

Renewing Our Spiritual Power

Harmony M.B.C., January 23, 2011 (Morning)

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Hosea 12:2 The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.

Hosea 12:3 He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God:

Hosea 12:4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him *in* Bethel, and there he spake with us;

In Hosea, God is bringing charges against Israel...the house of Jacob...for the fact that they have abandoned their worship and service to Him, and have become disobedient and rebellious. Most of us who read the Old Testament probably feel uneasy when we read the threats and warnings written in the prophets, because in those books God tells all Israel and Judah about their profane way of life and what He is going to do about it. So, we may feel uneasy when we read the prophets, and we don't say too much about those harsh statements of the Lord. On the other hand, if we pay attention to the writings of prophets, we find that the Lord also remembers the honorable things of Israel and Judah. We find this kind of material here in Hosea.

In our text chapter, God is again writing a message of dissatisfaction with His people. But, in the middle of the message, almost like a parenthetical addition, He reflects on some great historical facts about Jacob. In these reflections, we find a great message for the Israel of God...whom we are (We ought to always remember that what God wrote through the pens of the prophets to Israel, the offspring of Jacob, He wrote also for our instruction, because the bible tells us in **Gal. 4:28** - "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.").

The message God gives His people here in Hosea has several lessons to it. We are going to look at three of those today. I trust the Holy Spirit will help us to understand and receive those lessons.

I. Wandering Off the Right Spiritual Path by the Lord's People Will Bring Them Into Controversy (a contest) With the Lord and Will Bring Them Chastening (v.2)

II. Forgetting Our Source of Strength Leads to Spiritual Wandering Hosea 12:3-4 "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: 4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed:"

- ❖ Remember, in Hosea, as elsewhere by other prophets, He is reviewing how the children of Israel had gone astray: Examples: **Hosea 11:7** "And my people are bent to backsliding from me..."; **Hosea 11:12** "Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit..."
- ❖ But now, in this verse He is reviewing how it was with Jacob then to show what a contrast it is now, at the time of this writing.
- ❖ Jacob's act at birth was not thought out by him (a newborn baby does not plan); Jacob neither had a plan, nor even a conscious intent in what happened that day; this thing was a prophecy from the Lord.

- ❖ So, why does God take us back to this event where these twin son's of Isaac were born (see **Genesis 25:24-26**)?
 - Jacob taking Esau by the heel had great importance to a Jew; it was a sign of power...of gaining power. The Hebrew word which describes this act of Jacob is a word which gives us a visual image of taking power from someone by tripping them up by the heel.
 - The words of Hosea here, "...by his strength he had power with God" tell us that Jacob's blessing of becoming the head of the house of Israel was by an appointment of God. "By his strength means "because God appointed him to be the patriarch of Israel; but more importantly the patriarch of the Israel of God (all believers)"
 - What is the spiritual message of these two phrases in **v.3**? They are a revelation about God's pre-determined will for His people.
 - His pre-determined will is that they **will gain power over the dominant flesh** (Jacob gains the birthright over Esau the powerful carnal older brother because God determined to make it so).
 - **1Thess. 4:3** "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...."
 - This is what the house of Israel had forgotten, and this is what God's controversy with them is all about.
 - This would be the same controversy God has with His people today when they leave the good path of obedience through faith (in God's way).
 - Only when we remember that God has appointed us to dominate our flesh; to overpower it and by that make the spiritual man in us dominant; only then can we avoid getting into a controversy with the Lord.
 - It is through getting into such a controversy that we get disciplined.
 - But, it is through remembering where our strength and power lies that we have power with God and prevail (our strength and power lies in the intent of God toward us).
 - So, now we have the intent of God toward us. Knowing His intent, recognizing it as the source of our spiritual power, and relying on the omnipotence of God to carry out His will and intent gives us our spiritual energy.
 - **Colossians 1:11** "Strengthened with all might, according to his (Christ's) glorious power...."
- ❖ What next?

III. The Role of the Believer In the Empowering Process (v.4, last two phrases) - "... he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him *in* Bethel, and there he spake with us"

- ❖ We like to think (with awe) about how Jacob wrestled with the angel until near dawn. We are often tempted to think that Jacob prevailed through some kind of secret power. But, what God tells us here is that wrestling with the angel was successful because of 4 keys that Jacob used; all of which can be used by every saint of God.
 - Key 1: "...he wept..."
 - **Psalms 42:3** My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where *is* thy God?
 - **Hebrews 5:7** Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with **strong crying and tears** unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;
 - Key 2: (He) "...made supplication unto Him..."
 - Supplication is almost a lost art among the people of God: we are often like the apostles whom Jesus took with Him to the Garden for prayer time (**Luke 22:39-45**).

While Jesus is saying to us, “Pray that ye enter not into temptation....” we are falling asleep.

- Supplication only happens when we feel a deep and desperate need for the Lord to intervene
 - David did this kind of supplicating when he was fleeing from Saul and hid out in the cave of Adullam (**1Samuel 22**).
 - Jacob was facing extinction when he wrestled with the angel that night at Bethel; extinction from his offended brother - can we see that this is a type of threat of being overcome and destroyed by the carnal man that lives in us?
 - **Hebrews 5:7** “...he (Christ)...offered up prayers and supplications....”
 - Key 3: “...he found Him in Bethel...” Bethel is a Hebrew word that means “House of God.” So, let’s say this verse in (idiomatic) English... “...he found the messenger of God in the House of God.” Note: if he found the messenger of God he found the message from God.
 - I believe if a Christian neglects his church affairs he has failed to use technique number 3 for gaining power with God
 - This neglect can be picking and choosing when he will attend church services
 - It can be making selfish decisions about how he will treat the church
 - It might be simply discounting the message of God that the church declares
 - ◆ An interesting fact about Jacob’s trip back to Bethel; he took his place as head of household and commanded his family to put away all the family idols, and clean up their acts. When he did that, the people of the world stood in awe of him and would not start a fight with him nor seek to attack him (Gen. 35:1-5)
 - Key 4: “...spake with us there.” Conversation with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (us): This is a two-way communication.
 - You tell God something. You let God tell you something (prayer to the Lord only represents half the key; the other half is us looking in His word to see what He is saying to us).
 - You ask God about something. You let God ask you about something (asking the Lord to show you greater truth, or show you a right way, etc. is only half the key; the other half is listening for the Lord’s reproof, rebuke, instruction which lays bare the things that are neglected in your life).
 - You request something from God. You let God make a request of you (asking something from God is only half the key; the other half is answering the request of the Holy Spirit for you to do something that has been left undone).
- ❖ Conclusion: In this our day, have we wandered away from the true path of faith? Have we cluttered our lives and our relationship with God with a bunch of idols and irregular unspiritual habits or practices? Because of that, have we lost our power with the Lord? Are we willing to rediscover where we need to be? That discovery can be made if we are willing to shed tears over our condition, supplicate before the Lord, look for and find the Lord and His message in His church, and communicate with Him there.