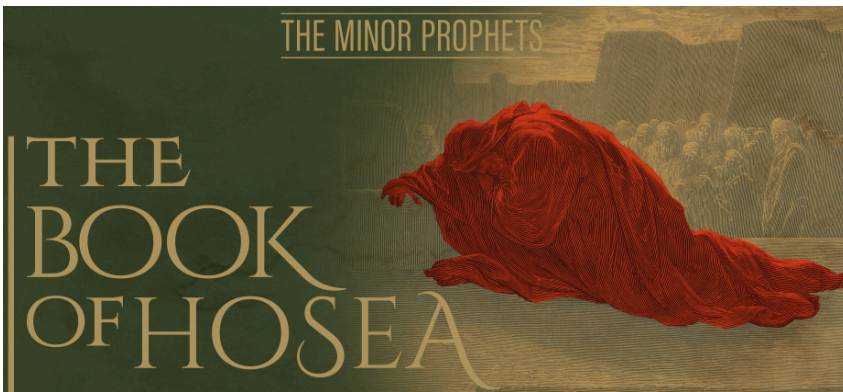


HOSEA

Faithful Love for the Unfaithful Lover

A St. Paul's Lutheran Bible Study



Sometimes marriages fall apart. In fact, that is sometimes the best thing that could happen – it all comes tumbling down. The reason why? The married couple is best to the journey all over again. All the hurt, pain, and junk needs to fall into a thousand pieces, and the husband/wife need to be emptied of all pride.

In the case of Hosea/Gomer and God/Israel, all the blame was on Gomer/Israel. Israel was the one that messed things up; Gomer was the one that ran to other lovers. However, the Lord and Hosea would be the ones to pursue their bride all over again. In verse 14, we get the picture of God taking a walk with His bride, so that He can speak tenderly. Why? Because Israel forgot the Lord. Yes, Israel forgot her Lord. Again, this is why God had to go after Israel. He loves her so much that He will not abandon her without pursuing her to win her back.

It would be easy to think that God would say to Israel, “Forget you!” After all, that is what often happens when one spouse abandons the other. However, the Lord will not forget Israel but pursue her; such is the nature of our Lord. While we were yet sinners (who forgot God), Christ died for us. What sweet Gospel! Indeed, the Gospel is something that was

HOSEA 2:14-23

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.

accomplished entirely apart from us, yet it is something that is entirely 'for us!'

It is also interesting to note that idolatry became so bad in the land of Israel that the people called God, "my Baal." Ugh, they had even forgotten His name by replacing His name with a pagan name.

Using the illustration of marriage, the problem for us Christians is not that we need to journey down the long aisle to get to the chancel rail to say the "I do's." Alas, some pastors teach their parishioners that they are on a journey towards the Lord. The goal of the pastor is to guide the bride (i.e., Christian) down the aisle to the finish line – the Lord at the marriage rail. Tragically, this is so very wrong. Instead, the Lord has already accomplished everything for humanity. All is done. Nothing needs to be accomplished. The marriage is sealed. And the problem? We are like Israel and Gomer, we are up at the altar and the vows have already been said and then... we run out of the church! Indeed, the Lord has done everything. He has forgiven our sins, He has sanctified us, He promised to feed us, care for us, and protect us... but often don't let Him!

In verse 17, the Lord speaks of a time when all of the bride's running will come to an end. He speaks of the great last day when sin will be dealt with, which will result in no more problems with God, ourselves, each other, and nature itself. In that day, His bride will be content forever. He will abolish war, restore Eden to mankind, etc.

As a final note, verses 19-20 give us an accurate picture of marriage. Several things to note:

- 1) Note what the groom brings to the marriage – righteousness, justice, steadfast love, and mercy.
- 2) And the bride? She responds to the groom's dedication/sacrifice with the appropriate response to commit herself as fervently and faithfully as the groom.
- 3) This is why the LCMS Vows for Marriage have the man go first. The man – as a reflection of Christ – promises to do everything for his bride (even death).
- 4) The bride then voluntarily submits to her new husband. Who wouldn't want to submit to someone that just vowed to die for you?
- 5) Today, tragically, women often don't submit because men are often unwilling to die. And men often don't want to die because their woman won't submit! What a wretched view of marriage! We must derive our view of marriage from the estate of Marriage, which God instituted – and is on display in verses 19-20.

