

Hosea, part 2

Notes for 15 Aug

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Read: [Hosea chapters 4 to 14](#)

Take aways from last week's Virtual Vestry:

1. If, at the cognitive level, you have a concept of what Divine Love means, it is more than likely to be understood only partially. It is clear that Hosea's love for an adulterous woman, if considered as a pattern of God's love for Israel, gives it an emotional depth which most of us can grasp. Both the parable of the Prodigal son and Hosea's love for Gomer, are placed in an emotional context with which humanity can identify.
2. God's relationship with humanity is like that of a 'Husband'. 'Baal' can mean husband, but it is characterised by the husband being the 'master', 'owner', or 'lord'. Chapter 2:16 completely torpedos this idea. Instead it is replaced by 'Ishi' which is used as an idiom for husband, being conceptually very different to that conveyed by 'Baal'. It implies equality, compassionate love, and intimacy. It is a term of partnership rather than ownership.

At this stage I would like to raise a question from Chapter 3:5.

- What does this mean?

There is a tension interwoven throughout Hosea:

- Chapters 1-3: Judgment and love interwoven in the marriage narrative.
- Chapters 4-10: Sustained indictment (justice dominant)
- Chapter 11: This is where you find the love/justice tension in its starkest form.
- Chapter 12-13: Justice reasserts itself, harshly.
- Chapter 14: Final resolution - 'earned', but through repentance.

I accept that the Divine Essence is best understood through the Incarnation. Through the story of Christ, it is clear that justice is subservient to mercy and forgiveness. Through last week's study and discussion, I saw the love that Christ portrayed throughout His ministry, in the pages of Hosea.

How do you reconcile some of the threatening judgement statements, eg in Chapters 4-10, with the sublime poetic expressions of compassionate love for Israel that we studied last week?

When you read some of the statements about the betrayal of the population regarding Yahweh, how would you regard the Israeli people?

Can you think of any example over the last 2000 years where you would argue God has imposed the form of justice described in sections of the Old Testament, (in the literal sense), on a people, tribe or nation in Europe, the Middle East or elsewhere?

If not, why not?