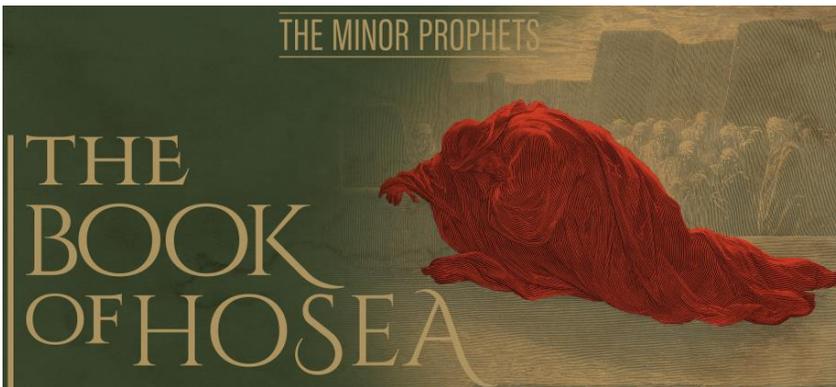


# HOSEA

## Faithful Love for the Unfaithful Lover

*A St. Paul's Lutheran Bible Study*



Things never change; we are very predictable. In Hosea 14:1-3, we hear how the nation of Israel depended on mere humans (i.e., the Assyrians) for help. In other words, the Israelites went the way of trusting in muscle power while setting God aside as dead weight. They made alliances with heathen nations because they trusted in the security that the nations provided. And, as we have obviously covered, with their alliances, they also made alliances with false gods. These false gods became idols that were made out of the hands of humans and then given divine attributes and worship by mankind.

Now, it would be easy to say to ourselves, *"I would never do such a thing."* However, lip service is cheap. Consider for a moment all the stories that you have heard over the years when a person's livelihood is threatened, how they then form an alliance with an ungodly party to grant them so-called security. And then consider how that alliance leads them to change their loyalty, worship, and adoration. The fact of the matter is that we humans are so frail and weak that when threatened, we will gladly depend on whoever has the most strength - even at the expense of having to worship their gods. When there is a hole in the ship, we jump ship. When the team is losing, we join the other team. When our army is leaving, we desert to the other side. We are fickle as human beings always seeking to protect ourselves. We look for the most powerful flesh, and then we align ourselves with that powerful muscle to feel secure, protected, and strong. We will even do this at the expense of turning our back on God almighty. Ah, but we don't like to admit this, which is the reason why we create a false god. We like to trust in the muscle power of mankind 'and' have a god.

### HOSEA 14:1-9

Author:

Hosea the Prophet

Date:

740-715 BC

Place:

Israel

Purpose:

Israel was like an unfaithful wife. She was attracted away from her husband (the Lord) to other lovers (idols). In the book of Hosea, the Lord calls Israel back to Himself. It is a call for Israel to forsake her unfaithfulness and be restored in the Lord's faithfulness.

Other:

Hosea is the most quoted book of the Minor Prophets in the New Testament.

Practically applied: in America, we see our misplaced trust on display every two years. That is right, every two years during elections, one side of the political spectrum becomes discouraged and depressed, whereas the other becomes exuberant and full of pride. While it is essential to vote ethically and to campaign for politicians on specific issues, we must always keep politics in check. We must always be careful to heed to Psalm 146:3-4, which states, *“Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day, their plans come to nothing.”* We must also understand Jeremiah 17:5, *“Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord.”* In other words, we go the way of idolatry when we put our fear, love, and trust in the Republican or Democratic Party. And, our idolatry becomes evident when our lamenting pours out over a Republican or Democratic loss in local and national elections.

Since we cannot trust in mere flesh and since we cannot put our trust in princes, presidents, congressmen, senators, governors, etc. is there anyone there to save us? As orphans in this world, we technically do not have any earthly helpers. Sure, we have the love and care of our parents, siblings, and helpful neighbors. But do we have the support of political, economic, and ideological muscles of power? Alas, more often than not, these powerful groups are more interested in using their powerful flesh to control the masses, not serve the masses. And so, again, is there anyone there to be a father to the fatherless? The Lord Almighty is the only One in this life that heals, loves, and serves.

While there are multiple reasons why powerful entities in this world despise Christianity, perhaps one of the biggest reasons is that Christianity makes the Christian *“lord of all, completely free of everything.”* (Martin Luther: Freedom of the Christian) Yet, we Christians are also a *“servant, completely attentive to the needs of all.”* (M. Luther) In other words, we don't owe any prince, president, or political party anything except to love one another. That is to say; we Christians are free with respect to all, yet we make ourselves slaves to all for the sake of serving everyone in our vocations. This is only possible for us because we have a living God – not a dead idol. We fear, love, and trust in a God who heals our waywardness. We fear, love, and trust in a God who makes a fresh start with us through the merits, death, and resurrection of Christ. We fear, love, and trust a Lord who came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom. But back to the reason why powerful entities often despise Christianity – it is because our loyalty is never in flesh and blood but in the One who put on flesh and bled.

In conclusion, we must consider verse 9. Verse 9 is like an epilogue to the whole book of Hosea. Everything in the book of Hosea is a warning for reproof and correction. It is also a book that summarizes the *hesed* love of God. In the end, the book of Hosea teaches us the pitfalls of our wandering adulterous hearts. It warns us of the temptations to follow other gods. It also teaches us about the steadfastness of God that He is always there for us when we are repented of our sins and wooed back to Him. Our Lord is a God of justice 'and' mercy. He desires no one to perish but all to have the knowledge of truth. He called Israel to repent/return to Him, and He calls us to daily do the same things for He has faithful love for the unfaithful lover. To God be the glory; Amen.

