



Return to Love and Justice

Lesson Scripture: Hosea 11-12

Focus Scripture: Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14

Key Verse:

Hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God.

Hosea 12:6 (NRSV)

Understanding and taking God's word to heart and life application

- Acknowledging God, Jehovah, and worshiping other gods
- How do we understand God's love and His judgement?
- How Christians should view and use prosperity?
- Worshiping God, Jehovah, only, and following His commandments and repentance
- Consider the credit due to God for the prosperity we may enjoy; sense of entitlement versus sense of thanksgiving
- What safeguards can a Christian put in place to ensure that wealth does not lead to *idolatry?

*An idol is anything or anyone we put before our duty to worship God.

Hosea

“Salvation”

Has been called the St. John (apostle of love) of the OT

- ▶ Is the first of the 12 Minor Prophets
- ▶ Along with Jonah, are the only writing prophets from the northern kingdom
- ▶ Began his ministry to Israel (also called Ephraim, after its largest tribe) during the final days of Jeroboam II – under whose guidance the northern kingdom had peace, prospered materially, but had moral corruption and decayed spiritually.
- ▶ The people were greedy and had adopted the moral behavior and idolatrous religion of the surrounding Canaanites
- ▶ Prophesying during the days surrounding the fall of Samaria, Hosea focuses on Israel's moral waywardness and her breach of the covenantal relationship with the Lord, announcing that judgement was imminent
- ▶ Hosea's message contains much condemnation, both national and individual – but at the same time he portrays God's love towards His people with passionate emotions
- ▶ The theme of Hosea is God's love for His covenant people, Israel, in spite of their idolatry

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- ▶ Hosea was commanded by God to marry a woman (Gomer) who would be unfaithful to him and would cause him many heartaches.
- ▶ Gomer lost interest in Hosea and ran after other lovers. We, too, can lose appreciation for our special relationship with God and pursue dreams and goals that do not include Him. Like Gomer, when Christians compromise their God-centered lifestyle and adopt the ways of the world, we are being unfaithful.
- ▶ God wanted the people in the northern kingdom to turn from their sin and return to worshipping Him alone, but they persisted in their wickedness. Throughout Hosea, Israel is described as ignorant of God, with no desire to please Him. Israel did not understand God at all, just as Gomer did not understand Hosea.

11 (NLT) The LORD's Continuing Love for Israel

1 "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt.

2 But the more I called to him, the farther he moved from me, offering sacrifices to the images of Baal and burning incense to idols.

7 – 10

7 For my people are determined to desert me. They call me the Most High, but they don't truly honor me.

8 "Oh, how can I give you up, Israel? How can I let you go? How can I destroy you like Admah or demolish you like Zeboiim? My heart is torn within me, and my compassion overflows.

9 No, I will not unleash my fierce anger. I will not completely destroy Israel, for I am God and not a mere mortal. I am the Holy One living among you, and I will not come to destroy.

10 For someday the people will follow me. I, the LORD, will roar like a lion. And when I roar, my people will return trembling from the west.

12

¹ The people of Israel feed on the wind; they chase after the east wind all day long. They pile up lies and violence; they are making an alliance with Assyria while sending olive oil to buy support from Egypt.

² Now the LORD is bringing charges against Judah. He is about to punish Jacob for all his deceitful ways, and pay him back for all he has done.

⁶ So now, come back to your God. Act with love and justice, and always depend on him.

⁷ But no, the people are like crafty merchants selling from dishonest scales—they love to cheat.

⁸ Israel boasts, “I am rich! I’ve made a fortune all by myself! No one has caught me cheating! My record is spotless!”

12

9 “But I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from slavery in Egypt. And I will make you live in tents again, as you do each year at the Festival of Shelters.

10 I sent my prophets to warn you with many visions and parables.”

11 But the people of Gilead are worthless because of their idol worship. And in Gilgal, too, they sacrifice bulls; their altars are lined up like the heaps of stone along the edges of a plowed field.

12 Jacob fled to the land of Aram, and there he earned a wife by tending sheep.

13 Then by a prophet the LORD brought Jacob’s descendants out of Egypt; and by that prophet they were protected.

14 But the people of Israel have bitterly provoked the LORD, so their Lord will now sentence them to death in payment for their sins.

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