

## Week 11. The Prophets and the Exile. Class Notes

### [A] THE COVENANTS – A BRIEF RECAP

**Noahic Covenant** - God made with Noah and descendants [so all post-Flood humanity] (Gen 9:9); with the animal kingdom (Gen 9:11); and with the earth = creation (Gen 9:13).

**Abrahamic Covenant** (Gen 15; 17) - God made with Abraham, his descendants, with the intention of blessing all nations (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; etc).

**Mosaic Covenant** - God made with Israel; sealed at Mt Sinai (Ex 24:8).

**Davidic Covenant** – God made with Davidic line of kings (2 Sam 7; Ps 89).

### [B] ISRAEL'S HISTORY – THE OUTWORKING OF THE MOSAIC COVENANT

From Exodus onwards much of OT is taken up with the history of the outworking of the Mosaic Covenant. In the **Former Prophets** (Joshua – 2 Kings) Israel's faithfulness led to blessing; but more often her rebellion, unfaithfulness and disobedience led to chastisement.

Similarly in the **Writing Prophets**, although time for repentance was running out; the prophets begin to intimate the imminent loss of covenant privileges: the Land, the Temple and its worship; the Monarchy; etc. Today look at Hosea an 8<sup>th</sup> century prophet to Northern Kingdom. Remember covenant **metaphors**: (i) King-Servant; (ii) Shepherd-Sheep; (iii) Father-Son/Child; and (iv) Bridegroom-Bride/ Husband-Wife.

### [C] HOSEA 1-3

Father-Child metaphor used; but especially Bridegroom-Bride/ Husband-Wife relationship. Each of the first three chapters follows a similar pattern: (a) Judgement; (b) Hope and Salvation. Turning points: 1:10; 2:14; and 3:5.

#### [1] CHAPTER 1 (which really extends to the end of 2:1)

##### (a) A Message of Judgement through Hosea's Wife and Children (1:2-9)

Hosea's call – to take (v 2) 'an adulterous wife' and 'children of unfaithfulness/ adultery'; intended parallel between behaviour of Hosea's wife and that of Israel; and also between the behaviour of Hosea's children and that of the Israelites.

'**Prophetic actions/ symbolism**' – 'visible messages' from God to his people, e.g., Jer 13:1-11; Ezek 5:1-5; Is. 20. In Hosea's case the whole of his family life was a visible illustration of God's message to his unfaithful covenant people.

**Jezreel** (vv 3-5) means 'God sows/ scatters' (see 2:23); a reminder of a blood-bath (2 Kgs 9-10). Israel called to account. They will experience military defeat 'in the Valley of Jezreel'.

**Lo-Ruhamah** (vv 6-7). No reference to any part played by Hosea. Has Gomer been unfaithful? 'Lo-Ruhamah' = 'Not-Pitied'/ 'Not-Loved'. The name indicate coolness with which

Hosea viewed the child? God's patience with Israel running out. [Hope lies with Judah, v 7]

**Lo-Ammi** (vv 8-9) = 'Not-My-People'. Gomer's unfaithfulness again? Covenant relationship now at an end. Lev 26:12 reversed. **YET**, at v 10, the mood changes; judgement reversed.

**(b) A Message of Salvation beyond Judgment. Reversed Symbolism. 1:10-2:1**

'like the sand on the sea-shore' - promises of Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 22:17 and 32:13) – basis for hope – a new Exodus (v 11) they will '*come up out of the land*'. Israel will be 'sons of the living God' (v 10): Father-Son covenant relationship (see Ex 4:22f). Reunion too.

**[2] CHAPTER 2 (vv 2-23)**

Hosea's family recede into background, the Lord's family comes to the fore. Yet, some hints of relevance to Hosea's family: v 4: 'I will not show my love/ pity to her children' – reminds of Lo-Ruhamah (2:6); v 5: 'Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace' – could fit with conception of Gomer's second and third children in ch 1.

**(a) Judgement**

**(i) Mother Israel Rebuked for Unfaithfulness; Called to Repentance (vv 2-4)**

Children and mother represent Israel. Israel the Mother who produces each new generation of children/ Israelites. Mother is rebuked for unfaithfulness. She's now separated from her husband (v 2). Call to repentance (v 2). Failure to repent -> humiliation and loss of blessings (vv 3-4). The Lord would no longer provide for his wife (see Ex 21:10).

**Metaphor of land** dependent on God-given rain to 'clothe' the fields; Israel preferred Baals.

**(ii) Increasingly Severe Levels of Chastisement and Judgement (vv 5-13)**

Various chastisements. Yahweh withdraws the harvests (v 9); related harvest festivals to cease (v 11) – means an end to temple worship. Israel cannot but expect judgement to fall – as, of course, it did!

**(b) Salvation**

**(i) The Logic of Divine Grace. Romance Blossoms (vv 14-17)**

**No change of heart on Israel's part is mentioned; no repentance** – all of grace.

Wilderness transformed into the setting for some very tender romance. Valley of Achor/ Trouble (Josh 7) becomes 'a door of hope'. V 16 - reversal of v 2.

**(ii) The Land Transformed. A New Age Dawns. Blessings Restored. Permanent Marriage (vv 18-23)**

**New marriage** (vv 19-20; cf v 16): 'righteousness, justice, love, compassion, faithfulness' – God's dowry to Israel. What she lacks; he will provide.

Name changes on marriage: Jezreel = 'God sows'; Lo-Ruhamah becomes Ruhamah/ Loved/ Pitied; Lo-Ammi becomes 'Ammi'/ 'My People'.