

The Half Hour That Changes the World

Hosea

Book 28

Basic Questions behind the book:

How much does God love us?

Summary of book:

Hosea lived out his message, literally, by marrying a woman who would not love him as much as he loved her, who would leave and betray him, and whom he would seek to get back at all costs. Likewise God has offered love to Israel who, by their idolatry, have shown themselves to be unfaithful. Judgment is coming and the relationship will break down, which speaks of the fall of Samaria (722 BC) and the resultant exile in Babylon. But there is a promise of restoration based wholly on the generous and incomparable love of God. The children of the marriage are given hugely significant and symbolic names – “God scatters”, “No Mercy”, “Not my people”. Make sure to take time to read the moving declaration of God's love in Hosea 11:1 - 4.

Vital Statistics:

Purpose: To illustrate God's outrageous and unmerited love for his sinful people.

Author: Hosea, the son of Beerī. His name means ‘salvation’. He is a contemporary to Amos.

Recipients: To the northern kingdom of Israel at a critical moment in their history when there were many signs of going away from God and the pending exile.

Dating: Hosea's ministry is to be located from just before and after the fall of Samaria in 722 BC.

Setting: Hosea started his ministry at the tail end of the reign of Jeroboam II, which had been a time of prosperity but also of apostasy as can be seen in Amos.

Other Reflections:

There is a clear parallel between Hosea paying the redemption price for Gomer's return and the death of Christ as a redemptive action on the cross. Once again we see a picture of God's self-sacrificing love that goes beyond the call of duty, what is reasonable. God will go to enormous lengths to bring people back to himself and he never stops loving them even when they stop loving him. He even loves them when they walk out on him. And, what is it that the Gomers of this world run to? Anything else that they feel will bring satisfaction, particularly if it does it now! We, also, are big into instant gratification! So - sex, money, material things, these and many more seem to be much more attractive than the life of faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, in the end, only He can satisfy.

“The Lord said to me ‘Go show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the scared raisin cakes’. (3:1)