

Seventh after Trinity – Hosea chapter 11, verses 1 – 11:-

Having looked at chapter 1 last week, this week we look at a brief summary of the rest of the Book. Here in the Old Testament we find a blunt, down to earth condemnation of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The ‘marriage covenant’ between husband and wife was, and is sacred - read Malachi chapter 2, verses 13 - 16 .

The Lord God has espoused the descendants of the patriarch Abraham. They are regarded as the ‘wife’ of the Lord God. In their worship of other gods they betray their promises to their ‘husband’, the Lord Himself.

Chapter 2 verses 1 – 13:- The picture of a faithless wife only interested in material things – verse 5, forgetting that the Lord God, her ‘husband’, is the maker and giver of all good things – verse 8.

That important word ‘therefore’ comes in verse 9. Because the people have done this, “*Therefore I will take back my grain . . . my wine . . . my wool and flax*”.

Verses 14 – 23:- After the punishment comes the promise of restoration! The people will be brought “*into the wilderness . . .*”, a reminder of “*the time when she came out of Egypt*”. Note in verses 22 – 23 the reversal of the names given to the children of Hosea (see chapter 1, verses 6 and 9).

Chapter 3 verses 1 – 5:- The prophet is commanded to mirror the future action of the Lord God by ‘buying back’ his adulterous wife. The fact that Hosea had to pay a ‘ransom’ implies that Gomer was owned by her ‘paramour’ and unable to return of her own freewill. The theme of ‘redemption’ has its ultimate fulfilment in the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ – John chapter 3, verse 16 and Matthew chapter 20, verse 28.

Chapters 4 – 5 verse 14:- The chapters reveal the contention of the Lord God against His people Israel and the results of their disobedience.

Chapters 5 – 6:- The Lord will not act until there is true repentance on the part of His people. Again and again he would restore them but their “*love is like a morning cloud . . .*”. The early morning cloud and heavy dew evaporate quickly in the heat of the sun and provide no moisture for the parched ground. The Lord God requires action from the heart and not an outward show – chapter 6, verse 6. The healing of Israel would come along with that of Judah after both have suffered a ‘harvest’ of exile and oppression – verse 11.

Chapters 7 – 10:- Again a list of the sins of Israel and the just punishment they deserve. Note that the Southern Kingdom of Judah is included in the future punishment – chapter 8 verse 14 and chapter 10 verse 11.

Chapter 11 verses 1 – 7:- The Lord was a ‘father’ to His people. Calling them, teaching them and leading them from the days of Abraham, through the exile in Egypt, the Exodus, and the wilderness wanderings He brought them into and gave them the Promised Land. And yet they turned away again and again. They are condemned again to exile.

Verses 8 – 12:- A cry from the loving heart of the Lord God! The ‘child’ He has loved and cared for will not be abandoned. They will be restored to their homes and brought back into fellowship even though they have lied and disobeyed the Lord time after time. At the time of the fall of the Northern Kingdom, the Southern Kingdom of Judah was still faithful - verse 12. Verse 12 belongs to chapter 12 (as verse 1 in the Hebrew scriptures).

Chapters 12 – 13:-

These two chapters continue the condemnation of Ephraim and also contain a brief outline of the coming judgement against Judah - chapter 12 verses 2 – 6. Note that in chapter 13 verses 1 – 3 the worship of the calf idols set up by Jeroboam is condemned, see 1 Kings chapter 12, verses 25 – 33.

Chapter 14:-

The Book of Hosea closes with a promise of restoration after punishment. Verses 5 – 7 contain a promise of a new Eden, flourishing like a garden.

The prophet adds verse 9 as a call for understanding. Sin and disobedience lead to separation from the Lord God. Maybe a reading and meditation on Psalm 1 will be a fitting conclusion to this book.