

## HOSEA'S MESSAGE FOR US

# Understanding God's Love

### THE LORD'S HEART (Chapter 7 and 8)

**T**hese two chapters reveal that, even though the Lord is going to punish unfaithful Israel, in His heart is the desire to bless them. He did not want their relationship to break down. It was not His preference to destroy them. His heart wanted good things for them. The words of Hosea here remind us somewhat of the prophet Jeremiah's record:

*"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will harken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:11-13)*

This is an important aspect of God's love! He wants good for us. When He must deal harshly with us, it is not because He delights in it. In Ezekiel 18 we read *"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? . . . Cast away from you all your transgressions . . . for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye"* (vs. 23, 31, 32).

**Notice five things** the Lord says in chapters 7 and 8 about what he really delights in doing for His people:

1. *"I would have healed Israel"* (7:1).
2. *"I have redeemed them"* (7:13).
3. *"I have bound and strengthened their arms"* (7:15).
4. *"Now will I gather them"* (8:10).
5. *"I have written to him the great things of my law"* (8:12).

In the latter days, God will get to do all of these things for Israel, but not now in the time of their rebellion and unbelief.

**Notice the sadness** in Chapter 7 as God speaks of His heartbreak over the way His people make it impossible for Him to do what He would do!

1. Just when He would have done what was promised in 6:1, they went back to sin (7:1-

- 6).
2. Even when trouble came, they refused to turn back to the Lord or even to pray for His help (7:7-14).
3. When He helped them, they remained rebellious in their hearts (7:15-16).

**Notice the anticipation** in Chapter 8 as God looks forward to the day when He can bless Israel.

1. He looks forward to their repentance (8:1-2).
2. He looks forward to re-gathering them in the Holy Land (8:3-10).

**In these words** expressing goodwill, we see the heart of God! Look at these other scriptures that reveal this same aspect of His love:

*“Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt harken unto me . . . I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up into their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had harkened into me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies . . . The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him . . . He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat . . .”* (Psalm 81:8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16).

*“O Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not!”* (Matthew 23:37).

*“The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* (II Peter 3:9)

God wants to save every soul. God wants to restore every backslider. God wants to bless every man. God wants to meet every need. It is only our sin that prevents Him from doing what He really wants to do. He must be just as well as loving in order to be God! But if we would repent, He could do so much for every one of us!

**What kept the Israelites** from having the blessing God really wanted to give them? These two chapters reveal five things.

### **Dishonesty with God**

Hosea 7:1 says, *“They commit falsehood.”* They pretended repentance (Remember Chapter 6) but they went on with their *“wickedness.”* Their devotion to the Lord was phoney and their pretense prevented true blessing. You can fool men, but you cannot fool God. You can make people believe you love God, but the Lord knows the truth. You can fake your way into having the approval of Christians, but you cannot fake your way into having God’s blessing! Honesty before men is very important. Honesty to yourself is

even more important. But honesty to God is of highest importance. Don't lie to God. Confess your sins. Express your weakness and unbelief. Ask for help. Stop pretending. Be real with God.

### **Stubbornness with God**

According to Hosea 7:10, Israel was too proud to return to God. Stubbornness before God is usually caused by pride. If you won't take God's way for forgiveness and restoration, you can never know His blessing again. How foolish to be so stubborn that you refuse to repent. You are the loser! Don't fight the moving of God's Spirit upon your life. Confess and forsake your sins. Come back to God! Don't let stubbornness prevent God's blessing on your life!

### **Fleeing from God**

In Hosea 7:13 God says, *"They have fled from me."* Some people flee from God. They don't want to think about Him. They don't want to hear about Him. They are afraid to acknowledge His dealings with them. They stay away from church, usually. They go deeper and deeper into sin. Somehow they are afraid to give their lives over to God. But, friend, there is no danger in giving your life to the One Who loves you the most. He will do you good, not evil. He cares for you, and intends to bless you. Why won't you let Him?

### **Sinning against God**

Hosea 8:1 says, *"They have transgressed my covenant."* In so doing, Israel *"cast off the thing that is good"* (8:2). When we sin, we forfeit God's blessing (See Psalm 66:18). Of course, when we confess the sin, we will be forgiven and have His favor back (I John 1:9). Doing right has more to do with having God's blessing than anything other than believing on Christ. Sin not; but when you do sin, seek forgiveness (Note I John 2:1).

### **Ignoring God's Word**

Hosea 8:12 says that the people counted the written Word of God *"as a strange thing."* They professed not to understand it, so they neglected it, and ignored it. Ignoring the Word of God will keep God's blessings away (Read Proverbs 28:9). Faith in an obedience to God's Word is the basis of God's blessing on us. You can't stay away from the Bible and look for the Lord to bless your life (Look at John 15:7). Don't make the same excuse that Israel did—that you can't understand the Bible. Most of what it says is very clear to anyone, no matter what "version" they read! If you just follow what you understand, God can bless you! Away with excuses! Get back to God's Word, and get back to God's blessing.

#### **Weekly Verse to Memorize:**

*"Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up."* (Hosea 6:1)