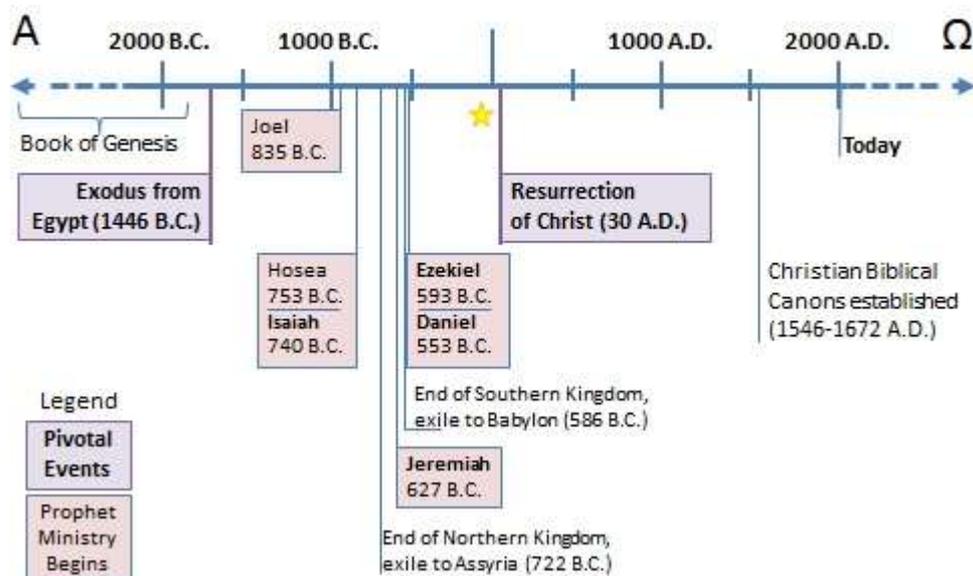


Housegroup Study – August 2nd 2017

Hosea 12-14 [Leaders Notes]

Timeline of Biblical Events



The Story So Far

God warned Israel they were facing judgment—and then rejected Israel's *fake* return to him. He knew they were not truly sorry, and didn't intend to change.

God's judgment is real. He warned of it through Hosea, and it came; through Jesus, and it came; and he has warned us of a final day of judgment.

God warned Israel they faced his judgment—and promised to be their loving Father.

Hosea 12-13 – “History Repeating”

Hosea 12-13 uses various episodes from Israel's past to illustrate the ways in which God's people have failed to trust him.

Read Hosea 12 v 1-9 and 13 v 1-3

1. Ephraim feeds on the wind; he pursues the east wind all day and multiplies lies and violence. He makes a treaty with Assyria and sends olive oil to Egypt.
 2. The Lord has a charge to bring against Judah; he will punish Jacob according to his ways and repay him according to his deeds.
 3. In the womb he grasped his brother's heel; as a man he struggled with God.
 4. He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favour. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there –
 5. the Lord God Almighty, the Lord is his name!
 6. But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always.
 7. The merchant uses dishonest scales and loves to defraud.
 8. Ephraim boasts, 'I am very rich; I have become wealthy. With all my wealth they will not find in me any iniquity or sin.'
 9. 'I have been the Lord your God ever since you came out of Egypt; I will make you live in tents again, as in the days of your appointed festivals.
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1. When Ephraim spoke, people trembled; he was exalted in Israel. But he became guilty of Baal worship and died.
 2. Now they sin more and more; they make idols for themselves from their silver, cleverly fashioned images, all of them the work of craftsmen. It is said of these people, 'They offer human sacrifices! They kiss calf-idols!'
 3. Therefore they will be like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears, like chaff swirling from a threshing-floor, like smoke escaping through a window.

Q: What can we remember about Jacob?

- His birth grasping at the heel of Esau
- Acquiring birthright through deception
- Wrestling with an Angel
- Marriages to Leah and Rachel
- Jacob's ladder and vision of God

Q: Hosea compares Israel to Jacob. What does 12 v 3-4a suggest he trusted in to get what he wanted?

Jacob was crafty and cunning, often using deceit to achieve his goals. For much of his life, Jacob trusted in his own strength and ability to get what he wanted.

Verse 3 reminds us of his birth, born grasping his brother Esau's heel, struggling for supremacy even in the womb. (Jacob's name literally means "he grasps the heel" which in Hebrew has the sense of "one who deceives".)

Even his struggle with the angel appears to start out as a desire to overcome God's messenger through his own skill and power. He trusted himself. Jacob was trusting in his own schemes and ingenuity to get what he wanted instead of trusting in God.

Q: What is Israel in Hosea's day trusting in for safety and security (v 1b, 7-8, 13 v 2)?

Treaties with God's enemies, the nearby superpowers of Assyria and Egypt. (v1)

Their own wealth, trusting in their own resources and willing to justify dishonesty in order to gain more. (v7-8)

Riches: Israel thought their wealth was evidence of God's favour and spiritual safety, when in fact their hearts were far from God. (v8)

False gods who are simply the work of human craftsmen. (13 v 2)

How did Things Turn out for Jacob? Read Genesis 28

10. Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran.
11. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep.
12. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.
13. There above it stood the Lord, and he said: 'I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.
14. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.
15. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.'
16. When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.'
17. He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.'
18. Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it.
19. He called that place Bethel (the house of God), though the city used to be called Luz.
20. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear
21. so that I return safely to my father's household, then the Lord will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.'

Q: What did Jacob end up doing?

For most of his life, Jacob trusted in his own skill and ability rather than in God. Yet God directly intervened in his life through a vision at Bethel and an encounter with an angel. Through these events, Jacob saw who God was and sought his favour. This incident was a turning point for Jacob, moving him from dependence on his own power to a desire for God's blessing.

Read Hosea 13 v 4-16

4. 'But I have been the Lord your God ever since you came out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Saviour except me.
5. I cared for you in the wilderness, in the land of burning heat.
6. When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me.
7. So I will be like a lion to them, like a leopard I will lurk by the path.
8. Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open; like a lion I will devour them – a wild animal will tear them apart.
9. 'You are destroyed, Israel, because you are against me, against your helper.
10. Where is your king, that he may save you? Where are your rulers in all your towns, of whom you said, "Give me a king and princes"?
11. So in my anger I gave you a king, and in my wrath I took him away.
12. The guilt of Ephraim is stored up, his sins are kept on record.
13. Pains as of a woman in childbirth come to him, but he is a child without wisdom; when the time arrives, he doesn't have the sense to come out of the womb.
14. 'I will deliver this people from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction?
15. 'I will have no compassion,
16. even though he thrives among his brothers. An east wind from the Lord will come, blowing in from the desert; his spring will fail and his well dry up. His storehouse will be plundered of all its treasures.
17. The people of Samaria must bear their guilt, because they have rebelled against their God. They will fall by the sword; their little ones will be dashed to the ground, their pregnant women ripped open.'

Q: Why does verse 14 seem out of place in this passage?

In the middle of stark words about the people's sin and God's judgment, he promises to rescue his people, so that not only will they be saved from their earthly enemies, but they will also be delivered from death, the greatest enemy. It is amazing grace, as Israel have not done anything to deserve such mercy.

Hosea 12-13 – “Return to Me”

Read Hosea 14 v 1-3

1. Return, Israel, to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall!
2. Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to him: ‘Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips.
3. Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount warhorses. We will never again say “Our gods” to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion.’

Q: What does God tell Israel to do, and why (v 1)?

Return to the LORD, to an obedient covenant relationship with him. They need to do this because they have sinned, and this has been their downfall—it has left them not enjoying the life they could have had with God as their Ruler.

Q: How are Israel to return (v 2-3)?

"Take words with you" ie: speak to God. The words they are to use are important—asking for God's forgiveness, confessing their sin and idolatry, recalling God's character and asking for his grace and strength to live changed lives.

Read Hebrews 13 v 15-16

15. Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.
16. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Read James 3 v 9-12

9. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness.
10. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.
11. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?
12. My brothers and sisters, can a fig-tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Q: What does it mean for Christians to "offer the fruit of our lips"?

Hebrews 13: It involves both praise of God and confession of Jesus' name: being willing to speak up for Jesus and be known as his follower.

James 3: Our lips reflect the state of our hearts. Someone who praises God for his mercy and grace cannot use those same lips to utter curses and improper talk.

As Christians, we should be careful about the words we use, with our speech being distinctive and matching our status as people saved by God.

God’s Promise - Read Hosea 14 v 4-8

4. ‘I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them.
5. I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots;
6. his young shoots will grow. His splendour will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon.

7. People will dwell again in his shade; they will flourish like the corn, they will blossom like the vine – Israel's fame will be like the wine of Lebanon.
8. Ephraim, what more has Ephraim to do with idols?
I will answer him and care for him. I am like a flourishing juniper; your fruitfulness comes from me.'

Q: What is life like for people who turn back to God?

Wonderful!

God will turn aside his judgment and love his people freely, healing their waywardness and rebellion. By asking for his forgiveness, God's people can experience the lavish grace and mercy of God. (v4)

This is a vivid illustration of the abundance of God's goodness. Hosea describes God as being water and life to his people, making them like a beautiful flower which blossoms, or a cedar of Lebanon, which, as the tallest tree of those times, was an image of strength and security. They will be a plant which flourishes and bears much fruit, like a healthy olive tree, a grape-producing vine or a vast tree that people can shelter under. (v5-8)

Conclusion – Looking back at the book of Hosea as a whole

Q: How would you summarise its message in a sentence?

Q: What have you learned, or been reminded of, about God?

Q: Has it challenged you?

Day 2

*Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld. 2
Chronicles 20:20*

Hannah **Baker**

Sam **Baker**

Colin & Christine **Barton**

Ron **Barton**

Robert & Alison **Bates** Ben, Sophie, Rebecca Jack

& Gladys **Bayton**

Andrew & Jane **Beckwith**

Lindsay **Benjamin**

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Focus - Ladies' Bible Study group

St Jerome's Parish, Kibera, Nairobi

Those who lead and preach at the services each Sunday

The Cliddesden Road Housegroup, John Ellison
