

Bible Study, Series 3, Week 2

Personal Bible Study

Day: 1

Read: Hosea 2: 1-3

Verse 1: "Accuse her" looks like it is a contradiction to the fifth commandment. This is not about family relationships though; it is used metaphorical where God is bringing a lawsuit against Israel by calling individual witnesses to accuse Israel.

"She's no longer my wife. I'm no longer her husband" the relationship between God and His nation are put in terms of a broken marriage.

Verse 2: " I'll rip off her clothes and expose her, naked as a newborn" This points to the Old East. When a man accused his wife of infidelity he had to remove her clothes and put her in front of the judges naked. Israel, like and unfaithful wife, has to be put naked in front of the Big Judge, God.

Question for personal study:

1. What did Israel have to do to return to God?
2. What will God's punishment be if they did not go back?
3. What is the purpose of the accusation against Israel: to destroy her or to give her another chance? Take special note of the "If she refuses" in verse 2 and motivate your answer.
4. Name a few different ways in which God still warns us today before He punishes us?

Personal application:

1. What has become clear to you concerning your relationship with God?
2. What are the ways in which you can show today that you are taking God's warnings to heart?
3. Pray for the strength to be obedient.

For the evening:

1. What did you do with today's assignment?
2. If you were able to do it, thank God for it. Ask God to protect you from arrogance.
3. If you failed, confess it and ask God to forgive you.
4. Try and find out why you failed and ask God for the strength to try again.
5. Read 1 John 1: 5-10

Day: 2

Read: Hosea 2: 4-8

Verse 5: "I'm off to see my lovers" the Baals that were the gods of nature, they were worshipped because they were believed to be the suppliers of the necessary things to stay alive such as food and water, clothing and more. ("They'll wine and dine me, Dress and caress me, perfume and adorn me!")

Verse 6: A way of protecting live stock, protect them from the wild animals and keeping them from breaking out. Keep her from her plans to go from God to the Baals.

Verse 7: "to my husband" God. It was against the law to return to your previous husband. It shows something of God's mercy.

Questions for personal study:

1. Have a look at verse 5 and 8 and point out what the Israelites real sin was.
2. What or who is often placed in the position of provider in the place of God these days?
3. On what was God's punishment targeted?
4. What does it tell you of God's love for sinners?

Personal application:

1. What struck you in today's piece?
2. How are you going to answer God in a practical way?
3. Pray.

For the evening:

1. Did you manage to make your answer come true? In which way? Thank God for it.
2. If nothing of it could come true in your way of life today, what was the reason? What kept you?
3. Read Exodus 19: 1-13

Day: 3

Read: Hosea 2: 9-13

Questions for personal study:

1. Summarize the punishment in your own words.
2. What light does Psalm 32: 3-4 shed on the consequences of sin in a person's life?

Personal application:

1. What can you do today to make sure that God does not have to punish you as well today?

2. Pray for strength.

For the evening:

1. Read Psalm 32
2. Take time to think about all you have done today and thank God for staying with you all day long.

Day: 4

Read: Hosea 2: 14-16

God's method of winning back the people are changing now. He offers love and mercy and a new opportunity. The metaphor of comparing God (as the husband) and people (as the wife) is built out further here.

Verse 14: "I'm taking her back out into the wilderness" God wants to separate His nation geographically from the Baals. Exile is being declared. It thinks back to the exodus from Egypt when the nation had to make a new beginning.

Verse 15: "valley of Achor" Probably a valley west of the Dead Sea. It has a memory of the sin of Achan (Joshua 7: 26) that made it difficult for Israel to enter the promised land any further.

Verse 16: Baal, the word means owner or master and shows the unfaithfulness of Israel.

Questions for personal study:

1. What is the attitude that God approaches His people with?
2. What does God want to accomplish with removing Israel from their country.
3. What is the difference between "my husband" and "my Baal?"

Personal application:

1. To be able to address God as "my husband" implies a very intimate relationship between you and God. Do you have such a relationship with God?
2. Think of one way in which you are going to live and improve this relationship today.
3. Pray for the strength to do it.

For the evening:

1. Could people see that you love God through your life today?
2. If so, praise God.
3. If not, why not and how can you make it happen?
4. Read 1 John 3: 18-24.

Day: 5

Read: Hosea 2: 18-23

Verse 21: Answer; the opposite of Hosea 1: 6. The answer happens in a chain reaction: God gives rain, the rain wets the earth, the earth produces its fruit etc.

Verse 22: Jezreel; serves as a symbol for the whole nation. Why this term is used is unsure. In Hosea 1: 4 it was used as a conviction, but here it is used as the indicator of the blessing of abundance.

Question for personal study:

1. What does God's salvation means to a person in practice?
2. How does this "healed" relationship to God differ from the "broken" relationship?
3. How must the people answer to God's mercy and blessings? Have a look at verse 20 and 23 as well.

Personal applications:

1. What struck you in today's study? Mention one thing only.
2. Get one practical way that is executable, which you can use to answer God today.
3. Ask God to help you with this.

For the evening:

1. Did you manage to do your task successfully today? How did you do it? Thank God for it.
2. If you did not manage, do not loose hope and become despondent. Confess it and ask God to help you to do better tomorrow. Try and do it again tomorrow.
3. Read Psalm 103 and pray.

Day: 6

Read: Isaiah 40: 27-31

Do revision of what you have done during the week and give special attention to any of your tasks that you have not been able to complete successfully. Make plans to do them in the coming week.

For the evening:

Read Psalm 118 and give special attention to verse 24.

Try and attend a church service during the weekend and write down what struck you in the sermons. Formulate practical ways you can live it.

Group Bible Study

Read: Hosea 2: 15-23

For explanations on specific verses, read the explanation in the personal studies if you cannot remember them that well any more.

"Betroth you to Me" It refers to a close relationship, an intimate relationship.

1. Name and discuss the characteristics of the restored relationship between God and His people.
2. Do these characteristics still stand for such a restored relationship today? Motivate your answer.
3. What is the effect of this restored relationship on a person's relationship to other people and the creation?
4. What are the promises God gives in verse 19-23?
5. How can one gratefully answer God? What are the full consequences of calling God "My God?"
6. What was the ultimate price God had to pay to restore this relationship with us? Read Ephesians 1: 7-8, 1 Peter 1: 18-19 and Hebrews 9: 13-14.
7. How can you, as a group, answer to this in the coming week? (Look at 1 Peter 1: 17 and 22)