

Israel's Restoration

Hosea 2:14-23

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3/10/2024



Hosea 2:14-23 (NIV)

¹⁴ "Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. ¹⁵ There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will respond as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. ¹⁶ "In that day," declares the Lord, "you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master.' ¹⁷ I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked. ¹⁸ In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety. ¹⁹ I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. ²⁰ I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord. ²¹ "In that day I will respond," declares the Lord— "I will respond to the skies, and they will respond to the earth; ²² and the earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and the olive oil, and they will respond to Jezreel. ²³ I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.' I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God.'"

v14 – How would God bless Israel?

He will woo her back to Him.

- Once Israel has felt the discomfort of her deprivation, then she will listen to the voice of God.

What does God alluring Israel tell us about Him?

He could force Israel back into a relationship with Him but instead he prefers it to be her choice.

- God doesn't force anyone to be in a relationship with Him. Love is not love if it is forced.

v15 – Achor means "trouble," so what does that tell us about God?

God's restoration is so great that He will transform the "Valley of Trouble" into a door of hope. This brings to mind...

Romans 8:28 – *all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

What does it mean, *she will respond 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 as when that relationship was fresh and new.

v16 – What kind of relationship did God promise Israel?

God wanted an intimate love-relationship with His people, and longed for the day when His people would have a marriage-like love and commitment to Him.

What was the problem with Israel thinking of God as "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.

v17 – What was significant about the Baal worship?

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, which wanted this "master-slave" relationship with man.
- But not the LORD God; He wants a love-based, commitment-based relationship with His people.

v18 – What else would God do besides restore a love relationship with Israel?

He would make a covenant with His creation; much of the curse would be removed during the Millennial Kingdom...

Isaiah 65:25 – *The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox*

What would God abolish from the land?

There would be no more war in the Millennial Kingdom when the Prince of Peace is ruling.

Isaiah 2:4 – *He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.*

The Millennial Kingdom will be the utopia the nations long for as demonstrated by Isaiah 2:4 being carved in stone in front of the UN building in NYC.

v19 – What does it tell us in the promise, *I will betroth you to me forever?*

When relationship with the LORD is ultimately restored, it will never be broken again.

Why is God taking so long to restore Israel?

He is doing what He does for us, bringing them to the end of themselves so that they will voluntarily turn to Him.

And there is also this:

Romans 11:11-12 – I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

What will characterize God’s ultimate betrothal to Israel?

Their relationship will be restored on a solid foundation (*in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion*).

v20 – Whose faithfulness is mentioned here, God or Israel?

It is God who is the faithful one. But Israel will get on-board with their own faithfulness once they are restored.

How would Israel demonstrate their faithfulness?

By acknowledging the Lord. To acknowledge means more than just to accept or admit the existence or truth of, it also means to recognize the importance or quality of. It implies getting to know Him... what relationship is all about.

v21 – What does it mean that once Israel is restored, God would respond?

This is great blessing of real, vibrant relationship with God. Our desires are aligned with His so we want what He wants.

How can we experience God responding today?

By getting to know Him so well that our prayers are aligned to His will...

James 4:3 – You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures

The more we get to know God and apply His principles in our lives the more equipped we’ll be to align our will to His. This is the same principle Jesus taught:

John 15:7 – If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

v21-22 – What else is responding here besides God?

The sky, earth, grain, new wine, and olive oil... When relationship is where it is supposed to be, God abundantly provides. This is the same principle Jesus taught:

Matthew 6:33 – But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Is Matthew 6:33 advocating the prosperity gospel, the idea that our prosperity is tied to our closeness to God?

God promises to provide for our needs, not our wants. He will give us the desire of our hearts but the timing is His, not ours.

- Applying God’s principles does make life better in the here and now.
- In a fallen world, bad things happen that are not a reflection of our faithfulness.
- The Sermon on the Mount is about the conditions during the Millennial kingdom when much of the curse is removed.

Given that “Jezreel” means “Scattered”; what does that tell us?

This term 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 promised a glorious redemption of the name Jezreel, which was first given as a sober reminder of scattering in judgment.
- Scattering would be transformed into sowing.

This brings to mind God’s promise...

Revelation 21:5 – Behold, I make all things new.

v23 – What else will be transformed by the restoration of Israel?

Hosea’s children named as markers of judgment would be transformed into a mark of restoration.

- His second child, a daughter, was named Lo-Ruhamah, meaning “*Not my loved one*” (Hosea 1:6).
- His third child, a son, was named Lo-Ammi, meaning “*Not My People*” (Hosea 1:9).

How will Israel respond to God’s restoration of them?

And they shall say, “You are my God!” With this, the restoration would be complete. The LORD would relate to His people as their God, and His people would relate to Him as His people.

- This is relationship, full of warmth and love, and what God longs for.

How does God longing for restoration with His people contrast with the religions of the world?

God's salvation is a having a relationship with Him. The world's religions are not as personal... they are more about what you have to do to earn God's favor.

- Which one of the pagan gods of the nations ever wanted the love of their followers?
- False gods don't want our love, they want our fear, our obedience, our slave-like sacrifice and devotion.

What applications come to mind from this passage?

- God wants a relationship with us; the ball is in our court to respond to Him.
- The nations seek a peaceful utopia but human efforts to achieve this apart from God will fail miserably.
- We are more effective in our prayers when our will is aligned with God.
- God doesn't do anything half-way; when He restores, it is complete restoration.