

# Through the Bible

# HOSEA

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruville



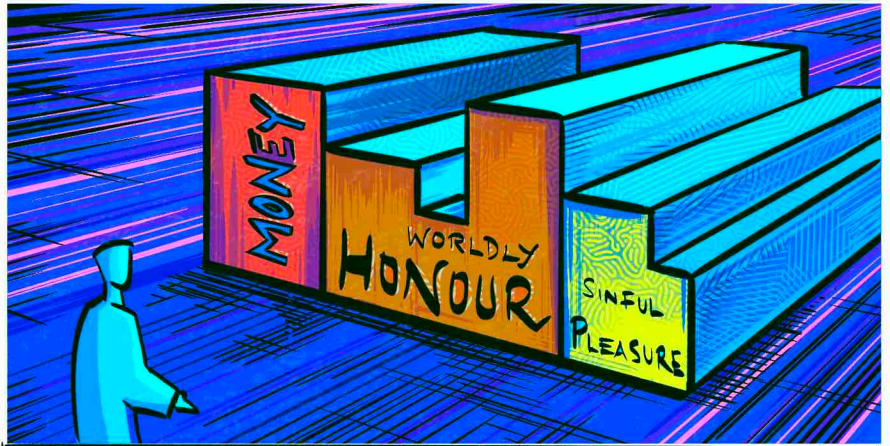
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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

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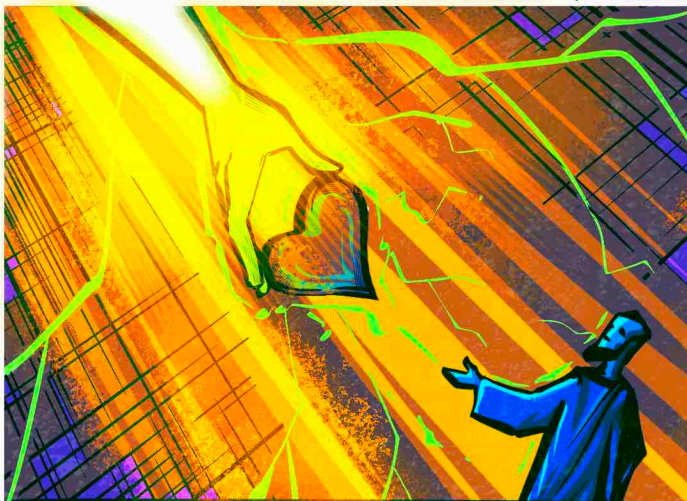
# HOSEA

HOSEA PROPHESED TO THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF **ISRAEL**. THE SUBJECT OF HIS PROPHECY WAS **SPIRITUAL ADULTERY** AND **GOD'S UNCHANGING LOVE**. HIS PROPHECY SHOWS THAT GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS PEOPLE WAS THAT OF A **HUSBAND** WHO KEPT ON **LOVING AN UNFAITHFUL WIFE**.



ISRAEL WAS CALLED THE "**BRIDE OF JEHOVAH**" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND ISRAEL WAS TO BE LIKE A **MARRIAGE** RELATIONSHIP -- JUST LIKE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH **CHRIST** IS TODAY. IF A WIFE LOVES A MAN **OTHER** THAN HER HUSBAND, OR SEEKS TO PLEASE **OTHER** MEN, SHE IS **UNFAITHFUL** AND COULD RIGHTFULLY BE CALLED "**AN ADULTERESS**".

IF WE ARE MARRIED TO CHRIST AND WE LOVE **MONEY**, WE ARE **SPIRITUAL ADULTERESSES**, BECAUSE **MONEY** IS "**ANOTHER MAN**". IF WE LOVE THE **HONOUR** OF THIS **WORLD**, THAT TOO WOULD BE RESPONDING TO "**ANOTHER MAN**" (THE **WORLD**) TRYING TO GAIN OUR **ATTENTION**. IF WE LOVE **SINFUL PLEASURE**, THAT TOO IS A PART OF THE **WORLD**. THAT IS WHY JAMES, SPEAKING TO BELIEVERS, SAYS, "YOU **ADULTERESSES**, DON'T YOU KNOW THAT **FRIENDSHIP** WITH THE **WORLD** IS **ENMITY** WITH **GOD**?" (JAMES 4:4).



HOSEA DEALS WITH THIS VERY IMPORTANT SUBJECT. AND GOD TAUGHT HIM THIS LESSON IN A VERY **PAINFUL** WAY. WHAT WE SEE IN HOSEA, PERHAPS MORE THAN IN ANY OTHER OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET, IS GOD TRYING TO MAKE HIS SERVANT **FEEL** HIS **HEART**. THIS IS THE PRINCIPLE OF **TRUE PROPHETIC** MINISTRY EVEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. WE HAVE TO **FEEL** TOWARDS **GOD'S PEOPLE** THE WAY **GOD FEELS** TOWARDS THEM.

WE HAVE TO LOOK AT **GOD'S PEOPLE** THE WAY **GOD** LOOKS AT THEM. OTHERWISE WE WILL BE JUST **PREACHERS** WHO ARE PREACHING **SOMETHING**, WHICH MAY BE **TRUE**, BUT WITHOUT THE **FEELING** THAT **GOD** HAS TOWARDS HIS PEOPLE. SO **GOD** HAS TO TAKE US THROUGH MANY **PAINFUL TRIALS** IN ORDER TO MAKE US **FEEL** THE WAY HE FEELS TOWARDS PEOPLE, BEFORE WE CAN **EFFECTIVELY MINISTER** TO THEM.

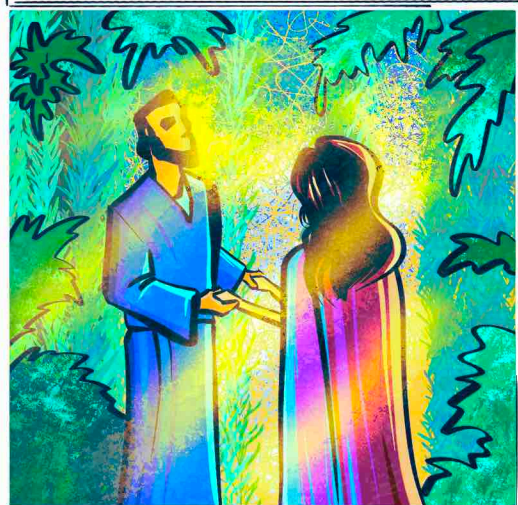




FOR EXAMPLE, IN HOSEA'S TIME, ISRAEL WAS LIKE AN **UNFAITHFUL WIFE**. WHEN SHE WORSHIPPED IDOLS SHE WAS BEING UNFAITHFUL TO THE LORD. THAT WAS PICTURED AS **ADULTERY**. ADULTERY AND IDOLATRY WERE VERY CLOSELY **LINKED** IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.



EVEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, SPIRITUAL ADULTERY IS A FORM OF **IDOLATRY**. IDOLATRY MEANS **WORSHIPPING** SOMETHING **OTHER** THAN THE **TRUE GOD**. IT MAY BE YOUR **BUSINESS**, YOUR **PROPERTY**, YOUR **MONEY**, YOUR **GOOD LOOKS**. IT MAY EVEN BE YOUR **MINISTRY**. ANYTHING THAT TAKES THE PLACE OF **CHRIST** AS NUMBER **ONE** IN YOUR LIFE IS AN **IDOL**. AND AS SOON AS **SOMETHING** HAS TAKEN THE **PLACE** OF **GOD** IN OUR LIVES, WE HAVE BECOME IDOLATERS, SPIRITUAL ADULTERESSES. ALL THE WORDS THAT ARE SPOKEN TO ADULTERESSES AND IDOLATERS WILL APPLY TO **US** AT THAT POINT.



AS HE WENT THROUGH THIS STRUGGLE, GOD TOLD HIM, "NOW YOU CAN UNDERSTAND HOW I LOVE MY PEOPLE. NOW GO AND PREACH TO THEM."



AS A RESULT, EVEN WHEN HOSEA SPOKE STERNLY TO GOD'S PEOPLE, THERE WAS A NOTE OF **COMPASSION** IN HIS MESSAGE OF **HOLINESS**.

THE WAY GOD MADE HOSEA FEEL HIS HEART WAS BY MAKING HIM **MARRY** AN **UNFAITHFUL WIFE**. THAT WAS A **PAINFUL** WAY FOR HOSEA TO LEARN THE TRUTH. WHICH MAN WOULD BE WILLING TO MARRY A GIRL WHO HE **KNOWS**, FROM THE OUTSET, WILL BE **UNFAITHFUL** TO HIM AND WILL COMMIT **ADULTERY** WITH OTHER MEN? IT WAS A **HEAVY PRICE** THAT THESE PROPHETS HAD TO PAY IN ORDER TO BE PROPHETS. WHEN HOSEA'S WIFE WAS UNFAITHFUL TO HIM, HE WAS TOLD TO **KEEP ON** LOVING HER. AT ONE POINT SHE EVEN WENT AND SOLD HERSELF AS A **SLAVE** TO ANOTHER MAN. HOSEA THEN **PAID MONEY** TO **BUY** HER BACK. AND HE STILL **KEPT ON LOVING** HER. BUT EVEN AFTER HE BOUGHT HER BACK, SHE STILL **KEPT ON** COMMITTING ADULTERY.



HOLINESS AND GOD'S **UNCHANGING LOVE**. THESE TWO THEMES WERE THE BURDEN OF ALL THE PROPHETS: **HOLINESS** IN GOD'S PEOPLE AND GOD'S **UNCHANGING LOVE** FOR HIS PEOPLE EVEN WHEN THEY ARE IN SPIRITUAL **ADULTERY** AND GONE **ASTRAY**.

GOD'S DESIRE WAS ALWAYS TO BRING HIS PEOPLE BACK. HE **DISCIPLINES** THEM; BUT THEN HE WANTS TO **BRING THEM BACK** TO HIM AFTER THE DISCIPLINE IS OVER. JEREMIAH SAID, "**AFTER** THE DISCIPLINE IS OVER, GOD WILL BRING YOU BACK." HOSEA SAID THE SAME THING. **HOLINESS** IS WHAT GOD DEMANDS. WHEN HE DOESN'T FIND THAT IN YOU, HE WILL **DISCIPLINE** YOU. BUT HIS LOVE IS SO GREAT THAT HE WILL THEN SPEAK **TENDERLY** TO YOU AND BRING YOU BACK INTO **FELLOWSHIP** WITH HIM, SAYING, "**HOW CAN I GIVE YOU UP? HOW CAN I LET YOU GO? HOW CAN I FORSAKE YOU? MY HEART CRIES OUT WITHIN ME. HOW I LONG TO HELP YOU!**" (HOSEA 11:8) . THIS IS HOW **TRUE PROPHETIC MINISTRY** SHOULD FUNCTION IN THE CHURCH TOO.





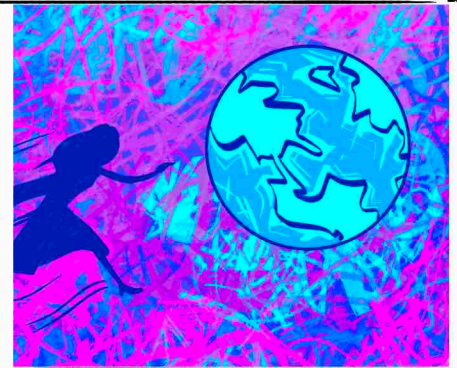
AND SO GOD ALLOWED HOSEA TO **SUFFER**. HE HAS TO TAKE US THROUGH **DEEP SUFFERING** IN ORDER TO GET US TO **FEEL HIS HEART**. READ THE SUFFERING THAT THE APOSTLE **PAUL** WENT THROUGH. THE PURPOSE OF ALL THAT WAS TO MAKE PAUL LIVE **CLOSE** TO GOD'S HEART SO THAT HE COULD **LISTEN** TO GOD'S **HEARTBEAT** AND FEEL AS GOD FELT. WHEN WE GO THROUGH TRIALS, WE COME VERY CLOSE TO GOD'S HEART. WE HEAR HIS HEARTBEAT AND **THEN** SPEAK TO PEOPLE.



THERE IS A LOT OF **DIFFERENCE** BETWEEN SUCH A PREACHER AND A MAN WHO HAS JUST ACQUIRED A LOT OF KNOWLEDGE BY READING BOOKS AND BY LISTENING TO SERMONS. EVERY **TRUE** SERVANT OF GOD HAS GONE THROUGH **HARD** TRIALS THAT OTHERS KNOW **NOTHING** ABOUT



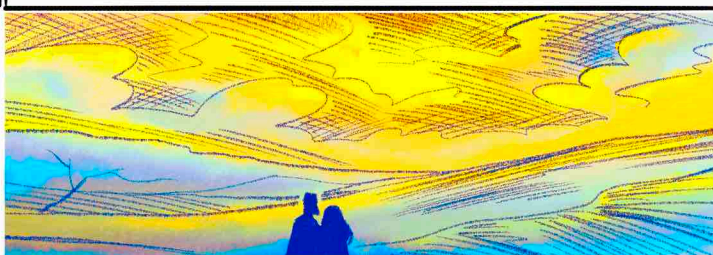
YOU HAVE TO **SUFFER** IF YOU WANT TO HAVE A **MINISTRY** FROM GOD. PAUL SAID, "I HAVE GONE THROUGH MANY **TRIALS** -- AND THE **STRENGTH** I RECEIVED FROM GOD IN THAT **SUFFERING** IS WHAT I CAN NOW **PASS** ON TO OTHER PEOPLE" (2 CORINTHIANS 1:4). WITHOUT SUCH **EXPERIENCES**, WE WILL ONLY PASS ON **DEAD KNOWLEDGE** TO PEOPLE.



HOSEA'S **WIFE** WENT AWAY FROM HIM IN THE SAME WAY THAT **ISRAEL** WENT AWAY FROM GOD. BUT WHEN ISRAEL WAS IN **TROUBLE**, SHE SOUGHT GOD **AGAIN**. MOST PEOPLE **SEEK** GOD ONLY WHEN THEY ARE IN **TROUBLE**. WHEN THEY FIND THAT **MONEY** DOESN'T SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS AND THAT THE **PEOPLE** OF THE **WORLD** LET THEM **DOWN**, THEN THEY TURN BACK TO GOD AND SEEK HIS **HELP**. AND **GOD** HELPS **THEM**.

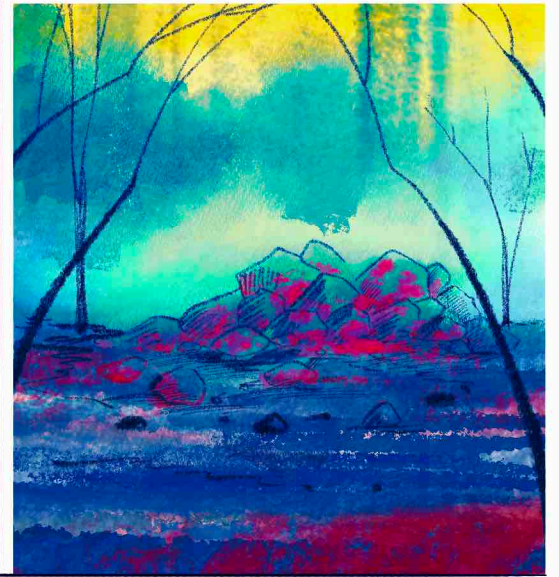


THE LORD SAID, "SHE DOES NOT KNOW THAT IT WAS **I** WHO GAVE HER THE **GRAIN**, THE NEW **WINE** AND THE **OIL**, AND **LAVISHED** ON HER **SILVER** AND **GOLD**, WHICH THEY USED FOR **BAAL**" (2:8). THIS VERSE CAN APPLY TO US TOO. DO WE REALISE THAT **EVERYTHING** WE HAVE HAS COME FROM **GOD**? DO WE REALISE THAT YOUR **HEALTH** IS GOD'S **GIFT**? THE **MONEY** WE HAVE IS GOD'S **GIFT**. THE **INTELLIGENCE** WE HAVE IS GOD'S **GIFT**. BUT ISRAEL USED THEIR **GOLD** AND **SILVER** TO MAKE **IDOLS** TO **BAAL**. DO WE USE WHAT **GOD** HAS GIVEN US FOR THIS **WORLD** AND ITS **PLEASURES**? IF YOU **RECOGNISE** THAT **EVERYTHING** IS **GOD'S**, THEN YOU WILL **GIVE** IT ALL BACK TO HIM AND SAY, "LORD, YOU GAVE ME ALL THESE **GIFTS** AND I WANT TO USE THEM ALL FOR YOUR **KINGDOM**."



BUT IN SPITE OF ISRAEL BEING SO **UNFAITHFUL**, THE LORD SAYS, "I WILL **WIN** HER BACK. I WILL **LEAD** HER INTO THE **DESERT**. I WILL MAKE THINGS **DRY** AND **BARREN** IN HER LIFE. AND WHEN EVERYTHING IS **DRY** AND **BARREN** SHE WILL TURN TO **ME**. THEN I WILL SPEAK **TENDERLY** TO HER THERE" (2:14). NO HUSBAND WILL SPEAK SO **TENDERLY** TO SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN SO **TOTALLY UNFAITHFUL** TO HIM.





BUT THE LORD SAYS, "I WILL SPEAK **TENDERLY** AND I WILL **CONTINUE** TO GIVE HER **GIFTS**. I WILL **RETURN** HER VINEYARDS TO HER. I WILL **TRANSFORM** THE VALLEY OF **ACHOR** INTO A GATEWAY OF **HOPE**" (2:14, 15). ACHOR WAS THE PLACE WHERE **ACHAN** HAD BEEN PUT TO **DEATH** FOR HIS SIN OF STEALING WHAT WAS THE LORD'S IN JERICO (JOSHUA 7). IT WAS A PLACE OF **JUDGEMENT** FOR SIN. AND NOW THE LORD SAYS, "I AM GOING TO MAKE THE PLACE OF JUDGEMENT A DOOR OF **HOPE** FOR YOU. EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE **FAILED**, AND JUDGEMENT AND **CHASTENING** HAVE COME UPON YOU BECAUSE OF THAT, YET NOW BECAUSE YOU HAVE **CONFESSED** YOUR **SIN**, I WILL OPEN A DOOR OF HOPE FOR YOU IN THIS VERY PLACE SO THAT SOMETHING **BEAUTIFUL** WILL COME FORTH FROM YOUR LIFE IN THE COMING DAYS."



THEN THE LORD GOES ON TO SAY "IN THAT COMING DAY, YOU WILL CALL ME, 'MY **HUSBAND**' AND NOT 'MY **MASTER**'" (HOSEA 2:16). IN THE **OLD COVENANT** THEY COULD NOT KNOW THE TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP THAT WE CAN HAVE WITH THE LORD TODAY AS **HUSBAND** AND **WIFE**. THIS RELATIONSHIP IS WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS INTO OUR LIVES. JUST AS ABRAHAM'S SERVANT BROUGHT **REBECCA** TO **ISAAC**, THE **HOLY SPIRIT** BRINGS **US** TO **JESUS** SO THAT WE CAN BE **MARRIED** TO HIM. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THEY KNEW HIM AS **MASTER**. NOW HE SAYS, "YOU WON'T CALL ME, 'MASTER' ANY MORE. YOU WILL CALL ME, 'HUSBAND.'"



FOR MANY PEOPLE THEIR SERVICE FOR THE LORD IS **BORING** AND **HEAVY** BECAUSE IT IS LIKE WORKING FOR A **DIFFICULT BOSS** JUST FOR THE SAKE OF THE **SALARY**. BUT A **WIFE** DOES NOT SERVE HER **HUSBAND** FOR A **SALARY**. A BOSS WILL NOT **SHARE** HIS PERSONAL WEALTH WITH HIS EMPLOYEE, BUT A **HUSBAND** DOES.

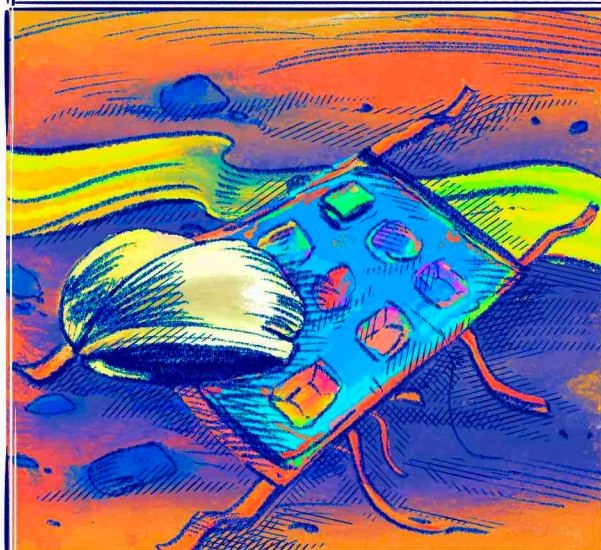


HOSEA'S WIFE SOLD HERSELF AS A **SLAVE**. BUT HOSEA "**BOUGHT** HER BACK FOR FIFTEEN PIECES OF SILVER AND FIVE BUSHELS OF BARLEY AND A MEASURE OF WINE" (3:2) SINCE ISRAEL WAS ABOUT TO GO INTO CAPTIVITY SOON, HOSEA TOLD HIS WIFE THAT DURING THAT TIME SHE WOULD NOT HAVE SEX WITH ANY MAN AND NOT EVEN WITH HIM (3:3). THIS WAS TO **ILLUSTRATE** THAT EVEN THOUGH GOD HAD **NOT** FORSAKEN ISRAEL, YET HE WOULD KEEP ISRAEL **AWAY** FROM HIM FOR A **PERIOD** OF TIME. BUT GOD WOULD **ULTIMATELY** BRING HIS PEOPLE **BACK** TO HIM.





FIRST OF ALL HOSEA SAID, "THIS IS THE CASE THAT THE LORD HAS AGAINST HIS PEOPLE" (4:1). AND THEN LIKE ALL THE PROPHETS, HE STARTED WITH THE **LEADERS**. MANY YEARS AGO I WAS INVITED AS A SPECIAL SPEAKER TO A LARGE DENOMINATIONAL **CONVENTION** IN INDIA. THERE WERE ABOUT **12,000** PEOPLE THERE. WHEN I GOT UP TO SPEAK I SAID, "THE BURDEN THE LORD HAS GIVEN ME IS NOT TO SPEAK TO ALL OF YOU THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE SITTING IN FRONT OF ME, BUT TO ALL THE **PASTORS** WHO ARE SITTING **BEHIND** ME ON THE **PLATFORM** AND IN THE AUDIENCE." AND I SPOKE ON BEING **RIGHTEOUS** IN **MONEY** MATTERS. I HAD BEEN INVITED TO SPEAK FOR **THREE** DAYS, BUT AFTER **TWO** DAYS, THEY TOLD ME, "WE **DON'T** WANT YOU TO **SPEAK** ANY MORE." SO I **SAT** DOWN **QUIETLY** ON THE THIRD DAY. **GOD** ALWAYS **STARTS** WITH THE **LEADERS**. **IT IS BECAUSE THE LEADERS GO ASTRAY THAT THE PEOPLE GO ASTRAY.**



GOD'S PEOPLE **SUFFER** EVEN TODAY BECAUSE THEIR **LEADERS** ARE **UNGODLY** AND DON'T KNOW GOD. SO HOSEA SPOKE TO THE **PRIESTS** FIRST (4:4). IF YOU'RE A **LEADER**, DON'T POINT YOUR FINGER AT THE **CONGREGATION** AND SAY, "WHAT TO DO? THE PEOPLE IN MY CHURCH ARE SO **BAD**." THE **LORD** SAYS TO YOU, "MY COMPLAINT IS WITH YOU **LEADERS**. YOU WILL STUMBLE IN BROAD **DAYLIGHT**, AND SO WILL ALL THE **FALSE** **PROPHETS** (4:5).

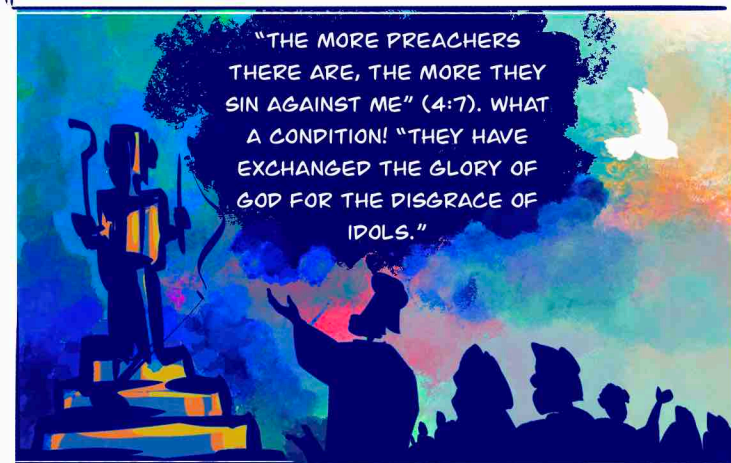


CAN WE TALK, SON?



SORRY, I'M BUSY PREPARING MY SERMON

"MY PEOPLE ARE BEING **DESTROYED** BECAUSE THEY DON'T **KNOW** ME" (4:6). WHY ARE GOD'S PEOPLE DESTROYED? IT IS **NOT** BECAUSE THEY DON'T **KNOW** THE **BIBLE**. THEY DON'T KNOW **GOD**. THE LORD SAYS, "THE FAULT IS **YOURS**, YOU **PRIESTS**, BECAUSE YOU **DON'T** KNOW ME. SO I **REFUSE** TO RECOGNISE ALL OF YOU AS **PRIESTS** ANY MORE. I AM **REMOVING** THE **ANOINTING** FROM YOUR LIFE.



"THE MORE PREACHERS THERE ARE, THE MORE THEY SIN AGAINST ME" (4:7). WHAT A CONDITION! "THEY HAVE EXCHANGED THE GLORY OF GOD FOR THE DISGRACE OF **IDOLS**."

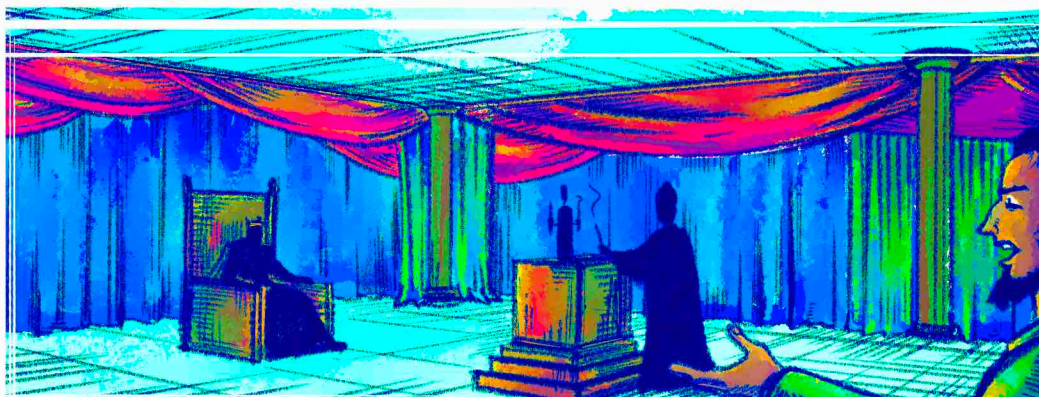
MANY PREACHERS HAVE LOST THE **ANOINTING** OF GOD TODAY BECAUSE THEY WORSHIPPED THE **IDOL** OF **MONEY**. ONCE UPON A TIME THEY WERE **POORER** BUT HAD THE **ANOINTING** OF GOD. TODAY THEY ARE **RICHER** BUT HAVE **LOST** THAT **ANOINTING**. THEY HAVE **EXCHANGED** THE GLORY OF GOD FOR **IDOLS**.



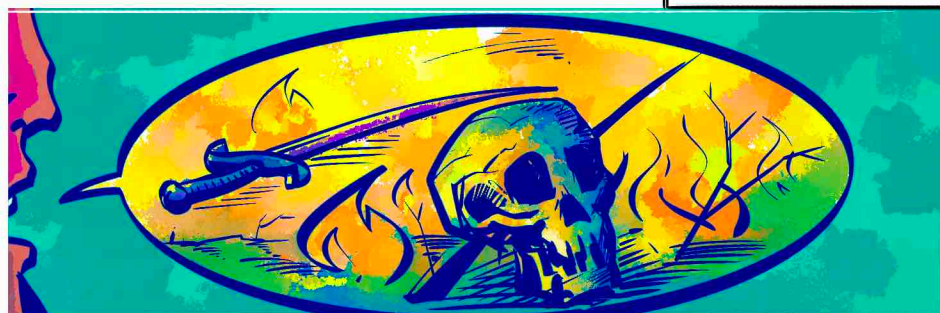
GOD'S LAW HAD PERMITTED THE **PRIESTS** TO **EAT** A PART OF THE **SIN** AND GUILT OFFERINGS THAT THE PEOPLE BROUGHT (LEVITICUS 6:25, 26; 7:5--7). SO THE **PRIESTS** WERE **HAPPY** WHEN THE PEOPLE SINNED, BECAUSE THE **MORE** THE PEOPLE SINNED, THE **MORE** **MEAT** THE **PRIESTS** GOT IN THEIR **CURRY**!! (4:8 )



"HEAR THIS, YOU PRIESTS AND ALL OF ISRAEL'S **LEADERS!** LISTEN, ALL YOU MEN OF THE **ROYAL** FAMILY! THESE WORDS OF JUDGMENT ARE FOR YOU: YOU ARE DOOMED! FOR YOU HAVE LED THE PEOPLE INTO A SNARE BY WORSHIPING IDOLS... BUT NEVER FORGET -- I WILL SETTLE WITH ALL OF YOU FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE. ONE THING IS CERTAIN, WHEN YOUR DAY OF PUNISHMENT COMES, YOU WILL BECOME A HEAP OF RUBBLE. THE LEADERS OF JUDAH HAVE BECOME AS BAD AS THIEVES. SO I WILL POUR MY ANGER DOWN ON THEM LIKE A **WATERFALL.**" (5:1, 2, 9, 10). AGAIN IT IS TO THE LEADERS THAT GOD SPEAKS OF JUDGEMENT FIRST, BECAUSE THEY WERE PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR ISRAEL'S **FAILURES.** EVEN TODAY, CHRISTIANS FAIL BECAUSE THEIR **LEADERS** HAVE FAILED **FIRST.**



WHEN ISRAEL HEARD HOSEA'S MESSAGE, THEY SAID THEY WANTED TO **TURN BACK** TO THE LORD -- JUST LIKE MANY DO TODAY WHEN THEY HEAR A **POWERFUL** WORD OF **JUDGEMENT.** MANY PREACHERS WOULD HAVE BEEN EXCITED TO HEAR SUCH WORDS AND **IMAGINED** THAT THIS WAS A **GENUINE** REPENTANCE THAT WOULD LEAD TO **REVIVAL.** BUT THE **LORD'S** RESPONSE WAS **DIFFERENT.** HE WAS **NOT** FOOLED. HE KNEW THAT THIS WAS ONLY A **SHALLOW, EMOTIONAL** TURNING THAT WOULD **VANISH** LIKE THE **MORNING DEW** IN **NO TIME** AT ALL (6:4).



IN 6:5, GOD DESCRIBES **TRUE** PROPHETIC MINISTRY: "I SENT MY **PROPHETS** TO **CUT** YOU TO **PIECES.** I HAVE **SLAUGHTERED** YOU WITH MY **WORDS,** **THREATENING** YOU WITH **DEATH.**" IT'S **NOT** AN **EASY** MINISTRY TO **CUT** PEOPLE TO **PIECES.** BUT **REMEMBER** THAT HOSEA **HIMSELF** HAD BEEN **CUT** TO **PIECES** BY **GOD'S** DEALINGS WITH HIM IN HIS **MARRIED** LIFE. AND IT WAS **FROM** SUCH A **SCHOOL** OF **SUFFERING** THAT HOSEA SPOKE. BUT IF WE TRY TO **IMITATE** A **PROPHET** **WITHOUT** GOD LEADING US INTO THE **SUFFERINGS** THAT THE **TRUE** **PROPHETS** UNDERWENT, WE WILL BE **FALSE** **PROPHETS.** FIRST OF ALL, WE MUST ASK GOD TO TAKE US THROUGH **DEEP** **EXPERIENCES** WHEREBY WE GET TO **KNOW** HIM -- EXPERIENCES OF **TRIALS,** **SUFFERINGS** AND **PAIN.** THEN GOD WILL MAKE US HIS **MONTHPIECES** TO MANY PEOPLE. WALK WITH GOD IN **SECRET.** LET US **HUMBLE** OURSELVES UNDER **WHATEVER** **GOD** SENDS IN OUR LIVES.



AND THEN GOD SAID, "I DON'T WANT YOUR **SACRIFICES.** I WANT YOU TO BE **MERCIFUL.**" THIS IS THE VERSE **JESUS** QUOTED IN MATTHEW 12:7. AND BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT **MERCIFUL** TO OTHERS, GOD **THREATENED** THEM WITH **JUDGEMENT** (6:11).



GOD WANTED TO **HEAL** ISRAEL, BUT ITS **SINS** WERE FAR TOO GREAT. SAMARIA, THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL, WAS FILLED WITH **LIARS, THIEVES** AND **BANDITS** (7:1). MANY **CHRISTIAN** **PREACHERS** ARE **GUILTY** OF THIS TODAY.





THEN GOD SAID, "MY PEOPLE **MINGLE WITH GODLESS FOREIGNERS**" (VERSE 8). THEY PICK UP THE GODLESS WAYS OF THESE GODLESS PEOPLE. MANY BELIEVERS TODAY MINGLE WITH **WORLDLY PEOPLE**, ADOPT **WORLDLY STANDARDS**, **WORLDLY METHODS** AND **WORLDLY BUSINESS PRINCIPLES** IN **CHRISTIAN WORK**. IN THEIR PREACHING THEY ADOPT THE METHODS USED BY **PSYCHOLOGISTS**. MUCH OF THE PREACHING FROM CHRISTIAN **PULPITS** TODAY IS PURE **PSYCHOLOGY**. IT'S NOT GOD'S WORD. IT IS JUST A **PEP-TALK** TO MAKE PEOPLE **FEEL GOOD**.



IT IS TOO **LATE** TO REPENT OF ALL THESE AFTER THE ENEMY HAS COME (8:1--4). ISRAEL HAD BECOME "A **VESSEL** IN WHICH **NO-ONE** DELIGHTS, BECAUSE THEY HAD **DESPISED** GOD'S **WORD** AND HIS **LAWS**" (8:8, 12).

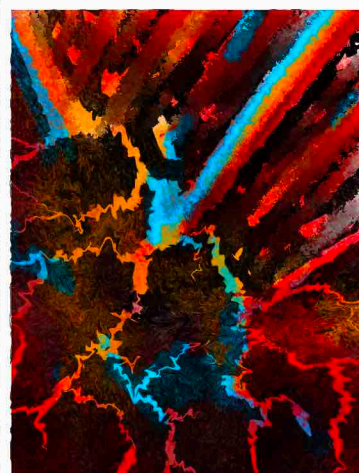


THE LORD WENT TO SAY, "THEY HAVE ALL BECOME LIKE A **HALF-BAKED CAKE**, COOKED ON **ONE SIDE**, NOT COOKED ON THE **OTHER SIDE**" (VERSE 8).



GOD THEN CRITICISES ISRAEL FOR BRINGING FORTH **FRUIT FOR HERSELF** (10:1). SHE HAS A **DIVIDED HEART** THAT SEEKS TO **LOVE** GOD AND HER **OWN INTERESTS** AND SPEAKS "MERE **WORDS** AND **WORTHLESS PROMISES**" TO GOD (10:4). MUCH THAT WE READ ABOUT THE BEHAVIOUR OF ISRAEL IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES IS BEING REPEATED AMONG **CHRISTIANS TODAY**.

"O ISRAEL, **DON'T REJOICE** LIKE OTHER PEOPLE DO" (9:1). THE BIBLE IS FULL OF EXHORTATIONS TO **REJOICE** IN THE LORD. BUT HERE IS A VERSE WHICH TELLS ISRAEL **NOT** TO **REJOICE** LIKE OTHER PEOPLE DO -- BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN **UNFAITHFUL** TO GOD. THEY ARE CALLED A **HARLOT**, BECAUSE THEY ARE OFFERING **SACRIFICES** TO **IDOLS**. WHEN A PERSON WHO WORSHIPS **MONEY**, **MAN'S HONOUR**, **SINFUL PLEASURE** AND A **COMFORTABLE LIFE**, COMES TO A SUNDAY MORNING CHURCH-MEETING AND SHOUTS THE PRAISES OF GOD, DO YOU KNOW WHAT GOD SAYS FROM HEAVEN? "DON'T REJOICE. YOU ARE A **HARLOT** WHO WORSHIPS **IDOLS**".



"SOW WITH A VIEW TO **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. REAP IN ACCORDANCE WITH **KINDNESS**; BREAK UP YOUR **FALLOW GROUND**, FOR IT IS TIME TO SEEK THE LORD UNTIL HE COMES TO **RAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS**" (HOSEA 10:12). GOD IS INVITING US TO PLOUGH UP THE **HARD GROUND** OF OUR HEARTS AND TO PLANT GOOD SEEDS OF **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. AS WE SEEK THE LORD, HE WILL RAIN SHOWERS OF **RIGHTEOUSNESS**



"WHEN ISRAEL WAS A CHILD I LOVED HIM AND OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON" (11:1). THIS VERSE ALTHOUGH REFERRING TO ISRAEL'S **REDEMPTION** FROM EGYPT IS QUOTED IN MATTHEW 2:15 AS APPLYING TO **JESUS** RETURNING TO **ISRAEL** FROM EGYPT.



GOD KNOWS ALL ABOUT THE DECEIT AND UNFAITHFULNESS AMONG HIS PEOPLE (11:12). YET HIS TENDER HEART YEARNS FOR THEM SAYING,

"OH, **HOW** CAN I GIVE YOU UP, MY SON? HOW CAN I LET YOU GO? MY HEART **cries** OUT WITHIN ME; HOW I LONG TO **HELP** YOU! NO, I WILL **NOT** PUNISH YOU AS MUCH AS MY FIERCE ANGER TELLS ME TO. THIS IS THE LAST TIME I WILL DESTROY YOU. FOR I AM **GOD** AND **NOT** MAN; I AM THE **HOLY** ONE LIVING AMONG YOU, AND I DID **NOT** COME TO DESTROY" (11:8, 9).

THIS **COMPASSIONATE** GOD IS OUR **FATHER**.



"THESE PEOPLE ARE **CRAFTY** MERCHANTS SELLING FROM **DISHONEST** SCALES. THEY LOVE TO **CHEAT**. THEY CHEAT OTHERS AND THEN THEY **BOAST**, 'I AM **RICH**. I HAVE GOT IT ALL BY **MYSELF**. NO ONE KNOWS THAT I GOT IT BY **CHEATING**'" (12:7, 8).

THERE IS A LOT OF **UNRIGHTEOUSLY-EARNED** MONEY AMONG **CHRISTIAN BUSINESSMEN** TODAY, WHICH THEY HAVE **CLEVERLY** HIDDEN FROM THE EYES OF OTHERS. **FINANCIAL SUCCESS** HAS GIVEN THEM **ACCEPTANCE** IN THE EYES OF **IMMATURE** BELIEVERS AND MANY OF THEM ARE **ELDERS** IN **GOOD** ASSEMBLIES. OUTWARDLY THEY APPEAR **RIGHTEOUS** AND GET **HONOUR** IN THEIR CHURCHES. THEY SAY, "**NO ONE KNOWS** THAT I GOT IT BY CHEATING BECAUSE MY **OUTWARD TESTIMONY** IS **SPOTLESS**." THEY ARE CLEVER MERCHANTS WHO HAVE DECEIVED THE PEOPLE. BUT THEY **CAN'T DECEIVE** **GOD** OR HIS **PROPHETS**. ONE DAY GOD WILL EXPOSE EVERY ONE OF THEM. **TRUE** PROPHETS ALSO CAN SEE THROUGH SUCH PEOPLE. THAT IS WHY THESE RICH BUSINESS PEOPLE WILL **NOT** GET CLOSE TO A **TRUE PROPHET**. LET ME ENCOURAGE YOU TO BE A **VOICE** FOR GOD **AGAINST** SUCH **CORRUPTION**, IN YOUR GENERATION.



"O DEATH, WHERE ARE YOUR THORNS?  
O SHEOL, WHERE IS YOUR STING?"  
(13:14). THIS IS A BEAUTIFUL VERSE ABOUT THE **RESURRECTION** AND IS QUOTED IN 1 CORINTHIANS 15:55.

HOSEA FINALLY INVITES ISRAEL TO RETURN TO THE LORD AND SAY: "TAKE WORDS WITH YOU AND RETURN TO THE LORD. SAY TO HIM, 'TAKE AWAY ALL **INIQUITY** AND RECEIVE US GRACIOUSLY, THAT WE MAY PRESENT THE FRUIT OF OUR LIPS'" (14:1, 2). THE FRUIT OF OUR LIPS IS "THE **SACRIFICE OF PRAISE**" AS WE READ IN HEBREWS 13:15. IT IS TO THE PLACE OF PERPETUAL **PRAISE** THAT GOD WANTS TO BRING ALL OF US FINALLY



GOD THEN SAYS, "I WILL **REFRESH** YOU LIKE THE DEW FROM HEAVEN. YOU WILL **RETURN** AND **REST** BENEATH MY **SHADOW**. YOU WILL BE A WATERED **GARDEN** AND BLOSSOM" (14:5--7). THIS IS A PROMISE OF THE OUTPOURING OF HIS **SPIRIT**



"WHOEVER IS **WISE**, LET HIM UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS: THE **PATHS** OF THE LORD ARE **TRUE** AND **RIGHT**, AND THE **RIGHTEOUS** WILL WALK ALONG THEM. BUT **SINNERS TRYING** THEM **WILL FAIL**" (14:9).

THERE ARE ONLY TWO CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE: **RIGHTEOUS** MEN WHO WALK ALONG THE PATHS OF THE LORD -- AND **SINNERS** WHO DO NOT. THOSE WHO ARE WISE WILL RECOGNISE THIS.