall answer with grain, with new wine, and with oil**: When relationship is where it is supposed to be, God abundantly provides. This is the same principle Jesus taught in Matthew 6:33: *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*.

c. **They shall answer Jezreel**: The name "**Jezreel**" means "Scattered," and could be used in a negative sense (as in Hosea 1:4-5). But it was also the word used to describe the good scattering of seed, "Sowing." Here, the LORD promises glorious redemption of the name **Jezreel**, which was first given as a sober reminder of scattering in judgment. Now it becomes a prophecy of the promise, "**I will sow her for Myself in the earth**." God will restore His people to abundance and blessing. Scattering will be transformed into sowing.

d. **And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy**: Hosea's second child, a daughter, was named *Lo-Ruhamah*, meaning "No Mercy" (Hosea 1:6). That name, originally given as a marker of judgment is now transformed into a mark of restoration.

e. **Then I will say to those who were not My people, "You are My people!"** Hosea's third child, a son, was named *Lo-Ammi*, meaning "Not My People" (Hosea 1:9). That name, originally given as a marker of judgment, is now transformed into a mark of restoration.

f. **And they shall say, "You are my God!"** With this, the restoration is complete. The LORD relates to His people as their God, and His people relate to Him as His people. This is *relationship*, full of warmth and love, and what God longs for.

i. Think about it: Which one of the pagan gods of the nations ever wanted the *love* of their followers? Which of them ever asked, "Do you love me?" False gods don't want our *love*, they want our fear, our obedience, our slave-like sacrifice and devotion. But the true God, the living God, isn't satisfied with just our fear, our obedience, or even with our slave-like sacrifice and devotion. *He wants our love, freely given and enjoyed in relationship with Him*. If we miss this, we miss the heart of God's work in us and for us.

ii. We see *complete* restoration. All three of Hosea's children, named as marks of judgment, now have their names restored and made into marks of mercy, grace, and restoration. God is that good!