

Lesson 13

Hosea 2:16–17 (Continued)

16 "And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal.' 17 For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more.

The people were now looking to the false god Baal as their lord, as their master, and as their husband. And the promise from God in verse 16 is that that sad situation would not last forever. The day was coming when the people would once again recognize God as their true Lord, their true Master, and their true Husband.

And **when** would this happen? Today, we can ask when **did** this happen. And we have already answered that question. We answered it when we looked at the word "know" in verse 8. And we found the answer in Jeremiah 31.

Jeremiah 31:34 – And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Jeremiah 31 is a prophecy about the church under the new covenant. It is in the church, and only in the church, where everyone knows the Lord. No one in the church looks to Baal, but instead all in the church look only to God.

And when did that happen? That happened in Acts 2 on the day when the gospel was proclaimed and the church was established. And, of course, it still happens today when people obey the gospel of Christ and are added by God to the church of Christ.

And verse 17 completes the thought: "For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more."

And again, that is just another way of expressing the great prophecy of Jeremiah 31:34 – "for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD."

The people of Hosea's day very often had the names of their false gods in their mouths, but a day was coming when that would no longer be true. A day was coming when **all** of God's people – from the least to the greatest – would have only the name of God in their mouth.

And that day came when the church was established – and everyone added by God to the church knows God and remembers no false gods. We see the name of God in the great proclamation of the gospel in Acts 2.

Acts 2:38 – And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

All in the church – from the least to the greatest – know God. We do not have the names of the Baals in our mouths.

Connections?

One more lesson before we leave verses 16–17 – and it a lesson about something that might seem a bit out of place here.

Some of you may remember a TV series from the 1970's called "Connections." In that series, a British science historian named James Burke would show connections between things that most people would have never thought were connected in any way. For example, in one episode he showed a connection between Napoleon's army and the Saturn V rocket!

I have always thought that a similar TV series or book about the Bible would be fascinating. There are many **seemingly** surprising connections in the Bible. Why do I say seemingly? Because those connections should not surprise us at all!

Yes, the Bible was penned by many people over thousands of years, but those words were breathed out by a single author. And so we should not be surprised at all when we find **seemingly** unexpected connections between distant books in the Bible.

As an example, I think we can find an interesting connection between Hosea 2 and a topic that may seem out of place in Hosea – **infant baptism**.

When H.L. Mencken, an avowed atheist, was once asked if he believed in infant baptism, he replied "Believe in it? I've seen it done!"

But, of course, the question is whether Mencken had actually seen the **baptism** of an infant, or had instead just seen the **bath** of an infant. And the Bible tells us that all Mencken could have possibly seen is the latter.

It is impossible to baptize an infant. Why?

Because baptism must be done in the name of Jesus Christ – which means under the authority of Christ and with the approval of Christ so that we are redeemed by Christ and added to the body of Christ. And Romans 6:4 tells us that baptism is a burial. We are buried spiritually dead, and we are raised spiritually alive.

No infant can ever experience a baptism for the simple reason that no infant is spiritually dead. In fact, Jesus tells us in Mark 10:15 that we need to become like a little child before we can enter the kingdom. And that is what we become when we experience a new birth at our baptism (2 Corinthians 5:17).

So what does Hosea have to teach us about infant baptism? Two things, perhaps.

First, verse 15 tells us that the people would become "as in the days of her youth." I think that phrase in Hosea is a prophecy or a promise or a pre-figuring that in this new kingdom, we would become like a little child as Jesus told us in Mark 10:15.

And, of course, a little child does not need to become like a little child for the simple reason that a little child is already a little child! Infants don't need to be saved because infants are not lost! Infants are not **saved**. Infants are **safe**. Infants are sinless.

And for those in the religious world today who would argue that infants are in danger because they have inherited the sin of Adam, I will just let the Apostle Paul clear up that misconception:

Romans 5:12 – Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men **because all sinned**.

Death did not spread to all men because Adam sinned, but rather death spread to all men because all men sinned. But infants have not sinned, and so death has not spread to them. Sin is not inherited (Ezekiel 18:20). I think Hosea 2:15 is a reminder to us of that fact.

But second, verse 16 is also a reminder of the great prophecy from Jeremiah 31:34 that everyone in this new kingdom would know the Lord. There is a knowledge requirement in this kingdom. And that is not something we learn from Hosea only here in verse 16. As we have already seen, knowledge is an important theme in Hosea.

One became a member of the ancient kingdom of Israel by being **physically** born into it. And although such a person may have learned about God later in their life as he grew up, that person

knew nothing about God at his birth. There is no knowledge requirement to being physically born!

As for the church, one becomes a member of that kingdom by being spiritually born into it. That spiritual birth is available only to those who have heard the gospel and learned about God and what God requires of them (as those who heard Peter in Acts 2 knew when they asked their question in Acts 2:37).

What that means is that those in the church ALL know God from the moment of their spiritual birth. That can never be true of an infant. An infant cannot be baptized. It is impossible.

The phrase "infant baptism" belongs on the list of oxymorons along with jumbo shrimp, civil war, plastic glass, and gay marriage. Those things just don't go together. It is impossible to baptize an infant, and we don't even need to leave Hosea 2 to see that!

Hosea 2:18–23

18 And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. 19 And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. 20 I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD. 21 "And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth, 22 and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel, 23 and I will sow her for myself

in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God.'"

This section of Hosea in verses 16–23 is one of the great prophecies of the church that we find in the Old Testament. (Many others are shown on the handout for Lesson 13.)

How do we know that this is a prophecy about the church? We know it because of the evidence. Let's look at that evidence now.

First, the time frame is evidence that we are looking at the church in these verses.

Verse 16 begins with the phrase "in that day." In verse 18, we see the phrase "on that day." And in verse 21 we again see the phrase "in that day."

What day is that day? We looked at that question last week, and we saw that it points to the coming of Christ to give himself for the world as a perfect sacrifice and to proclaim his wonderful gospel.

That time frame is the same time as Acts 2, where the church, the promised eternal kingdom of Christ, was established.

We are not looking at the end of the world here, and we are not looking at the near future of Israel in Hosea's day. Instead, the wonderful promises in Hosea are promises of Christ and the church of Christ.

A big piece of evidence that the prophecies in these verses are directed to the church is that the time frame for the fulfillment of these

prophecies is the same as the time frame in which the church was established.

A second piece of evidence that shows we are looking at the church here is that verses 16–17 and the second half of verse 20 describe a situation in which all of God’s people would know God. That is the same situation that we find in the church.

We talked about this evidence last week and earlier today.

Hosea is describing a time in which all the people of God would know God. That was certainly not true about the people of Israel. They did not know God (verse 8), and they would be destroyed by their lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6).

One of the great prophecies of the church is that those in the church – all of those in the church – would know God. And we see that great prophecy several times in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 11:9 – They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Jeremiah 31:34 – And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Joel 3:17 – So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain.

And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it.

Zechariah 2:11 – And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and **you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.**

And we know that prophecy is fulfilled in the church.

Galatians 4:8 – Formerly, **when you did not know God**, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that **you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God**, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

1 Thessalonians 4:5 – Not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles **who do not know God**.

2 Thessalonians 1:8 – In flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on **those who do not know God** and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Titus 1:16 – They **profess to know God**, but they deny him by their works.

1 John 2:3-4 – And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says **“I know him”** but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

A third piece of evidence that shows we are looking at the church here is that the first half of verse 18 describes a new covenant. And a related fourth piece of evidence that shows we are looking at the church here is that the second

half of verse 18 describes a time of peace and safety.

We will see in a moment why we are considering these two pieces of evidence together.

“I will make for them a covenant on that day.” That phrase from verse 18 is clearly describing a new covenant that was established in the first century. We know it is a new covenant because God says, “I will make” it. And we know it was made in the first century because (as we have seen) the phrase “that day” is referring to the first century.

That much is clear. But after that, things become a bit less clear!

“And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground.”

The new covenant we see here in verse 18 is a new covenant that God makes for his people with the beasts, the birds, and the insects! What does that mean?

For help with that question, let’s look at another great prophecy about the church found in Isaiah 11:6–9.

But before we read verses 6–9 from Isaiah 11, let’s read verses 1–5 of Isaiah 11 so that we can know with certainty the time frame of verses 6–9.

Isaiah 11:1–5 – There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom

and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

Those verses give us the time frame for the prophecy in Isaiah 11, and that time frame is when Jesus came to the earth in the first century. "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse." (Jesse was the father of King David.)

So now let's read the next part of that prophecy from Isaiah 11.

Isaiah 11:6-9 – The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

That prophecy is describing a time of peace and security. How was that fulfilled when Jesus came in the first century?

The answer is that it was fulfilled in the church. The head of the church is the prince of

peace, and those in the church are at peace with God and at peace with each other. Peace between Jew and Gentile had long been a promise from God, and that promise was and is fulfilled in the church. We are at war (2 Corinthians 10:4, 1 Timothy 1:18), but we are not at war with each other or with God.

Ephesians 2:13-17 – But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

And how is that peace described by Isaiah? In several ways.

In Isaiah 2:4, that peace is described as a time when “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.” (And yes, that phrase appears in front of the UN building, and yes, that phrase refers to peace between Jew and Gentile, and, yes, the irony in that is lost on the UN!)

In Isaiah 11:6-9 (which we just read), Isaiah described that peace using the animal kingdom (just like we see here in verse 18) – the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together, the cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down

together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

So, now, what do we have in verse 18? We have a new covenant, we have a first century time frame, we have an end of hostility, and we have peace and safety.

So how was all of that fulfilled? It was all fulfilled in the church. What else but the church involves a new covenant, a first century time frame, an end of hostility, and peace and safety?

Yes, it is odd to think of the new covenant as being made by God for us “with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground.” But is that description any more odd than the description in Isaiah 11? “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat”?

Both Isaiah 11 and Hosea 2 are telling us the same thing about the new covenant – it is a covenant of peace, it is a covenant of reconciliation, it is a covenant of blood. It brings an end to the hostility.

Hebrews 13:20-21 – Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

Colossians 1:19-23 – For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of

his cross. And you, who once were alienated and **hostile** in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now **reconciled** in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, **which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven**, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

I know we have all heard the phrase “church fight,” and I suspect that a few of us have been involved in one. There is nothing more sad than a church fight! Those two words do not go together at all! Jesus shed his blood to make peace in his church! That is what we just read in Colossians 1:20 – “making peace by the blood of his cross.” Our peace came with a price!

And what happens when there is peace in the church? What happens when we are not fighting among ourselves? Church growth is what happens.

Acts 9:31 – So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had **peace** and was being **built up**. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, **it multiplied**.

Our view of the first half of verse 18 is confirmed by the second half of verse 18 – “And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety.” And that is our fourth piece of evidence that shows we are looking at the church.

As we have just seen, Isaiah 2 and Isaiah 11 describe the church as a place of peace, and Ephesians 2 confirms that the church is a place

of peace. And Hosea 2:18 is describing the church the same way.

A fifth piece of evidence that shows we are looking at the church here is that verses 19–20 describe an eternal betrothal.

We have already seen in Hosea how the marriage bond between God and Israel had been broken. We saw it earlier in this same chapter – “for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband” (verse 2).

But later in this same chapter we have the great promise in verse 19 – “I will betroth you to me forever.”

And, again, our time frame for the fulfillment of that great promise is the first century. How did that promise come to pass in the first century?

Ephesians 5:23–32 – For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Revelation 21:2 – And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Revelation 21:9 – And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

That is how the New Testament describes the church. And what does God say in Hosea? He uses the same language.

Hosea 2:19–20 – And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

A sixth piece of evidence that shows we are looking at the church here is that verse 21 describes a situation in which God will do whatever is required to care for his people, provide for his people, and meet every need of his people.

Here is what we read in verses 21–22 (this time from the KJV):

And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.

As an aside, note the difference between the KJV translation of verses 21–22 that we just read and the ESV that we read earlier. In the KJV, God

says, "I will hear," while in the ESV translation God says, "I will answer." Why the difference? The Hebrew word means to pay attention to something (i.e., listen) and, by implication, to respond. Very often in the KJV it is translated "answered," but sometimes the same word is translated "hear" as in Psalm 4:1 - "Hear me when I call." (The ESV translates Psalm 4:1 as "Answer me when I call.")

Back to verses 21-22. What do they mean?

First, note the time frame in verse 21 - "in that day." That is the same day we have been seeing throughout this prophecy. It is the first century when Christ came to die for us, to proclaim his gospel, and to establish his eternal kingdom.

Second, we should note the cosmic terms with which this deliverance is described. God hears the heavens, the heavens hear the earth, and the earth hears the corn, the wine, and the oil. As one commentary says, "God in effect declares that he will move the whole universe to bring this about."

What is the message in this promise? The message here is that in the first century God will move heaven and earth to bless his people in every way possible.

Is that true of the church? Yes!

Acts 2:19-20 - And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to

blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

And when was that “great and magnificent day”? Peter answered that question before he quoted that verse from Joel.

Acts 2:16 – But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel.

This is that! The day when Peter quotes that verse in Acts 2 was “the great and magnificent day” of Joel 2:31! It is the same day that we are reading about here in Hosea 2. But did God really move heaven and earth to bless his church? Yes, he did. We just saw that in Acts 2:19–20, but we also see it elsewhere.

Ephesians 1:3 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

What about that last phrase – “and they shall hear Jezreel”? What does that mean?

Jezreel, as we recall, is the name of Hosea’s first child, whom we met back in Hosea 1:4.

Initially, his name was meant to indicate bloodshed, but in Hosea 1:11 we saw that his name was also meant to indicate blessing. In Hebrew, Jezreel can mean either “God scatters” or “God sows.” The scattering makes us think of bloodshed by the Assyrians, but the sowing makes us think of blessings from God.

It is in that latter sense that the name Jezreel is used here in verse 21 – they shall hear

Jezreel; they shall hear that God is sowing; they shall hear of blessings.

And, of course, that is true of the church. No one has received or could ever receive more blessings from God than those of us in the church have received.

A seventh piece of evidence that shows we are looking at the church here is that verse 23 describes something created by God – not by man.

Verse 23 begins with the phrase, “and I will sow her unto me in the earth.”

At the end of verse 22 we saw that God sows, and here in the next verse we see that God sows people. What does it mean that God sows or plants people?

I think it is a reminder that the church was planted by God!

Matthew 15:13 – Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

Jesus built the church (Matthew 16:18). The church is not man-made (Daniel 2:45). That is why it is described as the church **of Christ**.

And what will happen to man-made churches? Let’s read that last verse again!

Matthew 15:13 – Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

There is only one eternal kingdom, and that one eternal kingdom was planted by God. And that one

eternal kingdom is the one body, which is the one church.

An eighth piece of evidence that shows we are looking at the church here is that both Peter and Paul tell us that the promise in verse 23 is fulfilled in the church.

At the end of verse 23, we read:

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.

We saw something very similar back in Hosea 1.

Hosea 1:10 – Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

These promises are the same – the sad situation of Israel in Hosea's day would not last forever. A day would come, God says, when *Not Loved* would be loved and *Not Mine* would be mine. Everything would be turned around. The parental bond that had been broken would be restored.

And when did this happen?

Although I think we could answer that question even without a time frame, we are given a time frame. We are still in that same day we have been in all along in these verses – we are in the

first century when Jesus came and gave us his wonderful gospel.

This great promise is fulfilled in the church. But don't take my word for it. Listen to Paul and Peter as they point back to the prophecy in Hosea 1 and Hosea 2 and tell us that that it was fulfilled in the church.

Romans 9:22-26 – What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory – even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? As indeed he says in Hosea, “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’” “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”

1 Peter 2:9-10 – But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

For at least those eighth reasons, we know that Hosea 2:16-23 is a great prophecy about the church.