

Pursue Mercy and Judgment

Key Verse:
***“Therefore turn
thou to thy God:
keep mercy and
judgment, and
wait on thy God
continually.”
—Hosea 12:6***

Selected Scripture:
***Hosea 11:1-12;
12:1-14***

THE BOOK OF HOSEA IS

written as a symbolic parallel between the prophet's marriage to an unfaithful wife and the covenant which existed between God and Israel. The Lord first spoke to Hosea, saying, “Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord.” (Hos. 1:2) This seemingly strange command only makes sense in the light of its symbolic parallel. God's “marriage” to Israel had begun when the Law Covenant was given at Mount Sinai, and accepted by them. Even at that time, the Israelites were tainted to some degree as a “wife” due to their following after idolatry while in Egypt.—Lev. 17:7; 18:3; Josh. 24:14

Taking a wife who was already guilty of immorality in the past seems to qualify Hosea as an appropriate prophet to speak concerning Israel's marriage to Jehovah. One of the highlights of the prophet's words is that, in spite of her past sins, he professes great love for his wife by declaring that he will seek to recover her. (Hos. 2:14-20; 3:1) Some of the promises attached to her return sound like many found elsewhere in the Scriptures which speak of God's coming kingdom of righteousness, in which all

mankind will be blessed. We note these words of Hosea: “I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.”—Hos. 2:23

Later in his prophecy, Hosea turns his attention directly to the covenant between God and Israel: “Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.” (Hos. 4:1) As Hosea manifested patience and love toward his unfaithful wife, God manifests his love to Israel even more abundantly. The prophet holds out hope for their recovery, showing God’s great longsuffering toward them: “I will go away and return to My place Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.”—Hos. 5:15, *New American Standard Bible*

The words of our Key Verse, “Keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually,” remind us of the familiar words of another faithful prophet of the Lord. Micah wrote: “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic. 6:8) These basic principles would be the key to Israel’s hope of restoration back to favor and covenant blessings from God.

As spiritual Israelites, we should be keenly aware of the importance of our faithfulness to God and to our covenant with him, made possible through his Son, Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul spoke of his heartfelt concern along this line on behalf of his fellow brethren. “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (II Cor. 11:2) May we be faithful to God and to his Son, to whom we are espoused, fully “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”—Rev. 21:2

