



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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From the PREACHER'S HEART

THE SIN OF UNFAITHFULNESS (A Brief Overview of the Book of Hosea)

Introduction

For the past few weeks the news media have been filling us with the confrontational exchange between Mr David Cameron, leader of the Conservative Party, and Mr Gordon Brown, the incumbent Prime Minister, of the Labour Party. The subject of their debate was the Prime Minister's decision not to call for an early election and this was due largely to the sway of the opinion polls in favour of the opposition, which of course was strongly denied by the Prime Minister.

Furthermore, recent news report in the US and UK suggested that Mr Brown is distancing himself from his closest allies, the US government, so as to win over voters who are not in favour of the highly unpopular war in Iraq.

Such political manoeuvres are nothing new under the sun for we read of the same in the days of the prophet Hosea. During his prophetic career, he saw the great prosperity under King Jeroboam II, but one of great corruption of moral and shameful political conditions, much similar to what we see in the UK and many parts of the world today.

The Unfaithful Nation

The nation of Israel at that time was not only a nation in moral declension and in an unholy alliance with the heathen nations around it, worst of all, it was in spiritual adultery in forsaking Jehovah and resorting to the worship of a false god, Baal.

As we hear and watch the moral and spiritual downward spiral of this great nation, the United Kingdom, that was once a beacon of truth, of gospel truth, of great humanitarian endeavours, with so rich a Christian heritage, do we not see the sin of unfaithfulness of a nation who was so richly blessed of God in the past?

Brethren and Friends, lest we are quick to point that condemnatory finger at our British counterpart, do we not see in ourselves our own unfaithfulness toward God as depicted in the life of Gomer, the adulteress, who persisted in her sin and continues to live a life of shame?

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The message of Hosea is a parable to the nation Israel and to us, the wayward sinner, who persistently sin and forsake the Lord God to go after the god of this world who has blinded our minds (2 Cor 4:4). It has a message to those who ...

1. Have gone astray from the Lord (Hos 1:2, 3),
2. Forsake their Knowledge of God (Hos 4:1, 6),
3. Forsake their Worship of God (Hos 4:12),
4. Forsake their Covenant with God (Hos 6:4-7), and
5. Forsake their Separation to God (Hos 7:8, 9).

The Punishment for Unfaithfulness

Despite of Israel unfaithfulness and her persistent sin and life of shame, the prophet Hosea went on to seek for Gomer, found her and forgave her all and took her again as the wife of his love.

This is an illustration of the great mercy and love of God towards His chosen people, but before delivery can come, the prophet Hosea was to deliver the pronouncement of punishment (Hos 8:1) because Israel was unrepentant. The Lord God who is love is also the Lord God of righteousness and justice. Sin cannot go unpunished and must be dealt with by God and so Hosea was to be unsparing in his denunciation of the sins of kings, priests and people. He was willing to take the unpleasant message to them.

So it should be the same for the Lord's messengers in our days, who must be willing to obey the Lord's command to take up the most unpleasant and unpopular task in denouncing the sin of the congregation unsparingly.

The word of the Lord says, *"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. ¹⁸ When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. ¹⁹ Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul"* (**Ezekiel 3:17-19**).

This warning from the Lord through Ezekiel must be indelibly etched into the heart of every of the Lord's messenger, if he is a true messenger indeed.

The result of the punishment of Israel's unfaithfulness was:

1. Return to a State of Captivity (Hos 8:13)
2. Destruction of Cities (Hos 8:14)
3. Loss of Many Lives (Hos 9:12)

Thankfully the message of Hosea did not end in doom and like the light at the end of a dark tunnel, there is hope for those who are willing to repent and who would come to the Saviour for salvation.

God's Faithfulness to His People

Just when everything else falls apart, with no hope in sight, and when Israel's destruction seemed inevitable, the heart of God sobbed out,⁸ *"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? ... mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together ..."*⁹ *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help."* (**Hosea 11:8 Hosea 13:9**).

O brethren and friends, can you not feel the heart beat of God in these few words, of His desire *"that (none) should perish, but that all should come to repentance?"* (**2 Peter 3:9**). The message of Hosea is God's faithful promises to His people, of ...

1. His Unfailing Love for Israel (Hos 11:1-4)
2. His Future Restoration of Israel to their Land (Hos 11:10, 11)
3. His Future Redemption of Israel from Death (Hos 13:14)
4. His Future Blessing of Israel (Hos 14:4-7)

These promises are also for us, the spiritual children of Israel, who have put their trust in Israel's God through His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

The book of Hosea closes with a final appeal to the prodigal nation and a promise of mercy: *"O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity"* and⁴ *"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him"* (**Hosea 14:1; Hosea 14:4**)

Brethren and Friends, this is what God will do for every sinner who repents of his sins and accepts the Son of God, Jesus Christ as his Saviour. To those who have backslidden and to those who are still blatantly ignoring the commandments of God, do not persist in your wayward ways, this promise is also extended to you from the heart of God.

The Psalmist gives us a similar warning in **Psalm 50:22**²² *"Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."*

"In Amos there is portrayed the unapproachable righteousness of God, while in Hosea there is demonstrated the unfailing love of God. Just as Luke writes of the prodigal son, so Hosea tells of the prodigal wife."

*In His Service
Preacher Mok*

Source: "Walk Thru The Minor Prophets of the OT 1" – MBPC
"A Bird's Eye View of the Bible" (Noah Quarshie)

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

CHURCH THEME: WALK IN THE NEWNESS OF LIFE (Romans 6:4)

Our **worship services** begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm**.

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	<i>Today: 14/10/2007</i>	<i>Next Week: 21/10/2007</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We specially welcome Joseph Tan and Tan Boon Yee to the morning worship service last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	The Divine Provision: The Cross	The Divine Provision: The Resurrection	
<i>Text:</i>	Luke 23:33-46	1Corinthians 15:12-19	
<i>Organist:</i>	Yanning	Anthony	
Evening			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	John Poh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ushers Meeting: All ushers, as well as those who are interested to serve as ushers, please take note that there will be a short meeting in the side hall after the morning worship service. • Memory Verse for 3rd Quarter: Please note that the deadline for the review is Nov 2007. • Family Worship: Those who would like to open up their homes or student hostels for family worship for the months of October and November, please inform Pr Mok. • Those serving on the Lord's Day for both morning and evening worship services: Please gather behind the pulpit area at 10.30am for prayer. • Parking Restrictions: Please take note of the parking restrictions implemented by Brent Council for the upcoming weeks: Zone "KQ" 13 Sep to 13 Oct (inclusive of Saturdays and Sundays). For those who are driving, please ensure that you are not parking within the restricted area.
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	Reformation and Restoration	The Rock Was Christ	
<i>Text:</i>	Romans 1:16,17	Exodus 17:6	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Joy	Grace	
Other Duties			
	<i>Today: 14/10/2007</i>	<i>Next Week: 21/10/2007</i>	
<i>Ushers</i>	Wah Soon/Esmeralda	Jee/Joyce	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Yanning	Carol	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Constance	Maureen	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	No Bible Study	No Bible Study	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 19 Oct	7:30 pm	Young Adults Fellowship: YAF Meeting	
Sat 20 Oct	4.00 pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Jonathan	
<u>Last Week's Worship Service Collections</u>			
Offering: £545.21		Lunch: £32.91	
<u>Memory Verse</u>			
<p><i>Previous Week (Sept 07 Wk 5): Galatians 3:11</i></p> <p>But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.</p> <p><i>This Week (Oct 07 Wk 1): Mark 8:36-38</i></p> <p>For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.</p>			