

Introduction: The lukewarm church of Jesus in America has failed to fervently and urgently engage in spiritual warfare. The apostolic church 'turned the inhabited world upside down' with their preaching of forgiveness to a new way of life through the faith of Jesus in His crucifixion and resurrection (Acts 17:1-7). Most church members today cannot be used by God to change people's lives because they do not know the Word of God and His power (Matthew 22:29). *** Therefore we are weak against the vast majority of people who act wickedly out of ignorance of God and His ways; and, they choose to ignore God's revelation in creation (Psalm 19:1-6) to indulge in and approve of wicked behavior (Romans 1:18-31). *** Too many American Christians have either given up the spiritual battle, or they are fighting with the weapons of the world which are futile (2 Corinthians 10:3-4). Metaphorically it would be like a Cub Scout bringing the knife he used to shape his Pinewood Derby car to the gunfight at the O. K. Corral. When Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane, Peter cut off a man's ear with a sword and Jesus commanded him to put it away (Luke 22:47-51; John 18:10-11). When He later stood before Pilate, Jesus said because His kingdom is not of this world, His servants will not fight (as this world fights, John 18:36). *** Nothing could be more paradoxically perplexing than God's command to His prophet Hosea to take for himself a woman harlot who will bear children in her unfaithfulness! The covenant God would use Hosea's public shame and pain over his wife's behavior to show His unfaithful people how He felt over their turning from the one who brought them out of Egypt and established them in Palestine (Hebrews 11:23-31). *** David's worship song more traditionally sets out a clear picture of how God wants His people to fully engage in spiritual warfare. The way David lived was remembered through the prophet Jeremiah to one of the last human kings who reigned before being taken to Babylon for his unfaithfulness which led all Judah astray. We must act in (God's) righteousness (in Jesus) delivering the widow, orphan and stranger; and, we must contend for the cause of the poor and needy before the oppressor (Jeremiah 22:1-16). *** So now let's look carefully at our texts to discover what they tell us about how to fight the spiritual battle on God's side and in God's way.

I. The covenant God tells Hosea to marry a prostitute because of Israel's unfaithfulness; then Hosea must buy her back to faithfulness after she strays; after a lengthy discipline, Israel will return in fear before the Davidic king.

(Hosea 1:2; 3(1-5))

- A. The first word of Yahweh to Hosea was for him to take a prostitute for a wife because Israel had been unfaithful to their God. *(Hosea 1:2)*

1. The beginning of (what) Yahweh spoke through Hosea: Then Yahweh said to Hosea, 'You must go and you must take to yourself a woman of prostitution and the children of prostitution'. *(Verse 2a)*
'Strange' marriage: Why would the holy God ever ask His chosen prophet to marry a prostitute?
This command seems strangely outside of the character of God and Hosea.
2. Because the land is committing (extreme) fornication from following Yahweh. *(Verse 2b)*
People of land: The term 'land' means the whole population living on the land God gave His people Israel by Joshua to fulfill His covenant word to and through both Abraham and Moses has been as unfaithful to God as a prostitute is to her family! Although it must have been extremely uncomfortable for Hosea to obey, Yahweh-God made a powerful statement through Hosea's actions.

Hosea's marriage to an adulteress illustrates Israel's unfaithfulness

- B. Yahweh commands Hosea to buy his wife from harlotry and tell her they will be mutually faithful; after Yahweh disciplines Israel, they will return to Him and fear before the Davidic king. *(Hosea 3(1-5))*
1. Then Yahweh said to me: You must go again and you must love (the) woman being loved by a neighbor and (she is) committing adultery. *(Verse 1a)*
Love her again: Sometime after the marriage, Hosea's wife sold herself to a neighbor and was unfaithful to Hosea.
 2. [You are to love her] as the love of Yahweh (for) the 'sons' of Israel who are turning to other 'gods' and raisin cakes from grapes. *(Verse 1b)*
As Yahweh loves Israel: Yahweh tells Hosea He is asking His prophet to do in love for his unfaithful wife as He is doing in love for His wayward and unfaithful children descended from Jacob-Israel, who ate food sacrificed to false 'gods' and idols (1 Corinthians 8).

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3. Then I bought her for myself with fifteen (pieces of) silver and a homer and a half (almost one hundred gallons) of barley; then I said to her: Many days you will abide with me, and you will not fornicate and you will not be with a man; and, also I (am being) to you. So Hosea obeyed the command of Yahweh his God. *(Verses 2-3)*
Obedience: Neither the silver nor the produce from the ground was an exorbitant amount, but any amount paid to deliver another from unfaithful, disobedient action is a gift of grace, a purchased freedom that is undeserved. Furthermore, after Hosea obediently gives his wife God's command to him, he pledges faithfulness to her. This is a beautiful example of God's love for His wayward children that caused Him to send Jesus to redeem sinful humanity (John 3:9-18).
4. Because for many days the 'sons' of Israel will dwell without a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice, without a pillar-image-altar, without an ephod, and without manifest idolatry. *(Verse 4)*

Israel greatly disciplined: As a result of Israel's extreme unfaithfulness to their covenant God, they will suffer extreme consequences for a long time. They will not be ruled by one of their own, they will not offer legitimate sacrifices through priests wearing ephods (Exodus 28), nor will they be able to worship false 'gods' or idols. Hosea's extreme actions illustrate Israel's extreme unfaithfulness to her covenant God.

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5. After this, the 'sons' of Israel will return and they will seek Yahweh their God and David their king; and they will turn in dread fear to Yahweh and His goodness in the latter days. (*Verse 5*)

Hope: God always holds out hope for His people to repent in the future. Here He is talking about the future messianic king to come from David's line (2 Samuel 7:4-17).

Application: We now have the privilege of knowing all the Messiah from David accomplished with His first coming. Therefore we must pray to be moved to root our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as portrayed in the Gospels and the New Testament as fulfilling the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. So we must know all God's Word, pray in the Holy Spirit and seek God's wisdom to be disciples of Jesus bearing much fruit that will remain to His glory (John 15:8-16; 2 Peter 1:3-8).

II. David leads worshippers to praise God, to live blamelessly and avoid evil; and, to unite with faithful people, expel liars and cut off the wicked. (Psalm 101(:1-8))

- A. David pledges to praise Yahweh for His perfect character because he can live blamelessly; and, he can avoid and destroy evil because of his relationship with God. (*Verses 1-5*)

1. {a psalm, to David} Of steadfast love and justice, I will sing / to You Yahweh, I will make music // I will have wisdom in the blameless way / when will You come to me? // I will walk in the blameless integrity of my heart. (*Verses 1-2*)

Blameless integrity: David begins by pledging to sing praise accompanied by musical instruments to the God whose essence of His character is strong love and justice. By this, he indicates that he believes his wisdom to act with blameless integrity of heart flows from his relationship with the perfect God.

2. I will not set before my eyes any worthless (*belial*) thing / the work of those who turn aside, I hate / it will not cling to me // a perverse (twisted) heart will be far from me / I will not know evil. (*Verses 3-4*)

Avoid all evil: David leads the people by saying he will avoid all evil and not even look at worthless things.

Furthermore, he will cause all perversely twisted people to be removed from him because he does not want to know evil by being over-exposed to it.

3. (Anyone) slandering his neighbor in secret, I will destroy / (he with) haughty eyes and a proud heart, I will not endure. (*Verse 5*)

Destroy the proud: David says he will not endure people who continue in harming others out of pride, and will destroy them if they do not change.

- B. David will unite with faithful people; and, expel liars from his presence and destroy the wicked in the land. (*Verses 6-8*)

1. My eyes are on the faithful of the land so they dwell with me / (anyone) walking in the blameless way, (that one) will minister to me. (*Verse 6*)

Faithfulness unites: David begins the second half of the song returning to the theme of blameless people.

He describes them as faithful (in their walk with God), confirming the conclusion that David understands blamelessness and integrity come from a faithful relationship to the covenant God of Israel.

And, this faithful relationship to Yahweh unites all such people of faith.

Faithfulness of people to Yahweh unites them in Him.

2. One will not dwell within my house (who is) doing (treacherous) deceit / one speaking lies will not be established before me // in the mornings, I will destroy all the wicked in the land / in order to cut off from Yahweh's city all working iniquity. (*Verses 7-8*)

Spiritual warfare: This destruction of twisted and wicked evil-doers among God's chosen people is a physical expression of spiritual warfare. The death penalty was prescribed for certain willful violations of the Torah. In the first psalm of ascent, David wrote words consistent with this theme: He has lived with people who hate peace for too long. He is a man of peace, but they speak of war (Psalm 120:6-7).

Application: We must wake up to the great spiritual battle that is raging until Jesus returns; and, we must stand strong in this battle putting on all our God-given spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:10-18), always 'standing in the gap' (Ezekiel 22:29-31) making intercessory prayer in the Holy Spirit. Positively, we must pray the Holy Spirit convicts all people of sin, righteousness and God's judgment (John 16:7-11); and, negatively, we must pray God will bind evil 'strong men' (Matthew 12:28-29).

Conclusion: The covenant God tells Hosea to marry a prostitute because of Israel's unfaithfulness. Then Hosea must buy her back to faithfulness after she strays. After a lengthy discipline from their God, Israel will return in fear before the Davidic king.

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