

When I would heal Israel...**Read Hosea, chapters 4-7****INTRODUCTION**

1. Our first lesson, [‘faithless wife-FAITHFUL HUSBAND’](#) from **chapters 1-3** serves to give us a summary of the whole **Book of Hosea** – it is the ‘short’ story of what will be explained in more detail in the remainder of the Book. In that three-chapter narrative, we will find both [1] the human experience of Hosea as Yahweh calls and commissions him to marry Gomer, a wife who would prove to be unfaithful to him and promiscuous with other illicit ‘lovers,’ ... and also [2] the Divine parallel experience in that Israel has done and is doing exactly the same thing toward Yahweh. You might say that **chapters 4-14** are Yahweh’s commentary on **chapters 1-3**.
2. However, there are also the dual themes of retribution/restoration, punishment/promise, ‘tough love’ discipline/covenant mercy wooing that are woven together throughout Yahweh’s messages delivered through Hosea. After He has executed His just separation from Israel because of their blatant, promiscuous unfaithfulness, He will return to them **‘in the latter days’ [ch 3.5]**. His covenant promise is: **“And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know Yahweh” [ch 2.19-20]**. Just as Hosea did Gomer [ch 3].
3. **This is the promise of Christ!** The only way God can demonstrate both His justice against our sin and His mercy toward us sinners is by executing His wrath against Christ who will bear our sins and the punishments they deserve upon Himself ... so He can then give to us the promise of His mercy through our Substitute! The Book of Hosea is Yahweh’s promise of the Gospel of Christ who will come – and has come – **‘in that day’** when He says **“And I will make for them a covenant...” [ch 2.16 & 18]**. Only Christ can satisfy these conditions and fulfill the faithfulness this covenant demands!
4. Now, this next section we will deal with in this lesson [chs 4-7] is a lengthy section for us to even attempt to cover in one lesson. So I will be able to only outline it for us, point out the transitions and show the connections in His flow of thought, give the ‘logic’ of each sub-section in Yahweh’s progressive messages, and give as much detail during the lesson as we need to understand the meaning of the words.

ch 4.1-19 / Yahweh convenes His court of sovereign Justice and begins to present His case against faithless, adulterous Israel

1. **vv 1-3 / INDICTMENT: The indictment against ‘the land’ as a whole – the nation.** *“The opening verses of Hosea are like a court summons ... Hosea started in the maternity ward with the naming of his children in chapter 1. The we moved to the wilderness and the lovers’ tryst [ch 2]. Then to the slave market as Hosea buys back Gomer [ch 3]. Now we come to the law court” [Tim Chester]. ‘Hear the word of Yahweh, O children of Israel’* is not only prophetic language, but legal also. Like our familiar *‘Hear ye, hear ye...’* Also the word **‘controversy’** means complaint, accusation, or indictment. That is what this is. It is also related to the word for **‘plead’ in ch 2.2**. The indictments are summarized in three charges: [1] no faithfulness [remember the marriage motif]; [2] **no steadfast love**; [3] **no knowledge of God in the land**, that is no acknowledgement of Yahweh as their God, no intimate ‘knowing’ Yahweh in their affections, loyalties, faithfulness, or conduct. NOTE: these three themes will come up again and again throughout the Book. Make a mental note of them and watch as they are woven into all the messages to follow. **v 2 / Evidences** are presented to support the indictment: nothing but the violation and breaking of all of the Ten Commandments. Look for them and identify them. Examples of these transgressions will be repeated in detail and presented as numerous examples of Yahweh’s evidences against them throughout this Book.

2. **vv 4-9 / The indictments against the priests especially and also the prophets included: their spiritual leaders had failed to teach and lead the people to ‘know’ Yahweh their God and Husband. Verse 9 will transition Yahweh’s indictments now against ‘My people’ / v 12 who had all too willingly embraced and become like their unfaithful spiritual ‘leaders.’**
3. **vv 10-19 / The numerous indictments against the promiscuous populace: My people / v 12.** The sins they had willingly participated in following the ‘leadership’ and examples of their ‘leaders’: **And it shall be like people, like priest / v 9.** NOTE: **v 16:** here is the first of a numerous series of similes and metaphors Yahweh will employ to illustrate Israel’s faithlessness against Him. These illustrations will show Israel who they are by comparing them to likenesses they will readily recognize: **ch 4.16; 6.4; 7.4, 7, 8, 11, 16.** These indictments are all wrapped up in **v 17: Ephraim is joined** [wedded, married to; in illicit, promiscuous, adulterous, idolatrous union with] **idols; leave him alone.**

ch 5.1-7 / VERDICT: Following His indictments against their adulterous acts of faithlessness toward Him, Yahweh now proceeds to pronounce His verdict of judgment against them

1. **v 1 /** Again, we are summoned to **‘Hear this, O priests! Pay attention, O house of Israel! Give ear, O house of the king! For the judgment is for you...’** This **‘judgment’** is Yahweh’s verdict that He is handing down against them. The priests and king [along with his ‘house’ or dynasty] are specifically addressed because they have been the ‘leaders’ in all of Israel’s faithless apostasy against Yahweh / **v 7**
2. **vv 2-7 /** Obviously, the people have followed their ‘leadership’ so they will suffer the consequences of Yahweh’s verdict against **Ephraim/Israel.** [Ephraim is another synonymous name for Israel since Ephraim was one of the largest tribes in the northern kingdom.] And what is Yahweh’s verdict? **“He has withdrawn from them” / v 6.** He will withdraw His protections and defenses of the nation. He will turn them over to their enemies, particularly the Assyrians.

ch 5.8-15 / SENTENCE: Yahweh Himself will execute His sentence against them through the agency of their enemies according to the just punishments of His verdict against them

1. **vv 8-9 / “Blow the horn in Gibeah, the trumpet in Ramah. Sound the alarm at Beth-aven [Bethel]...”** These are like air-raid sirens going off. Now the scene shifts from the court room to the battle field. Yahweh will turn them over to their enemies to be destroyed, **become a desolation, crushed in judgment / vv 9, 11.**
2. **vv 10-14 /** What follows in these verses is a series of destructive judgments that Yahweh says He Himself will execute. He will come against them like: **a flood of water, v 10; a devouring moth, v 12; a corrosive dry rot, v 12; festering wound, v 13; vicious lion, v 14.**
3. **v 15 /** Again, He reiterates His threat to withdraw His protection and defenses from them ... but only for the purpose of bringing them to the end of themselves and cause them to see their need of Him, confess and repent of their sins, acknowledge their guilt, and seek Him earnestly, sincerely, and faithfulness. **see Romans 2.4**

ch 6.1-3 / YAHWEH THE HEALER: Hosea interrupts his proclamations of judgments from Yahweh ... to make an impassioned plea of his own: “Come, let us return to Yahweh...”

1. **This has to be a pivotal point in the Book.** This is the message that Yahweh is delivering to Israel throughout all this Book. If they will only return to Him, be faithful to Him, and fulfill the covenant ‘marriage’ vows they have made to Yahweh, He will mercifully and graciously forgive them and save them. He will gladly have them back. But they have not listened to Yahweh, and they are not listening now. So Hosea takes it upon himself to make his own plea for Yahweh.
2. **v 1 /** Connect **ch 5.14, “I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and no one will rescue”** with this promise: **“for He has torn us, that He may heal us” / see ch 5.15.** Israel has been appealing to even their neighboring enemy kingdoms to protect them from whichever other one of

them may have been threatening them at the moment / **see ch 5.13**. But Yahweh still appeals to them, and stands ready and willing, to heal them and bind up all their wounds. But Israel still will not acknowledge Yahweh as their God.

3. **There has to be a prophetic reference here to the Gospel of Jesus Christ!** Hosea is speaking and writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, **‘the Spirit of Christ’** who is in him / **see 1 Peter 1.10-12**. He is writing in his present moment and context expressing what he knows about the heart, desire, purposes, and character of Yahweh. But Hosea does not know the gracious fulfillment of all these prophecies and promises that will come to fruition in Jesus Christ and His Gospel. He just knows Yahweh will ... because He has promised. All of this prospective salvation will be revealed, delivered, and fulfilled by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ who will come 750 years later!

ch 6.4-11 / ‘PLEASE HEAR MY HEART’: Yahweh takes up again with the pleas of His own heart for His covenant people

1. **vv 4-6 / ‘What am I supposed to do with you? How else can I respond to your gross, blatant, heartless, and incessant faithlessness toward Me? I will do what I have to do ... though it tears at My heart to have to do it!’** NOTE: here [v 4] is another one of those numerous similes Yahweh employs to try to get them to look at themselves and how they have betrayed Him and been unfaithful to love Him in return for all His love for them. **“For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”**
2. But we can’t move on from this plea without recognizing that we, too, are included among those who must examine our own hearts and be sure we are responding to Yahweh as He desires. Jesus also quoted this Scripture to expose, convict, and warn the hypocritical and heartless Pharisees that their empty religious rituals would not satisfy the heart of God / **see Matthew 9.10-13 & 12.7**.
3. **v 7 /** In truth, Israel’s history of faithlessness against God and their transgressions of His covenant is the history of the whole human race. This is not just Israel’s national and provincial story – it is the story of us all!

ch 7.1-16 / UNREQUITED LOVE: Yahweh continues with the pleas of His own heart ... ‘I would have healed you, but you would not be healed’

1. **v 1 / “When I would heal Israel...”** I have chosen this statement as the title of this lesson because THIS is what Yahweh desired to do. THIS is the sole purpose of all His stern warning, harsh indictments, and threatening verdicts that He has handed down. THIS is my continuing overture of love and mercy to you: **“When I would heal Israel...”** So how did Israel respond even to His very Face as He is pleading with them? When He comes to heal them, THIS is what He finds them doing...
2. **vv 2-7 /** NOTE: another one of the several similes, **the overheated oven: vv 4, 6, 7**. But the heat with which they are overheated and burn is not the heat of passion to see Yahweh and return to Him ... it is not the heat of repentance and remorse over their sins ... it is not the heat of shame and disgrace they should have burned with over their sins. NO! The heat with which they burn is the heat of lustful adulteries, passion for unbridled debauchery of all kinds, and the heat of violence and bloodshed. Violent crime was rife in Israel. In fact, here in the northern kingdom Israel, at least three of their latter kings were assassinated by political rivals. This kind of unrestrained violence was the norm of their day.
3. **vv 8-13 /** NOTE: two more similes to describe Israel’s faithlessness: **‘unturnd cake’ and ‘silly dove.’** This time, it is their alliances with foreign nations, running to them, trusting them and depending on them to defend them from the other enemies who may be threatening them / **vv 8, 11. “Yet they do not return to Yahweh their God, nor seek Him, for all this” / v 10. “I would redeem them, but they speak lies against Me” / v 13.**

4. **vv 14-17** / NOTE: another simile to describe their faithlessness: **'treacherous bow.'** Their prayers are likened to the shooting of arrows from a bow. They were praying / **see v 14**. But their prayers were not from their hearts. All they wanted Yahweh to do was to give them relief and deliverance from their troubles. Yahweh Himself had been their strength and protection in all their past / **Psalm 144.1-2; 18.34**. But what did they do with the bow and the arrows Yahweh had provided for them and trained them to use against their enemies? They turned it back on Him! / **vv 15-16**.
5. Sadly, there is more of the sad same to come. Our next lesson will open with another trumpet call to battle – Yahweh's war against them. But He will ultimately triumph even over all their adulterous faithlessness – and ours – by the promise of salvation which He will send to us in His Son, Jesus Christ! Stay tuned...

**I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for My anger has turned from them [Hosea 14.4]
... after it will be exhausted upon Christ on His Cross!**

Hosea 6.1-4: "Come, let us return to the LORD; for He has torn us, that He may heal us; He has struck us down, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live before Him. Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; His going out is sure as the dawn; He will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth."

"But how can God be both the tearer and the healer? How can God tear up and at the same time heal those who turn to Him? How can He strike us down and at the same time bind up His people?"

The answer is the cross of Jesus. There at the cross God tore us apart. Yet not us, but the One who stood in our place – Jesus, the representative of God's people. Jesus was torn that we might be healed. Jesus was struck down that we might be raised up. Jesus died the death we deserve so that we might live in God's presence.

...Hosea believed that somehow God would restore His people. A day would come when God's people would be judged by God. They would be torn apart, destroyed, carried off with no one to rescue them. But God is true to His gracious promises and God is true to His gracious character. And so Hosea believed that somehow God would destroy His people – and then revive them. They would be wiped off the map and wiped out of history. But God would revive them and restore them.

Seven hundred and fifty years or so later, Jesus was arrested and His disciples scattered (Matthew 26.31, 56). There was only one faithful member of the people of God – Jesus. Jesus is not only the Son of God. He is also the people of God. He is our representative. He is the real Israel, the faithful remnant, the true vine.

In the end, there is only one faithful member of the people of God. And on that dark day He was arrested and condemned and crucified. He died and there was no one left. God's people were destroyed. God's people were struck down. There were no people of God. It was the end of the line. The story was over. God's purpose was finished. As you look across the whole sweep of human history, there was only one faithful person. The faithful remnant came down to just one person – one true Israelite, one true man of God... And now even He is dead. And there was no one left. No one.

But three days later Jesus walked from the tomb. The people who were dead are given new life. The people who were carried away are restored. The story that was over begins a new chapter.

Jesus is our representative. God's people are raised to live in His presence when Jesus walked out of the tomb. What Jesus achieved, He achieved on our behalf. If you are a Christian, then when Jesus walked out of the tomb you walked out of the tomb. Or rather we walked out of the tomb. It is not just that individuals are promised a future resurrection. The people of God as a collective entity were revived, were brought to new life. When Jesus defeated death, we defeated death. We are in Christ. So His story is our story. His death and resurrection are our death and resurrection. His victory over sin is our victory over sin." ~Tim Chester | HOSEA, The Passion of God | pages 107-109