

“All the Prophets Testify”: Hosea 1:10-2:1

Midweek Bible Study – 2026 July 22

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<https://www.pilgrimlc.org/bible-studies/prophets>

Invocation & Opening Prayer

Follow-up to last class: pace, depth, other comments or questions?

Outline (the following is from *TLSB* p.1428; we are listing the major divisions and will expand/collapse them as we proceed through them [we previously noted possible alternate explanations for the arrangement, such as *CSSB* p.1351, and *God’s Word for Today*, p.3]):

- I. Superscription (1:1)
- II. Hosea’s Personal Issues as Prophecies (1:2-3:5)
 - A. Names of Hosea and Gomer’s Children Presage Israel’s Judgment (1:2-9)
 - B. Great Reversal of the Curse (1:10-2:1)**
 - C. Divorce Proceedings with New Betrothal and Marriage (2:2-15)
 - D. Images of Great Reversal (2:16-23)
 - E. A Second (?) Marriage to Gomer (3:1-5)
- III. Various Oracles (4:1-14:9)

Great Reversal of the Curse (1:10-2:1):

1:10 *Yet*: We briefly mentioned before, as the ESV text note indicates, that the Hebrew text numbers this verse 2:1. (Related is the matter of where this and the next “section” really start, as the non-Hebrew numbering would suggest that 1:10-11 goes more with 1:2-9 than with what we have as 2:1. Keil-Delitzsch says the announcement of salvation belongs to the previous prophetic proclamation. Golden follows the Hebrew numbering and discusses the shift from past-time narrative report to future-time prophetic oracle.) In the Hebrew the conjunction is the usual conjunction that is often translated “and” or “but”, though in this case a different translation, such as the ESV’s “yet”, does seem warranted by the context, for the conditions just described in 1:2-9 are described in 1:10-2:1 as reversed. Keil-Delitzsch prefers “Nevertheless”; Golden leaves the conjunction out of his translation. (The same conjunction is used and translated “and” later in 1:10 and three times in 1:11.) The judgment is not removed but limited. Keil-Delitzsch says, “To the symbolical action, which depicts the judgment that falls blow after blow upon the ten tribes, issuing in the destruction of the kingdom and the banishment of its inhabitants, there is now appended, quite abruptly, the saving announcement of the final restoration of those who turn to the Lord.” *CSSB* says, “The threatened punishment (vv. 4-9) would be for only a limited time, and a period of blessing would follow.” Anticipating what follows, Roehrs-Franzmann comments, “When the people of God, by their guilt, have destroyed every possibility of the fulfillment of God’s promise, then the promise made to Abraham will be fulfilled.”

the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered: the “sons” or “children” of Israel are mentioned again in 1:11 (the ESV text note on “Children of the living God” later in this verse notes that the Hebrew word is “sons” but is translated as “children”, which is true also in 1:11; we remember that “sons” inherit, and so sometimes preserving the gender-specific “sons” in favor of the gender-neutral “children” is warranted). As *TLSB* notes, the statement “Recalls the covenant God gave to Abraham, whereby his descendants are promised to become as numerous as the sand and the stars (cf Gn 32:12).” The Genesis 32:12 passage is Jacob (also known as “Israel”) reminding the Lord of His earlier promises to Jacob himself as in 28:13-15. For the promises to Abraham specifically as sand on the seashore, we might look first at Genesis 22:17, though the promise is given earlier in other terms, such as dust of the earth and stars of the sky. Golden discusses groups them all under the term “hyperbolic simile”. We member discussions such as those related to Revelation regarding the limited numbers used at the time. *CSSB* refers to Genesis 22:17; 32:12; and confers Jeremiah 33:22 and Hebrews 11:12. Keil-Delitzsch comments, “It might appear as though the promise made to the patriarchs, of the innumerable increase of Israel, were abolished by the rejection of the ten tribes of Israel predicted here. But this appearance, which might confirm the ungodly in their false security, is met by the proclamation of salvation” (confer Laetsch). Keil-Delitzsch goes on to say that the “sons of Israel” in this case should be understood of the northern kingdom, especially in view of the distinction in 1:11, but compare Kretzmann, who usually follows Keil-Delitzsch, but who in this case says “the children of Israel” are “the spiritual Israel in Messianic times”. For his part, Luther says, “History bears witness that at the time of Christ this people had multiplied and become countless. Their own region was filled and there were Jews in almost every city of the Gentiles, including even Rome.” Golden refers to “the sons of Israel”, in contrast to “the house of Israel” or “the house of Judah”, as inclusive and full of Gospel promise. As suggested by *GWfT*, we might discuss the extent to which, if any, we might ever see the great numbers in this lifetime.

And in the place where: where “the place” is precisely is not readily apparent. Luther says, “This place is neither Jezreel nor Judah but a place where up to now there was no people of God, that is, there the kingdom of God, the victory over sin, death, and hell, will be preached.” Keil-Delitzsch offers the alternatives of the place “where their rejection was declared by means of this name, or the land of exile, where this name became an actual truth”, and Keil-Delitzsch prefers the land of exile, taking 1:11 as their coming up out of it and indicating “that the change is to take place in exile”. Kretzmann explains, “in the center of the Lord’s worship in the midst of His visible Church, wherever He would establish His congregations in the Messianic era”. Golden cites Seifrid’s saying that the place “recalls the desolation of the land and Israel’s exile”.

it was said to them ... it shall be said to them: Golden says the Hebrew is woodenly translated “it will be said to them? But more smoothly rendered as “they will be called”. Roehrs-Franzmann comments, “The word...of the living God will give the reunited people the gift which they had perversely sought from Baal: life.” God’s Word of law is contrasted with God’s Word of Gospel, which effects that which it declares, whether read or preached or administered with means such as water, touch, or bread and wine.

“You are not my people,” ... “Children of the living God”: The name of Gomer’s third child, the second son, was, in Hebrew, *Lo-ammi*, or, in English, “Not My People”. That they will be told that they are “Children of the living God” is a dramatic reversal (confer 2:1). *CSSB* accents both the contrast of “children of the living God” with “children of whoredom” in 1:2 and 2:4, and the contrast of “the living God” with idols that are not God, with reference to Deuteronomy 32:17 (on the latter contrast, confer Keil-Delitzsch). As *TLSB* comments, “Even amid an announcement of judgment, God promises to spare many. Later, He extends His covenant promises to all people, so that ‘all Israel’ might be saved in Christ (Rm 11:25-26; cf Eph 2:12-15, 19-20).” Of course, God intended from the beginning His desire to save all people and made clear to Abraham and his descendants, especially Isaac and Jacob, that all people would be blessed through them in the Messiah. Apparently this verse is thought to be alluded to in Matthew 5:9, Jesus’s beatitude on the peacemakers that they will be called “sons of God”; likewise St. Paul “quotes” this verse in Romans 9:26-27, discussing not only Jews but also Gentiles (there further reference is made to Romans 8:14, that all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God, and to Matthew 16:16, where Simon Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God [confer Golden’s discussion of the connection]). *CSSB* notes the Romans use and 1 Peter 2:10’s applying the Hosea verse to the Gentile mission (confer *TLSB*’s reference to 1 Peter 2:10 below; confer also Laetsch and his inclusion of the Gentiles).

1:11 *And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together:*

Keil-Delitzsch notes that the statement presupposes that Judah will also be rejected by the Lord (presumably in that it will need to be gathered). That the children of Judah, the southern kingdom, and the children of Israel, the northern kingdom, are being gathered together suggests a re-united united-kingdom as under David and Solomon. Kretzmann refers to “all the true members of the Church of the Lord, all those who have acknowledged Him in faith as their Father”. The NIV even translates “will be reunited”, and *CSSB* comments, “Israel and Judah would become one nation again.” *TLSB* comments, “Anticipates a day when tribal divisions will end.” Note the passive voice of the gathering, probably reflecting God’s doing the action of the verb. We can think of the Small Catechism’s explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed that the Holy Spirit gathers the whole Christian Church on earth. Confer Kretzmann, who refers to their being gathered together “in the communion of saints”, and Laetsch, who refers to *una sancta catholica ecclesia*, that is, the one holy catholic Church, with “catholic” understood as according to the whole or universal (not to be confused with universalism). Golden applies the verse’s hope “for the people of Yahweh today as well, with the manifold divisions that exist within the church catholic, individual confessional bodies, specific congregations, Christian families, and the like.”

And they shall appoint for themselves one head: that the people themselves would appoint one head for themselves seems somewhat surprising (confer Golden). Keil-Delitzsch says the expression resembles Numbers 14:4, “where the rebellious congregation is about to appoint itself a head to return to Egypt”, but really “points back to Moses”. Golden also refers to Numbers 14:4 but notes that in Deuteronomy 17:15 the Lord told the people they could set over them a king whom the Lord had chosen. Kretzmann glosses, “accepting the Messiah as the one Master in the Church”. Regarding the “one head”, *TLSB* comments, “A single king over a united nation is predicted in 3:5. There, the head is foreseen as belonging to the house of David. This promise of a single head over a unified body is ultimately fulfilled by Jesus (Eph 1:22; 4:15-16; 5:23; Col 1:18).” Confer Roehrs-Franzmann, who refers to the people’s seeking the Lord their God and David their king (with reference to Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:15-28), and who suggests that the term “king”, which one might expect to be used here, might be avoided here because Israel’s recent history “had given kingship an evil connotation”.

And they shall go up from the land: to where exactly they shall go up is not readily apparent. Luther says, “He does not place this kingdom on earth. Rather, it will be lifted up from the earth from day to day, from earthly things to heavenly. Know what things are on high!” We might think of going up to the Temple or to some equivalent expression of it, such as Mt. Zion or Jerusalem. Confer Roehrs-Franzmann, who refers to “a common pilgrimage of the united people to the House of God in Jerusalem” and recalls the division of the kingdom and its divided worship. On the basis of Deuteronomy 28:68, Keil-Delitzsch sees rebellious Israel’s banishment among the heathen as if they were being carried back to Egypt, and Keil-Delitzsch refers to Hosea 8:13 and 9:3. Confer Kretzmann, who says they are “removed from the unbelievers in whose midst they live”. *CSSB* suggests that the people possibly go out of the land of exile, with reference to Exodus 1:10, or that the people would spring up from the ground like plants; confer Golden on either a new exodus or an agricultural metaphor. The plant idea fits well with the following, if it refers to planting. Golden is one who sees the agricultural metaphor both in this phrase and in the next phrase.

for great shall be the day of Jezreel: in what way the day will great is not readily apparent. Keil-Delitzsch suggest that the day is important and glorious “because of its effects and consequences in relation to Israel”, that is, the destruction of the tribes and ending of their kingdom and exile are the turning point from which their reconversion to the Lord and reunion with Judah follow. The immediate referent to “Jezreel” is also not readily apparent, though the Valley of Jezreel was mentioned last in 1:5, it was mentioned in connection with the name of Hosea and Gomer’s son named “Jezreel”, so his day could be in view. Golden thinks that Tiglath-pileser III was holding the Valley of Jezreel as Hosea was making this prophecy. *CSSB* recalls that the name “Jezreel” means “God scatters”, and *CSSB* says that in this case the name refers to God’s “sowing or planting, indicating a reversal of the meaning of the first child’s name (2:21-23).” Roehrs-Franzmann explains, “The greatness and wonder of the change produced by the redeeming grace of God is mirrored in the transformation which the word Jezreel undergoes: the ill-omened blood of Jezreel and the valley of Jezreel as the scene of God’s judgment (1:4-5) are replaced by the great day of Jezreel on which ‘God sows,’ that is, recreates His lost and doomed people.” Keil-Delitzsch is similar but seems to object to giving a different meaning to the name. (Obviously the recent Gospel Readings of “The Parable of the Sower” and “The Parable of the Weeds of the Field” are related to the idea of God’s sowing.)

2:1 *Say to your brothers ... and to your sisters*: while the outline we are following puts 2:1 with 1:10-11, the change in non-Hebrew chapter numbers suggests more of a break between 1:11 and 2:1, which section break perhaps is supported by the lack of a Hebrew conjunction at the beginning of this verse and the change in verbal mood at the beginning of this verse from what we would call indicative to imperative. (Compare Keil-Delitzsch, however, who sees the close connection between this verse and the preceding verse. Golden takes what we have as 1:10-11 with what we have numbered as 2:13.) “Say” here is a second-person masculine plural imperative, as is “Plead” in 2:2, though admittedly the tone and indirect-object of the imperative change there. Keil-Delitzsch quotes Hengstenberg and say Hosea “sees the favoured nation of the Lord (in spirit) before him, and calls upon its members to accost one another joyfully with the new name which had been given to them by God”. Laetsch remarks, “In true brotherliness shall all the members of God’s people acknowledge one another as children of the one Father, all having experienced the same compassion.” Roehrs-Franzmann comments, “The people are told to greet one another with the terms that express the end of God’s judgment and the renewal of His grace; thus they express their newfound unity in a common confession in praise of the mercy of their God.” *TLSB* comments, “Hosea calls for his message to be heard by all Israel, recalling not only a common lineage through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but esp[ecially] God’s constant blessing and favor.” Of course, God’s prophecy through Hosea at this point also relates to Gomer’s children whose names are reversed. “*You are my people*” ... “*You have received mercy*”: As *CSSB* notes, “The negatives associated with the names of Hosea’s children...are dropped”. The declaration “You are my people” essentially was made in 1:10 with “Children of the living God”. Note that the sequence of the reversed name phrases in this verse corresponds not to the birth order of the daughter and second-son but to the corresponding sequence of brothers and sisters as mentioned in this verse. *TLSB* comments, “God’s promise, even before Israel promises to change (cf Eph 2:13). Wordplay of the names of Hosea’s children (Not My People and No Mercy) Hosea artfully emphasizes God’s promise to show mercy and restore His people. Cf. 1 Pt 2:10.” Jezreel, the name of the first-son, is arguably mentioned in 1:11 (confer Laetsch, who says the names are referred to in a manner which shows that every trace of wrath and punishment is gone.”. *GWfT* notes that Judah and Israel “were never reunited—no geographical, political, or ethnic union ever took place.” Keil-Delitzsch says the prophecy is fulfilled not in the return of the ten tribes from captivity, even as the Bible refers to only portions of two tribes returning, but in the time of the Messiah’s ruling over Jews and Gentiles, as noted earlier with reference to Romans 11:25-26 and 1 Peter 2:10. Keil-Delitzsch comments, “Through its apostasy from God, Israel had become like the Gentiles, and had fallen from the covenant of grace with the Lord. Consequently, the re-adoption of the Israelites as children of God was a practical proof that God had also adopted the Gentiles world as His children.” And, Keil-Delitzsch refers to the rites of Circumcision and Passover, as we would point to Baptism and the Lord’s Supper for Abraham’s spiritual children.

What are you taking home from the prophecy considered tonight?

Perhaps worth repeating from last week is the following portion of *TLSB's* Law and Gospel Application Note for Hosea 1:2-11 that seems to be relevant to 1:10-11, "Through Hosea's ministry, God shows mercy, pledging to gather, restore and lead His people into a better future." (*TLSB's* Law and Gospel Application Note for Hosea 2:1-13 does not seem to be as applicable to 2:1 as to 2:2-13.)

Kretzmann concludes his treatment of 1:1-2:1 by saying, "No matter how far a person has fallen away from the truth of God's Word, there is always mercy for Him through the redemption of Christ, if he but returns in true sorrow over his sins and accepts the offered deliverance." (We might add the Holy Spirit's work in making that happen!)

Next time, July 29, Hosea 2:2-15

Closing Prayer & Benediction