

7. HOSEA

760-722 AD

Hosea was the only writing prophet who came from the northern kingdom of Israel and his prophecies were directed to Israel in the latter years of their kingdom. He prophesies their exile and also *their restoration in the latter days*.

The Lord will betroth Israel to himself and they will know Him (Hos 2:14-23)

“In that day” (Hos 2:16, 18, 21) often refers to the end of the age as it does here when the Messiah will return. The Lord will have mercy on Israel and allure her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her, as he did when he saved Israel from slavery in Egypt and brought the nation into the wilderness of Sinai, where he made his covenant with her. He will make a new covenant with Israel when the Messiah returns (Jer 31:31-34). This betrothal is sealed by God giving the bride righteousness, justice, love, and compassion (Hos 2:19). As Jeremiah says, God will put his law within them and write it on their hearts referring to the conversion of Israel as a nation at the Lord’s coming. This passage should not be confused with the Church, also called the Bride of Christ, his prophecies are all about Israel.

“In that day,” Israel will call the Lord her ‘man,’ hence husband, rather than her ‘baal’ (lord), also the name of a Canaanite god they worshiped. The covenant with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things on the ground reflects the restoration of the earth during the millennium and the harmony of man with the animal world (Isa 65:25, Rom 8:21). The bow, the sword, and war will be abolished from the earth during the era of peace (Isa 65:21-22) when the Messiah rules. All Israel will know the Lord. This idyllic picture describes the restoration of the nation of Israel and the restoration of the whole world during the messianic reign.

Earlier returns of Israel to the Lord were only small shadows of the final reality when Israel and Judah are united under one head, the

Messiah. In the new era, the hardening of Israel will cease; they will all be saved (Rom 11:25-27) through faith in Jesus.

In his first epistle, Peter addresses Christians, whom he calls ‘exiles of the dispersion’ and quotes this passage from Hosea, saying, “Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (1 Pet 2:10). Hosea may not have known it, but Gentiles as well as Jews would experience God’s love and mercy. That was a secret that was made known to the apostle Paul by revelation. “Through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus” (Eph 3:6).

Israel will seek the Lord and the Messiah in the last days

Israel will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods. Afterward they will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. In the last days, they will come trembling to the Lord and to his goodness (Hos 3:4-5).

Israel was in exile for over 2500 years without being a nation, without having a temple, their promised land, or Jerusalem, but in accordance with this wonderful promise they have returned to their land and Jerusalem and they will seek the Lord their God and David their king.

The Lord will restore his people Israel to their land for himself (Hos 2:23). He will betroth Israel to himself forever with righteousness, justice, love, compassion, and faithfulness. The nation of Israel will once again call God her husband when the deliverer comes from Zion and turns godlessness away from Jacob (Rom 11:25-32). Christians were at one time disobedient to God but have now received mercy as a result of Jewish disobedience, so that Israel too may receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to Christians. All God’s people will be reconciled to him, through the Messiah.

I will pour out my Spirit on David’s descendants and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and they will recognize my grace and pray to me. They will look on me, the one they pierced, and they will wail for him as one wails for the death of an only child, and they will mourn for him as one mourns the death of a firstborn son (Zech 12:10).