

Unlocking The Mystery & Treasure Of Our Inheritance

#42 The Blessing Of My Thorny Path

Hosea [salvation], a prophet to the Northern Kingdom [also called Ephraim] lived and prophesied just before the destruction of Israel in 722 BC. Murder, idolatry and immorality were rampant in the land. Nobody seemed to be interested in hearing the Word of the LORD.

Hosea 1:2a Hosea was commanded to marry a prostitute, Gomer, who subsequently bore him 3 children. He wasn't sure the last 2 were fathered by him. Gomer lost interest in Hosea and pursued other lovers. Hosea had the humiliating responsibility of buying back his own wife. This "action sermon" was a vivid picture of Israel's actions to God by prostituting themselves to idols and committing "spiritual adultery." Hosea's action illustrated God's relationship with Israel. He was to manifest God's patience and love.

Hosea 1:2b For the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the LORD."

THE PROBLEM - SPIRITUAL ADULTERY?

A. THE SIN OF JEROBOAM

Hosea prophesied during the reign of seven kings. Five of the seven are said to have continued in the sin of the Jeroboam. [II Kings 14:24, 15:9, 15:18, 24, 28, 17:21-23]

"And he did Evil In The Sight Of The Lord; he did not depart all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin." [The spiritual climate of the land]

I Kings 12:26-29 The Terrible Sin Jeroboam Committed

The context: After death of Solomon, the nation divided. Jeroboam, king of Israel, believed he would lose power if people went to Jerusalem to worship God so he devised a counterfeit religion. He gave the Israelites a new god--golden calves.

Jeroboam's sin: He Sought To Achieve His Own Personal Agenda. He put himself and his desires before God and distorted God in order to do so. He Changed His Understanding of God.

Key Point: Encountering God As He Is invariably changes our personal agendas.

If Jeroboam had sincerely been worshipping God:

1. He would have seen God's glory and his own sinfulness.
2. He would DESIRE to do God's will, even if it meant reuniting the kingdom. [1:11 = God's will]
3. Jeroboam never really encountered God during his required temple worship times.
4. He didn't have a relationship with God.
5. He set up idol worship to hinder the nation from having relationship with God.
6. In his desire for power, he took a whole nation down with him. His sin was great.

Isaiah 6:1-8 gives us a great contrast to Jeroboam and a great example of someone Who Was Changed because of his encounter with God.

After Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord, he recognized his sinfulness.

When God asked, "Whom shall I send?" Isaiah said, "Here am I. Send me!"

B. THE SIN OF JEHU

Hosea 1:4 And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel [1st child of Hosea & Gomer]; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the House Of Jehu, and will cause to Cease The Kingdom of the house of Israel.

1. Jezreel = "God scatters" or "God sows"

God would punish and scatter the nation for its sinfulness. [Ahijah's prophecy I Kings 14:15-16]

God will punish the house of Jehu for what he did at the valley of Jezreel. I & II Kings

a. God Told Jehu To Destroy Ahab's Family. (He & Jezebel promoted Baal worship in Israel.)

b. Jehu also killed Joram [II Kings 9:24], Ahaziah, king of Judah [II Kings 9:27-28],

42 of Ahaziah's relatives and several functionaries of the Baal cult [II Kings 10:12-14; 18-28].

c. The execution of Baal's servants was certainly in accord with the Lord's will

[cf. I Kings 18:40], but Jehu's Attack On The House Of David Went Too Far.

d. II Kings 10:31: Jehu continued in the sins of Jeroboam.

e. II Kings 10:28-29 Jehu kept the golden calf worship. Why? same reason as Jeroboam?

2. God announces: I will avenge the innocent blood shed by Jehu and put an end to Jehu's dynasty in Israel. This was fulfilled in 752 BC when Zechariah was assassinated, the great-great-grandson of Jehu and the last of his dynasty to reign. [II Kings 10:30]

HOSEA 1:6-7 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name LO-RUHAMA ["NO compassion"]: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. ⁷ But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will Save Them By The LORD Their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

Note: After the Assyrians defeated the northern kingdom of Israel, they turned on the southern kingdom of Judah. The Assyrians conquered almost every little town in the southern kingdom, but the night before they were to attack Jerusalem, 185,000 Assyrian soldiers mysteriously died in their sleep. The next morning the army fled home.

HOSEA 1:8-9 Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.

⁹ Then said God, Call his name LO-AMMI: for Ye Are Not My People, and I will not be your God.

3 Children: Destroy Jehu's line & all of Israel; no mercy or compassion on Israel; utterly take them away; you are not my people.

GOD' S GRACE: ISRAEL' S FUTURE RESTORATION [MILLENNIUM] (1:10-2:1)

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

¹¹ Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for Great Shall Be The Day Of Jezreel. Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.

Note: Hosea repeats two of the names but removes the negative prefix "Lo." The names, Ammi and Ruhammah, which respectively mean "My People" and "My Loved One," project forward to a future time after Christ's return when Israel will once again be God's people.

Key Point: Despite God's discipline, God tells Hosea He will eventually restore the nation:

Numerical growth	Spiritual restoration
National unification	Administrative centralization
Territorial occupation	Divine blessing

Have these been fulfilled yet? No. Dispensationalists use passages like these to base their belief in a Literal Future Kingdom where Israel will occupy the land in peace and experience the blessings of God. God made this promise to Israel. They will enter into their kingdom and the promises of the prophets will be fulfilled. If you don't believe in the literal Millennium, you have to ignore much of Scripture [~1850 verses] or say they have already been fulfilled in history or are going to be fulfilled in the church.

The Symptoms Of The Problem of Spiritual Adultery

THE ADULTEROUS LOOK (2:2--13)

Hosea 2:2 What is the "adulterous look on her face?" (NIV)

Proverbs 7:6-22 A harlot who is cunning of heart. She thought her actions would satisfy her soul. She was out accomplishing her own goals, but her actions would destroy relationships. In verse 11 she is described as "boisterous" and "rebellious" - these are not descriptions of a feminine wife. It says, "her feet do not remain at home."

Titus 2:5 Paul describes godly women as "workers at home."

Hosea 2:13 She has a "brazen face."

Hosea 2:14-18 She hides behind religious activity. You can't tell from the outside the true condition of the heart. She was just going through the motions.

Jer. 3:3 "You had a harlot's forehead and refused to be ashamed."

THE SYMPTOMS OF THE ADULTEROUS LOOK

1. NOT RECOGNIZING GOD AS THE SOURCE OF LIFE

Jer. 2:27 Further descriptions of their sinfulness and how they "had their own way" It says, "They say to a tree, 'You are my father' and to a stone, 'You gave me birth.'" But in a time of trouble, they will say, 'Arise and save us.'"

Ryrie: "Tree" and "stone" refer to things used in the worship of Baal. They looked to Baal to give them life and happiness. What do we look to for happiness? Spouse, friends, shopping, pleasure? We depend on our own efforts to make life work and when things don't work, we expect God to come through.

Note: When there was a drought or famine in the land, the Jews repeatedly turned to Baal for help instead of turning to the Lord. [I Kings 18-19]

2. DRYNESS

Jer. 3:3 The rains have been withheld; same punishment as in Hosea 2:3. This is a symbol of the barrenness and desert-like condition of our souls when we try to live by our own means, playing the harlot with everything else and forsaking God. Their plans did not satisfy them. Our Actions And Our Dependence On Circumstances Are Going To Lead Us To A Life Of Spiritual Dryness, Because We Do Not Have The Living Water Refreshing Us.

3. INGRATITUDE - Their response

They thanked the false gods for their blessings of food, water and clothing. God will not allow us to enjoy His gifts and at the same time ignore the Giver: Essence of Idolatry

4. PRIDE

"You refused to be ashamed." = Pride. They thought they could do it on their own. When they failed, they didn't return to God apologetically or humbly. They came prideful and angrily.

5. EXPECTING GOD TO BLESS US

They ask God why He hasn't blessed them. They don't see what they are doing wrong. But God shows at the end of verse 5 that "they have had their way." Following their own agendas.

6. ANGER - BLAMING GOD

This is not actually stated, but it is implied throughout the passage in both Jeremiah and in Hosea. This naturally happens when a proud person doesn't get what he expects.

Hosea 2:6-7 THEREFORE, behold:

I Will Hedge Up Thy Way With Thorns, and Make A Wall, that She Shall Not Find Her Paths. And she shall Pursue Her Lovers, but She Shall Not Overtake Them; 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.

Truth: God Causes Our Own Methods To Fail To Lead Us Back To Him.

Secret of Divine Sufficiency > End of ourselves. God uses your difficulties [thorns] to draw you to Himself. These "thorns" can be the very condition of our blessings.

"There are times when God restores to us those things we lose through negligence, rebellion or sin. For the Christian, the storms are a No Lose Proposition. They help us to see and acknowledge the loose shutters, the missing shingles and the rotten fence posts in our lives while turning back to the only One who can make the necessary repairs - Almighty God."

"God uses the thorns and storms of life to purify us; help us see who we are in Him; recognize our own weakness so we will appeal to His strength."

George Mattheson: "My God, I have never thanked Thee for my thorn. I have thanked Thee a thousand times for my roses, but not once for my thorn. I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my thorn, but I have never thought of my thorn as itself a Present Glory. Teach me the glory of my cross, teach me the value of my thorn. Show me that I have climbed to Thee By The Path Of Pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow."

2: 8-13: very things she paid her lovers with will be taken away: they belong to her Husband. Hosea 2:8 reference to grain, wine and oil - Baal was the Canaanite god who supposedly controlled storms and was responsible for both agricultural and human fertility.

This shows They Didn't Recognize God Was The True Source Of Their Blessings.

2:8 "which they used for Baal." took things God had given them to worship another god.

She will finally realize her shame only when she sees herself truly spiritually naked, her joy removed, her material blessings gone: all because of the worship of the Canaanite god, Baal.

HOSEA 2:13 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.

GOD'S RESPONSE: RESTORATION & GLORIOUS FUTURE (2:14-23)

After describing their sin and bringing them to the wilderness, verses 14-23 show God is also merciful and now He is enticing them back to Him. God uses these wilderness experiences to bring us closer to Himself.

Larry Crabb 3 areas of needs:

1. Casual Longings For convenience, comfort and personal preference. I prefer it not rain on my picnic or outing. I don't want the car to break down.
2. Critical Longings For meaningful human relationships. I want to see my family come to know Christ. I want to see sick people regain their health.
People have a great marriage
3. Crucial Longings Deep thirsts of our innermost being - What satisfies our casual and critical longings could NEVER satisfy our crucial longings.

The only thing that will ever satisfy our crucial longings is a Relationship with God.

We spend all our energy trying to fill the first two categories not realizing:

If we work on the relationship with God, He will take care of the rest.

God's 6 "I Will" Statements of Promise: Hosea 2:14-23

1. Hosea 2:14 "Therefore, behold, I Will Allure Her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort [tenderly] to her.

a. He doesn't force His people to love Him. He allures them as a lover woos his beloved, seeking her hand.

b. He leads us into the wilderness or desert where we are dried up in our own resources.

c. Then we are more likely to turn to Him.

d. Just as He led Israel through the wilderness and "married" her at Sinai, God will meet His beloved in the wilderness in the Last days and lead her into her land and her glorious kingdom.

Note: What is the result of being in the desert?

2:14 He speaks kindly to her. Being in the desert makes us more receptive to God's kind words.

2. Hosea 2:15 shows that God will bless them.

I Will Give Her Her Vineyards from there, and the Valley Of Achor As A Door Of Hope;

- a. He guarantees a return to their land and a restoration of their prosperity.
 - b. To Israel, the Valley of Achor [trouble] was where Achan stole from God and brought shameful defeat to Israel's army. This memory will be erased from their mind.
 - c. After the Israelites stoned Achan and got right with God, they were able to defeat Ai.
- Truth: God can turn our times of defeat into a time of hope. He did so at Achor.
- d. This Valley will become a "door of hope" through which Israel will enter a new life.

2:15b She shall sing there, As in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

e. Ex 15: Song of Moses: their deliverance from the Pharaoh and the miracle of the Red Sea.

Note: Our song should be so focused on God it leads us to forget self.

f. Isa. 65:10 ...the valley of Achor shall be a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

3. 2:16-17 "And it shall be, in that day," Says the LORD, " *That* you will call Me Ishi, 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me Baali, 'My Master,' For I Will Take From Her Mouth The Names Of The Baals, And they shall be remembered by their name no more.

a. God declares an end to idolatry among his people.

b. Israel will no longer address God as Baali, but as Ishi. [both mean my husband]

- Ishi = my husband = my man = dear familial relationship
- Baali = my husband = my master = legal sense
- Baali sounds like a god with whom Israel committed adultery = Baal.
- Avoid any hint of a former lover

4. 2:18 And in that day I Will Make A Covenant for Israel with the living creatures of the open country and with the birds of the heavens and with the creeping things of the ground.

And I Will Break The Bow And The Sword and [abolish battle equipment and] conflict out of the land and I Will Make You Lie Down Safely.

a. This new covenant will include a restored creation and peace among the nations.

5. 2:19-20 And I Will Betroth You To Me Forever; yes, I Will Betroth You To Me in righteousness and justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy.

²⁰ I Will Even Betroth You To Me in stability *and* in faithfulness, and you shall know (recognize, be acquainted with, appreciate, give heed to, and cherish) the Lord.

New Betrothal = betroth 3 times = 3 elements of the betrothal

Time = Forever

Content = Righteousness, justice, loving kindness and mercy

Quality = Faithfulness, stability

Divine marriage relationship will be restored.

Everything Israel lacked during her years of separation from her Husband, Jehovah.

6. 2:21-22 And in that day I Will Answer says the Lord; I will answer the heavens and they shall respond to the earth [which begs for the rain it needs], ²² And the earth shall respond to the grain and the wine and the oil and these shall respond to Jezreel.
a. The heavens send the rain; the earth brings forth the produce and the Lord sends His rich blessings. Picture of a restored universe where sin and death no longer reign

7. 2:23 And I Will Sow [plant] 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.

New meaning to Jezreel [can mean 2 things = God scatters & God sows]

a. During the period of punishment, Israel experienced = God scatters [outside the Land]

b. In restoration = God sows = God will sow Israel back into the Land.

c. In that day, ALL OF GOD'S BLESSINGS WILL BE RESTORED in the Valley of Jezreel.