

**FROM THE COURTROOM TO THE CHAPEL:
A PICTURE OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS
(Hosea 2)**

BACKGROUND (CHAPTER 1)

- The message: a last attempt to save some out of doomed Israel (the northern kingdom)
 - The image of Hosea = husband/wife relationship with an adulterous wife, Gomer (1:2), and a faithful husband, Hosea (3:1).
 - The implication of Hosea = Israel is the adulterous wife, and God is the faithful husband.
- Chapter 1 – God tells Hosea to name his children by certain names to highlight the unfaithfulness of Israel and her subsequent punishment.
 - Jezreel = “God will scatter [seed]” – prophecy of judgment, as God scatters Israel among the nations in captivity
 - Lo-ruhamah = “Not pitied” or “She has not obtained compassion/mercy” – pictured God’s withdrawal of favor upon disobedient Israel
 - Lo-ammi = “Not my people” – expressed God’s displeasure and withdrawal from His people (temporarily)

COURTROOM SETTING (vv. 2-13)

Verses 2-13 are a courtroom setting in which the children (the people of Israel) are entreated to “plead [earnestly]” with their mother (the nation as a whole). God has entreated her Himself, but He has no relationship with her any more (“she is not my wife; neither am I her husband”). She didn’t listen to Him anymore, so He asks the children to start appealing to her, in order that she might cease from her adultery—the children would have been the individuals within the nation, and the mother would have been the leadership which represented the nation as a whole (**Principle:** responsibilities of followers to keep leadership accountable).

The Indictment: Adultery (v. 2)

- Read verse 2.

The Verdict: Guilty (v. 5)

- Her own statement: “I will go after...” = strong, undeterred desire. Hers was a selfish/pragmatic love, for she attributed her material abundance to her “lovers,” that is, the heathen nations around her with their gods upon whom she was relying (cf. v. 12). → In actuality, she was self-deceived, for God was the One who had lavished these things upon her (v. 8). She went to others to get what they couldn’t provide her with and what God had already given her. **Application:** To whom do we go for counsel, for acceptance, for forgiveness/removal of guilt, for prosperity, for peace, for security, for pleasure, for satisfaction?
- She was corrupt, for she had taken these things that God had given her, and was using them to worship a false god (v. 8). **Application:** When are we guilty of the same with our time, talents, opportunities, material assets, etc.
- She was engaging in profligate idolatry (vv. 11, 13), “following” them and “forgetting” God. **Illustration:** Forsaking chocolate cake to eat worms. **Application:** Classic “ungodliness” in our lives?

The Punishment: Humiliation through Chastening (vv. 3-13)

- *She will be desolate (vv. 3, 9)* – V. 3: She will be made like a “wilderness” or “desert” so that she will die from thirst. V. 9: She had been worshipping immoral fertility gods/goddesses (e.g., Baal; cf. v. 8, 11-13); when the land brought forth abundantly, Israel attributed it to these false gods and their wicked worship practices (v. 5, 12), even though God really was the source (v. 8). Now, God promises to withhold that blessing—to withhold the rain and harvest productivity (v. 9). His punishment upon Israel for their sin of Baal-trust was clear (vv. 11-13). → God removed what she was trusting in, what she was finding security in. **Principle:** God will remove non-God sources of security and hope.
- *She will be shamed (vv. 3, 10)* – V. 3: She will be shamed in front of all, her private indulgences becoming humiliatingly public. V. 10: God would show her to be what she really was—filled with lewdness, with nothing honorable. Having taken away her assets (vv. 8-9), she was completely weak and exposed; and since “her money was run out,” no one of her “lovers” would be able to (v. 10) or would want to (v. 7) rescue her. This would rapidly lead to her captivity. → God will reveal her true nature to her friends; the hidden things, He will bring to light. **Principle:** You can hide behind

a façade for only so long; God will rip away the mask. **Application:** Q.—How do I live transparently with God? A.—(1) Remember you already are transparent to God; (2) Live transparently with people.

- **2 Facts about this Chastening:**
 - This punishment will extend to her children (v. 4)—future Israelites would reap the consequences of Israel’s sin. **Principle:** We don’t sin in a vacuum. God will visit the iniquities of the parents upon the children to the third and fourth generation (Exodus 20:5; 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:9).
 - This punishment is filled with God’s mercy. (1) God builds a wall so that she cannot continue down her wicked path of destruction [v. 6]; (2) God will drive away her lovers so that when she pursues them, she will not find them, and she will reasonably conclude, “I should return to my first Lover, because I had it a lot better then” [v. 7]. Her predicament will drive her back to God, as the Prodigal’s did to his father (Luke 15:17-18); (3) Even before the punishment, God had been trying to make Israel not look as bad as she was [vv. 8-9]. Her faithful Husband had been trying to cover her up so that she wouldn’t shame herself so much. Even though she went from one man to another (or one nation/god to another), the faithful Husband followed her around, attempting to hide the blatancy of her sin.

CHAPEL SETTING (vv. 14-23)

Verses 14-23 are a chapel setting in which the faithful husband woos his estranged wife into a renewed covenantal relationship.

The Wooing (v. 14)

- “Allure” = persuade, seduce, entice; “speak comfortably/[kindly] to” = wooing; cf. Gen. 34:3; Jud. 19:3; Ruth 2:13

The Restoration of Blessing (v. 15)

- Having been brought into a wilderness (v. 14), which accurately depicted her spiritual depravity (v. 3), God would begin to produce life. Her “Valley of Achor/[Trouble]” would become a “door of hope.” Her joy, taken away in v. 11, will be restored.

The Restoration of the Relationship (vv. 16-20)

- Vv. 16-17 – They will not call God “My Lord”; they will call Him “my husband.” Having formerly forgotten her faithful Husband, now she will be made to completely forget her destructive lovers.
- V. 18-20 – God renews the covenant with Israel (New Covenant)
 - Characterized by harmony, peace, and safety
 - God initiates the renewal of vows:
 - Eternal commitment
 - Committed to righteousness (which Israel needed)
 - Committed to justice (continued fairness)
 - Committed to steadfast love (*hesed*)
 - Committed to compassion (displayed in chpts. 1-2)
 - Committed to faithfulness (God wouldn’t change)
 - Climax in the knowledge of God (New Covenant)
 - God will also restore agricultural fertility, which He had previously taken away (vv. 21-23)
 - God will hear the heavens, which had just heard from the earth, that the grains had just asked for fertility.
 - God will plant Israel back in the land.
 - God reverses their fortunes: He undoes Jezreel, by planting them in the land; He will have ruhamah upon the lo-ruhamah; He will say to the lo-ammi, “You are ammi” and they will respond, “You are my God!”

CONCLUSION

Truth: God refuses to divorce; He is faithful to the remnant.

- In Matthew 19:9, Christ seemingly allows divorce in situations where ongoing, unrepentant immorality is ongoing. → God has accused and clearly convicted Israel of outright adultery; He “could” divorce, but He does stay faithful.
- There is perhaps no more of a personally-insulting, grief/shame-laden, hurtful sin against a spouse than adultery (i.e., being intimate with another so-called “lover” who had shared nothing with you). Oh, the pain that must be experienced by the “innocent” spouse. God isn’t bound by emotion or surprise. He is committed to His covenant, and so He must be faithful to us (II Timothy 2:13). In our unfaithfulness, He is unerringly faithful.

Application: Don’t tempt God; allow His faithful love to compel you to service and obedience, not free you to lasciviousness and license.