

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
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Hosea 1:1–2:23. Hosea’s wife and children as divine teaching aids.

Acts 1:1–26. The Early Church.

Job 15:1–9. Eliphaz accuses Job of folly.

COMMENTS:

Hosea 1:1–2:23. Hosea’s prophetic ministry began with perplexing instructions from God to find a wife who would become adulterous. This is no parable or vision but actual instructions regarding a literal marriage that would give Hosea God’s perspective on Israel. Hosea, like the Lord, would have a wayward wife and a broken heart. There is no small controversy regarding the unseemliness of God ordering Hosea to marry a morally unclean woman. Some argue that Gomer was a prostitute at the time she was married. Others, like me, contend that Gomer was sexually pure at the time of marriage and later became an adulteress. The Book of Hosea does not provide information concerning Gomer’s premarital sexual experience. The expression “adulterous wife” does not describe her condition at the time of marriage, but anticipates what she proved to be, a wife characterized by unfaithfulness. Any knowledge of Gomer’s status at the time of marriage is thereby precluded. Gomer bore Hosea three children whose names made them divine judgment oracles. They would bear the shame of their mother’s behavior and at the same time represent the shameful behavior and divine condemnation of the children of Israel. Hence they were called “children of unfaithfulness.” The divinely chosen names for Hosea’s three children serve as reminders of the broken relationship between the Lord and Israel and points ahead to judgment. Each section on the children (**1:3–5, 6–7, 8–9**) contains a birth notice (**1:3, 6, 8**), a divine word of instruction concerning the child’s name (**1:4, 6, 9**), and an explanation of the meaning of the name (**1:4–5, 6, 9**). *The first child* (a son) was named Jezreel (**1:3**). The general fulfillment of this prophecy came in 734-722 B.C. when the Assyrians overran Israel and reduced it to a province within their empire. *The second child* received the name Lo-Ruhamah, which means “she is not loved.” Her name indicated that the Lord’s love for Israel would be cut off for a time. “Lo” means “no”, and “Ruhamah,” is from the verb רָחַם, which describes tender feelings of compassion, such as those expressed by a parent for a child. We see in **1:7** that during the time of impending judgment, God will show His love to Judah (in contrast to Israel) by delivering them from the Assyrians apart from military might. This promise was fulfilled in 701 B.C. when God supernaturally annihilated 185,000 soldiers in the powerful Assyrian army in one night thereby ending its campaign against Judah (2 Kings 19:32–36). In **1:8-9** we have *the third child*, a son, was named Lo-Ammi, which means “not My people.” In the ancient covenant formula God declared, “I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be My people” (Lev. 26:12; cf. Ex. 6:7; Deut. 26:17–18). But now that relationship was to be severed. The last clause of Hosea 1:9 (“I am not your God”) is literally, “and I [am] not I AM (’Ehyeh/Esse) to you.” The statement alludes to God’s words to Moses, “I am (’Ehyeh) who I am (’Ehyeh). This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM (’Ehyeh) has sent me to you” (Ex. 3:14). “I AM,” which is closely related to the divine name Yahweh, points to God as the covenant LORD of Israel who watches over and delivers His people (cf. Ex. 3:16–17). However, through Lo-Ammi the Lord announced that Israel would no longer experience His special saving presence. Instead, they would experience His chastening. After divine discipline, God would

return blessedness to Israel (**1:9-10**): They will again be like the sand on the seashore in fulfillment of the Lord's irrevocable promise to Abraham and be reunited under one Leader (**1:11**)—in accordance with the promise to David of an everlasting throne. In **2:2-23**, the Lord described this rejection in detail, comparing Israel to an unfaithful wife who chased after lovers. In the process of confirming the nation's guilt, the Lord announced coming punishment. This judgment, however, would not be final, for God intended to draw Israel back and restore the broken covenantal relationship. Thus this section, like the preceding one (**1:2-2:1**), progresses from judgment (**2:2-13**) to salvation (**2:14-23**). In sum, God focuses on three particular sins: idolatry (spiritual adultery), ingratitude, and hypocrisy. Since the people of God were acting like prostitutes, God would treat them like prostitutes and shame them publicly. Since the people of God were not thankful for God for His blessings of food, water, and clothing, God would remove these blessings. Since the people of God were just going through the motions of religion without love for Him, God would abandon them to their own devices. Though often unrecognized, divine discipline in the form of handing people, including believers, over to their own desires is the worst judgment as this consists of hardening the hearts of those who have turned their hearts from God—as we have studied in divine concurrence where God actualizes all desires and actions—both the positive and negative ones. God is the efficient cause behind all activity—all! Man is but the formal cause. *Quo Vadis?*

Acts 1:1-26. The Book of Acts tells us what Jesus continued to do and teach through His spiritual body, the church. **1:1-11:** After His resurrection, Jesus remained on earth for forty days and ministered to His disciples. He had already opened their minds to understand the Old Testament message about Himself (Luke 24:44-48), but there were other lessons they needed to learn before they could launch out in their new ministry. Jesus appeared and disappeared during those forty days, and the believers never knew when He might show up. It was excellent preparation for the church because the days were soon coming when He would no longer be on earth to instruct them personally. Jesus taught the church several important lessons during this period: (1) The reality of His resurrection (**1:3**), (2) the kingdom (**1:4-8**), and (3) promise of His return (**1:9-11**). Note these believers' focus on prayer in those early years when the Lord was no longer physically present. As we have noted, prayer is a chief means of a second-personal relationship with the Lord, which is the only relationship that is truly personal and very real. It is when we recognize that God is with us, loves us, and is always listening that draws us into those reciprocal 2nd person relationship—moment by moment growing in love with and delight in Him.

Job 15:1-9. Eliphaz accuses Job of lacking wisdom. How did Eliphaz know this? He claims to know this by reciting Job "empty notions" and "useless words" (**2-3**). Eliphaz likens Job's words to those who come from a belly filled with the hot desert wind and not from a heart filled with true wisdom. Eliphaz was using one of the oldest tactics in debate—if you can't refute your opponent's arguments, attack his words and make them sound like a lot of "hot air." Eliphaz not only heard Job's words, but he saw where those words led (**4**): "But you even undermine piety and hinder devotion to God". Eliphaz's point is that if everybody believed as Job believed—that God does not always punish the wicked and reward the godly—then what motive would people have for obeying God? Religion would not be worth it! But this is Satan's theology, the very thing that God was using Job to refute! If people serve God only for what they get out of it, then they are not serving God at all, they are only serving themselves by making God their servant. Their "religion" is only a pious system for promoting selfishness and not for glorifying God. The

is a major problem in “American style of Christianity” in which God characteristically takes a back seat to mammon. Yes, God loves to bless, but always a result of loving God, which requires a good soul, a virtuous soul, which has capacity to handle true blessings. Love is the key motive for the spiritual life (Deut. 6:4–5; 7:7; 10:12–16; 11:1, 13, 22; 19:9)—the root, hinge, and root of all other spiritual virtues (read 1 Cor. 13). Love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom. 13:8–10) and the highest motive for obedience (John 14:15). In fact, love drives all of our lives, be it licit or illicit love. Job’s words as interpreted by Eliphaz indicated to him that Job had a wicked heart, 5–6: “Your sins are telling your mouth that to say!” What comfort in fellow believers was there for Job when his friends would not even believe what he was saying? Contrary to Eliphaz’s sarcasm in 7–9, Job never claimed that he was the first man God created, that he was God’s confidant, or that God had given him a monopoly on wisdom.

Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don