



Major Lessons from Minor Prophets Less 1 2Q 2013

Spiritual Adultery (Hosea)

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY GUIDE

Read first two paragraphs, “The mind...” thoughts?

Do you think the word “sin” is overused to the point we become unresponsive, or wrongly responsive to it? “How did we get in this mess? Sin” – does that really say anything?

What is sin? Answers I have heard over the years include:

- Doing bad things
- Bad stuff
- Disobeying God
- Breaking the Commandments
- Transgression of the Law
- Failing to love
- Not having faith
- Selfishness

Would it be important to have a healthy understanding of what “sin” is?

In the second paragraph when it says, “humans sin – therefore humans die” what do you think of this?

When the disciples asked Jesus, who sinned that this man was born blind? What did Jesus say?
Neither.

Humans sin therefore they die – do newborns commit sin? Do unborn fetuses commit sin? Do they die?

Do we die because we commit sin, or do we die because we *are born sinful*?

We are born in sin conceived in iniquity (Ps 51:5)

Is there a difference from having a sin condition, and actually committing sin?

Who chose for you to be a sinner? Did you make that choice?

We were born this way because we are descended from Adam and Adam changed himself.



So, back to the question – what is sin? “transgression of the law” or being deviant from the way life was designed to operate. Sin is disharmony with God’s character, law, methods, principles, and design protocols of love. And being out of harmony with the way life is built to run results in what? Death!

So humans die because we sin, or another way to say it is, because we have a condition that is terminal and without remedy naturally results in death.

But if we have the idea that sin is an act first and that bad act results in imposed death – then we are on a different plane of understanding.

This same idea underpinned distorted ideas about God 2000 years ago. Health and wealth was thought to come from God and sickness and disease and poverty was thought to be evidence of curse from God. In other words both positives and negatives were believed to be imposed by God, which means they believed in what kind of law? Consider this quotation what do you think?:

It was generally believed by the Jews that sin is punished in this life. **Every affliction was regarded as the penalty of some wrongdoing**, either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. **It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God's law, but this truth had become perverted.** [Why does all sin result in suffering? From where does the suffering arise? How had the idea become perverted? Is the suffering from sin inflicted by God?] **Satan, the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God,--as *punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin.*** [Do we still here this preached today?] Hence one upon whom some great affliction or calamity had fallen had the additional burden of being regarded as a great sinner. {DA 471.1}

Thus the way was prepared for the Jews to reject Jesus. [What prepared the way for the Jew to reject Jesus?] He who "hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" was looked upon by the Jews as "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;" and they hid their faces from Him. [How many Christians teach today that God was the one striking His Son at the Cross? Are Christians preparing to reject Jesus a second time by accepting the same lies the Jews did?] Isaiah 53:4, 3. {DA 471.2}

God had given a lesson designed to prevent this. The history of Job had shown that **suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy.** But Israel did not understand the lesson. The same error for which God had reproved the friends of Job was repeated by the Jews in their rejection of Christ. {DA 471.3}

Thoughts?

Read paragraphs 3-7, “Yes, humans die...” thoughts?

What is it God does for us that we could not and cannot do for ourselves?

How does he save us from death?

What is the cause of death? Do you see this question takes us back to the two laws?



If we believe in an imposed law and a god in the image of a Roman emperor then we believe the cause of death is a “just” inflicted execution by the ruler of the universe. And Jesus came to appease the wrath of God and pay the legal penalty.

But if we believe the law is the design protocol upon which life is built, then we believe death is the result of being out of harmony with God and His design. Then we realize Jesus came to reveal the truth to break the bonds of deception and win us to trust, destroy death by curing humanity’s sin condition, and restoring the image of God in man!

So the introduction concludes nicely with, “The message is that God wants to save us from our sins, to save us from the devastation that sin, rebellion, and disobedience bring. Over and over in these books we see the Lord pleading with His people to repent, to put away their sins, to return unto Him, to find life, not death, salvation, not damnation, hope, not despair.”

Let that be our focus this quarter

Spiritual Adultery (Hosea) Lesson 1

SABBATH

Let’s start our reading Hosea 1:4-11:

⁴ Then the LORD said to Hosea, “Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. ⁵ In that day I will break Israel’s bow in the Valley of Jezreel.”

⁶ Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, “**Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them.** ⁷ Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God.”

⁸ After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. ⁹ Then the LORD said, “**Call him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.**

¹⁰ “Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘**You are not my people, they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’** ¹¹ The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel. Hosea 1:4-11

Let’s now read the memory text:

I will plant her for myself in the land;
I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ (Lo-Ruhamah)
I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ (Lo-Ammi) ‘You are my people’;
and they will say, ‘You are my God.’” Hosea 2:23



Thoughts?

What was Hosea's life supposed to teach?

Do we see the life of Hosea acting out more than just the Jews? When Gomer has children not from Hosea – do we see the type of God accepting people into his family that were not of Abraham?

Why is the idea that the promises made to Abraham are fulfilled in the Christian church more appealing than the idea that genetic descendants of Abraham are still going to fulfill those promises?

- The problem of sin and its solution is a human race problem, initiated in Adam and solved in Christ. Abraham and his descendants are a small subset of this larger human family tree, but “God so loved the world...”
- Jesus told the genetic descendants of Abraham that their father was Satan – why? Because Jesus taught it was about character not genetics.
- If God chose people for salvation based on genetics it would make God out to be a racist
- Martin Luther King Jr. said: “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”
- Do you think Martin Luther King Jr. was wrong? Do you think Jesus would say to Mr. King, well actually, character isn't what's important, it's whose genes you have.

What kind of God does it make God out to be to teach that genetic descendancy has some advantage, or that God has some different path to salvation other than Jesus for the genetic descendants of Abraham?

Gen 18:18 Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and **all nations** on earth will be blessed through him.

Which means what? That *the* descendant of Abraham, Jesus, will bring salvation for all human beings, “For God so loved THE WORLD...”

ISA 42:6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles,

ISA 42:7 to open eyes that are blind,
to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

Thoughts?



**ISA 56:3 Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the LORD say,
"The LORD will surely exclude me from his people."**

And let not any eunuch complain,
"I am only a dry tree."

ISA 56:4 For this is what the LORD says:
"To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,
who choose what pleases me
and hold fast to my covenant--

ISA 56:5 to them I will give within my temple and its walls
a memorial and a name
better than sons and daughters;

I will give them an everlasting name
that will not be cut off.

**ISA 56:6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD
to serve him,**

to love the name of the LORD,
and to worship him,
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
and who hold fast to my covenant--

**ISA 56:7 these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.**

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "There are important..." thoughts?

What is adultery? Is it different in marriage than with God?

Is marital adultery physical whereas adultery with God is with the heart Or is marital adultery also with the heart?

How does the Lord handle our adultery with Him?

- He forgives
- He seeks to restore
- He pleads, begs
- He warns – of what?
- He lets go to reap pain and suffering
- He rescues and pleads and loves and forgives and leave free
- And lets go to reap pain and suffering
- And refuses complete reconciliation until the heart is healed.

MONDAY



Continues the issue of spiritual adultery - What is spiritual adultery? How did the Jews commit spiritual adultery? What did they do?

Read the second paragraph, “The prophet Jeremiah...” Thoughts?

The lesson suggests that idolatry is viewed as spiritual adultery – what do you think? Consider this quotation from one of the founders of our church:

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

Do I need to review any of the quotes from last week’s lesson? Do we have a problem with idolatry today? Do we have a problem with spiritual adultery today, every bit as serious as the Jews did?

Read third paragraph, “The expression...” thoughts?

Is it possible for us to use God’s gifts in a way that works against God’s cause? How?

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Hosea chapter two:

- 1 Say of your brothers, ‘My people,’ and of your sisters, ‘My loved one.’
- 2 Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts.

What do you understand this to mean?

- Is it talking about Gomer or the people of Israel or the Christian Church or all of humanity or all of it?
- Why are they not husband and wife?
- What is implied by unfaithfulness from between her breasts?

What lies below the breast? The heart – is it suggesting that the issue of unity, of genuine marriage, intimacy is a heart bond, and they have not united their hearts with God?

- 3 Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born; I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst.



Thoughts? What does this mean?

- Will God inflict this or is this an expression of what happens to the soul separated from God?
- When Revelation describes Laodicea as wretched, poor, blind and naked, is it speaking physical nakedness? What about here in Hosea?
- When Jesus told the woman at the well to ask him for living water so she would never thirst again, was he speaking of H₂O? What about in this text?

4 I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery. “

What does this mean?

- Does is say God does not love her children?
- Or is God not able to show his love because such blessings would be misused, would be misunderstood, would be taken as evidence of blessings from the false god and solidify her children in rebellion against God?

5 Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.’

6 Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way.

What does this mean?

- Does God actively inflict harm, or is this a description of the natural consequences built into reality that occurs when we step out of harmony with God’s design?
- What happens to the drug addict? The porn addict? The adulterer? The smoker?
- When we violate God’s law do we reap consequences that hurt like thorn bushes?
- And if we thrash around, frantic to free ourselves to we get confused, lost, overwhelmed, and unable to find our own way?
- Is this an infliction or the natural result of choosing to live out of harmony with God’s design?

7 She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.’

What is being described?

- Reality bears in and despite frantic efforts to find peace in the ways of the world, there is no peace, and joy cannot be caught there.
- So the awareness leads to a conclusion – what?
- To go back to her husband, in this case God – but what is the motive?
- Does she go back because she has come to love God? Or because she realizes she gets better treatment with him? So the motive to return is still selfish.



- This is how we all come to Christ, we come to him broken, hurt, beaten down, frustrated with self and the world, discouraged, lost, hopeless, seeking relief for self. We come initially not primarily because we love him, but because we need him.
- And how does Christ receive us? With love and grace.
- And what happens within us as we experience God's love and grace, so undeserved? We love Him in return!
- Is there a lesson here in how we should treat others?
- Do we see a problem in the Middle East today in choosing another path in how they treat those who betray them? And does that path lead to love and trust?

8 She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold— which they used for Baal.

What is described?

- How many fail to give God glory for their talents, abilities, health, temporal blessings, but instead use those for self-advancement and self-glorification, which results in what?

9 Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her nakedness.

10 So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands.

11 I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed feasts.

12 I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them.

13 I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot," declares the Lord.

What does this mean?

- How does God punish?
- Is it infliction, or is it that He allows us to reap what happens when we go down selfish paths?
- And when we turn away from God to do our own thing, what does He do?

14 Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her.

15 There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.

16 "In that day," declares the Lord, "you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master.' [baal]"



What is the Hebrew for “my master”? It is baal – you will no longer call me baal?

- What does this imply?
- In Hebrew baal also meant husband and protector, but a domineering controlling, dictatorial husband, very much like we still see in Middle Eastern families. And it became confused with the false god baal, so it stopped being used. God here says they will no longer call me baal.
- Does it imply that people would misconceive God as a baal, as a dictator, imposer of rules and laws, punisher, task master, but a time would come when they would see Him for who he really is?
- What does it look like to consider God to be like baal? To believe he requires appeasement and inflicts punishment for sin.
- Has Christianity struggled with seeing God like baal?
- Has the time come to no longer see God this way?

Notice what follows when we stop seeing God as baal, when we finally return to the truth of who God is as revealed in Jesus:

17 I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked.

18 In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety.

19 I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion.

20 I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord.

21 “In that day I will respond,” declares the Lord— “I will respond to the skies, and they will respond to the earth;

22 and the earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and oil, and they will respond to Jezreel.

23 I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’; and they will say, ‘You are my God.’ ”

Thoughts?

Is this speaking only to genetic descendants of Abraham or to all of us? And what is the message?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Hosea 4:1-3 presents...” thoughts?

Failed to live up to the terms of the covenant – what covenant?



The Old or New Covenant?

When did Israel fail to live up to the terms of the Old Covenant?

What is the Old Covenant? How would you describe it?

Listen to these two quotes both from the book *The Faith I Live By*, do you agree with these conclusions?

Another compact--called in Scripture **the "old" covenant--was formed between God and Israel at Sinai**, and was then ratified by the blood of a sacrifice. . . . {FLB 78.2}

God . . . gave them [Israel] His law, with the promise of great blessings on condition of obedience: "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then . . . ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Exodus 19:5, 6. The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law; and **they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient."** Exodus 24:7. They had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and **yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God**, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through **a covenant which they had broken**; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the **Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant, and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings**. . . . {FLB 78.3}

The terms of the "old covenant" were, Obey and live: "If a man do, he shall even live in them;" but "cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." Ezekiel 20:11; Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 27:26. **The "new covenant" was established upon "better promises"--the promise of forgiveness of sins, and of the grace of God to renew the heart, and bring it into harmony with the principles of God's law.** {FLB 78.4}

The only means of salvation is provided under the Abrahamic covenant. {FLB78.5}

Thoughts?

- How would you describe the Old Covenant?
- What was the agreement?
- When was this covenant broken?
- Were the sacrifices part of the Old or New Covenant?
- What happens under the New Covenant that didn't happen under the Old? A renewed heart in the believer – healing!

Here is the second quote from Faith I Live By:

As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants. The **covenant of grace** was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should



bruise the serpent's head. To all men **this covenant offered pardon**, and the **assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law.** Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. {FLB 77.2}

This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it, and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. **The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God's law.** [which law?] The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." The testimony of God concerning His faithful servant was, "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Gen. 17:1; 26:5. . . . {FLB 77.3}

The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the "second," or "new," covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. {FLB 77.4}

The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. {FLB 77.5}

There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today. . . . Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the author and the finisher of our faith. {FLB 77.6}

Thoughts?

What are the two laws?

What do you make of this quote?

Under the new covenant, the conditions by which eternal life may be gained are the same as under the old--perfect obedience. Under the old covenant, there were many offenses of a daring, presumptuous character, for which there was no atonement specified by law. In the new and better covenant, **Christ has fulfilled the law for the transgressors** of law, if they receive Him by faith as a personal Saviour. "As many as received him, to them gave he **power to become** the sons of God." Mercy and forgiveness are the reward of all who come to Christ trusting in His merits to **take away their sins.** In the better covenant **we are cleansed from sin** by the blood of Christ (Letter 276, 1904). {7BC 931.10}

What do you hear in this passage?

- Both laws required perfect obedience? Why? Because life is built to operate upon God's law, it is the design protocol for life.
- What is the difference then?
- In the first, the Remedy, the perfection comes from the sinner, which of course fails
- In the second, the Remedy, the perfection of character, comes from Christ, which He perfectly achieved.



So the problem with Israel? They failed to understand the nature of God's kingdom of love, the law upon which life is built, and saw God like Baal, imposer of law and therefore they responded with works to try and both keep the law and appease God.

And, having gone down the trail of imposed law and legal requirements, how did they treat each other?

- Multitude of manmade regulations, rituals, rules
- False picture of God taught
- Exploitation of others
- Hard heartedness
- Fraud and cheating at the Temple etc. etc.

What about Christianity today? Any similar issues?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The name *Hosea*..." thoughts?

What do you understand the purpose of judgment to be? Would you see it as diagnosis? Correctly diagnosing what is wrong for the purpose of leading people to repentance and healing?

The lesson states the problem was the "people's lack of knowledge, the knowledge of God, that led them into rebellion..."

What interferes with our knowing God?

- Bad theologies taught in church
- Bad science taught in schools
- Bad examples in leadership and society
- Television
- Novels
- Video games
- Alcohol, drugs
- Unhealthy diet?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-4