

# ***NEW TESTAMENT LESSONS FROM OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS***

**Wednesdays, 2021**

**6:00 pm in the Sanctuary**

**Wednesday, June 2, 2021**

**“What God Desires”**

**Hosea 6:6**

**Leader: Chuck Emory**

<sup>6</sup>For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,  
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings. (NIV)

<sup>6</sup>For I desire [or *take pleasure in*] loyalty rather than sacrifice,  
And the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. (NASB)

<sup>6</sup>For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,  
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. (NRSV)

<sup>6</sup>I want you to show love, not offer sacrifices.  
I want you to know me more than I want burnt offerings. (NLT)

## **I. Introduction**

- A. False impression that there is a disconnect between the Old and New Testaments
- B. Christians believe that the Old Testament is incomplete apart from the New Testament.
- C. The Old Testament provides the background within which we interpret the New Testament.
- D. But the Old Testament also foreshadows the truth of the New Testament.

## **II. What God Desires**

### **A. Hosea's World**

1. Hosea prophesied during the latter half of the eighth century B.C. (around 753-722 B.C.), which was an extremely difficult time in Israel's history, just before the northern kingdom was taken into captivity and exile. He was a contemporary of Isaiah and Micah.

2. Hosea's primary audience was the northern kingdom, known as Israel or Ephraim, which is mentioned 35 times in the book. The king was Jeroboam II, one of the worst kings in Israel's history. He allowed idol worship to run amok, opening the doorway for the Israelites to cheat, steal, abuse, and even murder each

other on a constant basis. During this time, the people forgot about knowing God as their intimate first love.

3. During this time, the kingdom of Assyria was the big regional threat. Assyria was centered on the Tigris River in Upper Mesopotamia – in modern terms, northern Iraq, northeast Syria, and southeast Turkey. By this time, its capital was Ninevah.

4. The first Assyrian invasion and wave of exile culminated around 732 B.C. and included people of Galilee and other regions in the northern kingdom. See 1 Chronicles 5:26; 2 Kings 15:29. About 10 years later, in 722 B.C., following another invasion, the Assyrians took the northern kingdom capital of Samaria, and another wave of exile followed. See 2 Kings 18:11-12. This event marked the fall of the northern kingdom.

## B. Hosea's Message

1. The overarching image of Hosea is the relationship between God and His people. It is presented primarily through the metaphor of a marriage. God is committed to Israel in the most intimate way, but Israel has proven unfaithful. And yet, shining through the darkness of the people's idolatry, infidelity, and injustice, is the powerful message of God's enduring and steadfast love for them. See Hosea 14:4. Throughout the book, Hosea pictures the people turning away from God and turning toward sin and idolatry. They lived as if they were not God's people. Hosea's message is that, although they will have to pay a price for their sinfulness, God will ultimately restore their relationship with Him.

2. Chapters 1-3: These chapters narrate the family life of Hosea to illustrate the relationship between God and His people. God told Hosea to marry a prostitute named Gomer, who was sure to betray him. He took her as his wife and treated her well, but Gomer kept wandering into the arms of other men. She was unfaithful. And yet the Lord told Hosea to keep going after her again and again, and to bring her back home. See Hosea 3:1-3. More than any other prophet, Hosea's prophecies flowed from the life of his family.

3. Chapters 4-14: The rest of the book focuses specifically on the relationship between God and the Israelites. These chapters record Hosea's prophecies to the people. Here he clearly prophesies the sins of the people, the certainty of impending judgment, and the assurance of God's faithfulness and love.

## C. Hosea 6:6

1. For context, look at verses 1-10. Verses 1-3 could be an exhortation from Hosea, pleading with the people to repent. They could be mere "lip service" from the people in the midst of hard times. Or they could be a prophecy of a future statement from the people after being judged and repenting. In any event, our

focal verse falls within the next section, verses 4-10, which is God's response to the people. It is a harsh statement of judgment and a plain statement by God of what he expects out of this relationship.

2. Perhaps the most interesting word in verse 6 is the one translated "mercy" or "loyalty" or "steadfast love." The Hebrew word is *hesed* or *chesed*. This word is found some 250 times in the Old *Testament* and expresses an essential part of God's character. In Exodus 34:6-7, when God appears to Moses to give the Law for a second time, God describes Himself as "abounding in" or "filled with" *hesed*, which is translated "love and faithfulness," "unfailing love," "faithful love," "steadfast love," and "loyal love." The core idea is loyalty or faithfulness within a relationship. Thus, *hesed* is closely related to God's covenant with His people. God's covenant relationship with His people results in His loyal love and faithfulness – even when His people are unfaithful to Him. The heart of *hesed* is God's generous sense of compassion, grace, and mercy. Humans, too, can express *hesed* in relationships. In Ruth 3:10, Boaz describes Ruth's kindness toward him and Naomi as *hesed*. *Hesed* is the inclination of the heart to show "amazing grace" to the one who is loved.

3. The other part of the verse mentions God's desire for his people to "know" Him or to "acknowledge" Him. Certainly, the Israelites *knew* God in one sense – they were familiar with Him and His law and His expectations. But they had not internalized that knowledge. It was mere "head" knowledge, not a deep and abiding knowledge that is only found in intimate relationships. To be known – truly and deeply known – is to be understood and appreciated and valued.

#### D. New Testament Lessons

##### 1. Matthew 9:13

<sup>9</sup> As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

<sup>10</sup> While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. <sup>11</sup> When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

<sup>12</sup> On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>13</sup> But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

## 2. Matthew 12:7

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. <sup>2</sup> When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.”

<sup>3</sup> He answered, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? <sup>4</sup> He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. <sup>5</sup> Or haven’t you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? <sup>6</sup> I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. <sup>7</sup> If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent. <sup>8</sup> For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

**III. Conclusion** – It remains true today that God desires *hesed* rather than sacrifice and the knowledge of Him more than burnt offerings. Is our love for Him “like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears”? God has secured our relationship with Him through sending His own Son to redeem us and to restore us – despite our unfaithfulness. How are we giving Him the *hesed* He desires and deserves? How well do we know Him? How much effort are we putting forth in the relationship? We will never achieve perfection in this regard, but it should be our priority. Let us all remember the words of Jesus: “Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’” That’s something we should be thinking about every day.