

2-1-1932

Studies in Hosea 1-3

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Recommended Citation

Laetsch, Th. (1932) "Studies in Hosea 1-3," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 3 , Article 15.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol3/iss1/15>

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Lammes“); 12, 11 („sie haben überwunden durch des Lammes Blut“). Wem diese Wolke von Zeugen für die „Theologie des Blutes Christi“ noch nicht genügt, der zeigt klar, daß er sich gegen die Wahrheit verschließt. In Summa, wie Luther zu 1 Petr. 1, 19 schreibt: „Wer nicht durch das Blut von Gott will Gnade erlangen, dem ist besser, daß er nimmer vor Gottes Augen trete, denn er erzürnt nur die Majestät je mehr und mehr damit.“ (IX, 996.)

Die hier dargelegten Wahrheiten sollten um des Gegensatzes willen, der sich im Modernismus herangebildet hat, um so mehr betont werden. Das kann auch sehr wohl geschehen in besonderen Serien während der Fastenzeit. Man könnte als Thema einer ganzen Serie stellen: Für sie alle gestorben, 2 Kor. 5, 15, und dann die einzelnen Punkte an der Hand folgender Stellen ausführen: 1 Kor. 15, 3; Röm. 5, 6—8; 2 Kor. 5, 14; Gal. 2, 20; Röm. 6, 10, 11; 1 Theß. 5, 10; Röm. 6, 8. Ein anderes Thema wäre: Christi stellvertretendes Opfer: Matth. 26, 31; Joh. 18, 8. 9. 14; Matth. 27, 26. 9. 10. Oder das Thema nach Gal. 3, 13, und die einzelnen Punkte nach Gen. 2, 17 und 3, 19; Röm. 5, 12. 19; Hesek. 18, 20. 24; Gal. 3, 10 und Luf. 18, 14; Röm. 8, 3; 2 Kor. 5, 21; 1 Petr. 1, 18. Oder man stelle als Thema für eine Serie: Gerecht durch Christi Blut, wozu die einzelnen Stellen passen: Eph. 1, 7; Röm. 5, 9; Apost. 20, 28; 1 Petr. 1, 18. 19; 1 Joh. 1, 7; Offenb. 7, 14; Hebr. 10, 19. 20.)*

Fr. C. Kreßmann.

Studies in Hosea 1—3.

Chapter 2, 1—13.

“In this second chapter the same cycle of events recurs as in the first, with this difference, that what is expressed by symbol in the one, is simply narrated in the other.” (*The Pulpit Commentary, in loco.*)

*) Das folgende Verzeichnis wird der weiteren Orientierung auf dem Gebiete dienen, da es einige der Hauptschriften aus unsern Kreisen nennt, die seit 1920 erschienen sind: *Lutheran Witness* (16 Leitartikel und kürzere Beiträge seit 1923, bis 1930 inkl.); „Die moderne Diesseitigkeitstheologie“, L. u. W. 1920, 270 ff.; „Die moderne Diesseitigkeitstheologie“, Syn.-Ber. d. Kans.-Dist. 1921; „Das Christentum als Jenseitsreligion“, L. u. W. 1922, 1 ff.; „Die rechte Weltanschauung“, L. u. W. 1923, 225 ff.; „Luther's Educational Ideals and Modern Vicious Tendencies“, *Luth. Witness*, No. 24, 1927; „The Social Theology and Modern Sunday-school Work“, *S. S. T. Q.*, April, 1928; *The Lutheran Principle of Indoctrination and the Pedagogy of Modernism* (pamphlet issued 1928); „The Bible and Its Modern Critics and Enemies“, Syn.-Ber. d. Ontario-Distr. 1928; „Modern Views about Inspiration — and the Truth of Scriptures“, *Princeton Theol. Review*, XXVII, 227 ff.; *The Religion of the Child and Other Essays* (book issued 1929); „The Means of Grace, with Special Reference to Modernism“, *Theol. Monthly*, IX, 289 ff. 321 ff. 362 ff.; „Modernism“; Report of the Norwegian Synod of the American Ev. Luth. Church, 1931.

God had threatened to the nation complete and final rejection. Yet, behold His grace! He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. With this in view, the Lord turns to the few faithful children who still remain in Israel and urges them to plead with their mother, with the nation, so that, if not the entire nation, at least some individuals be induced to repent. "Plead with your mother, plead." Strive, remonstrate, with her. Show her the error of her way and the imminent danger of eternal rejection. "For she is not My wife, neither am I her husband." Let us try to visualize the scene so impressively brought out in these words. Addressing His children, God, as it were, points with His finger to the woman regarded as His wife and pronounces that truly awful judgment: She, this one, אִיָּהּ, is not My wife, and I, אֲנִי, the full, emphatic form, not her husband. She may still call herself, and be called by others, My wife, since I have not yet publicly rejected her; but in reality our relations, intimate as they were, are severed. We are inwardly estranged, parted. She is no longer My wife; she is a harlot, an adulteress. "And let her put away her whoredom from her eyes and her adulteries from between her breasts." Her eyes are full of adultery, 2 Pet. 2, 14, glowing with the fire of impure, unholy love. Her immodest, lewd demeanor and behavior reveals her true character and incites in others that lust and passion which completely dominates her. Away with that! Let her remove every trace and vestige of adultery in thought and look and word and deed and again become My pure and chaste and loving and devoted wife. In other words, let her put away all idolatry, let her love and worship the Lord, her God, and serve Him only.

"Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst." If she refuses to put away her adulteries, My judgments shall surely overtake her, Israel shall become Jezreel, a signal example of the wrath and punitive justice of God. It shall become evident that she is no more My wife and I no longer her husband. Deprived of all her goods and all her gifts and all her charms, stripped naked as on the day she was born (cf. Ezek. 16, 3—5), she shall be left miserably to perish, forsaken, rejected, no longer My wife, אִיָּהּ אֲנִי, chap. 1, 9.

"And her children not will I pity, for children of whoredoms are they." Her children shall be in truth what their name implied, chap. 1, 6, אֲנִי אֲנִי. I shall have no pity, no compassion, no mercy, upon them. אֲנִי denotes the intense pitying yearning of the parent toward his offspring. "For they be the children of whoredoms," they are bastards and not children. How can it be otherwise? "For her mother has played the harlot." Like mother, like children; born by a harlot mother, illegitimate children, they have inherited from their

mother, to whom they owe life and being, the same adulterous, idolatrous spirit. "She that conceived them hath done shamefully," rather הוֹרִיטָהּ, has been put to shame. This makes the charge even more emphatic than the English translation would suggest. Her own sins put her to shame, cry out against her. So manifest has been her adultery that she cannot deny her guilt; she must hang her head in shame, even though she may endeavor to carry it proud enough and even boast of those shameful things of which she stands convicted. Moreover, she stands self-convicted. Out of her own mouth shall she be condemned. "For she said, I will go, follow, walk, after my lovers, who give my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drinks," all that I need for food and clothing and, in addition, luxuries. Unwittingly she reveals the real cause of her adultery and idolatry. No longer does she regard God as her loving Husband. She looks and longs for other lovers, foolishly, alas, vainly, hoping, like many another unfaithful wife, that the stagnant, foul waters of the stranger's love would prove sweeter than the running waters of her own well, Prov. 5, 15 ff. Her lovers, as is evident from the context, are other gods, idols, Baalim; cf. especially v. 14. True, God had showered down upon Israel the evidences of His divine love toward her. Her whole history was the record of an unexampled love of God toward a nation in itself no better than others, Deut. 7, 6 ff.; 9, 4 ff. Ezek. 16 applies to Israel as well as to Judah. Yet Israel grew weary of her Lord, doubted His love, longed for more freedom than she was permitted to enjoy, craved, alas, a freedom of sin and the flesh. Moreover, it cannot be denied that in the Old Testament covenant the Law predominated. Not only the religious life, but to a great extent also the social life of Israel was hedged about by many rules, ceremonies, regulations, often concerning seemingly insignificant details. These laws the God of all love, the loving Husband of Israel, had enacted for wise and salutary purposes; cf. Gal. 2, 23 ff.; 4, 1 ff. Still, how burdensome these laws, *e. g.*, Lev. 11, 24-47; 15, 1 ff., must have been even to the faithful Israelites, the loving spouse of the Lord God! Cf. Acts 15, 10. What an altogether unbearable yoke must they have seemed to such Israelites as had lost or never had possessed true love toward their God! How must they have chafed under these rules and regulations, in which they did not recognize the loving hand of God leading them to deeper knowledge of sin and heartfelt longing for the Savior! To them God was no longer a loving Husband, but a stern taskmaster, who could only command and threaten and condemn. Once love to her Husband had waned, Israel cast about for other lovers. The greater "freedom" which idol-worshippers round about her enjoyed appealed to her. There I will have bread and clothing and riches and luxuries, and, above all, there I will find love and appreciation and freedom. Why should I serve

Jehovah, who knows only to command and to punish? I want love and freedom, and I am going after my lovers to get what I have a right to enjoy. Clandestine trysts at first, secret visits to heathen temples or altars, there the gratification of her lust, her passion; and in the measure that her love to God waned, her adultery, her idolatry, became the more manifest, until at last she was in deed and truth a woman of whoredoms and adulteries. Shall this outrage continue? The Lord had not cast her aside at once. Good times continued, riches, power, influence, increased. It seemed that idolatry paid better wages than service of the Lord.

Alas, how often is this very story repeated even in New Testament times! Christians tire of their God and Savior. They weary of His service, who in unwearied service for them laid down His life that they might escape eternal death. Yet the wisdom, the riches, the pleasures, the honors, yea, also the sins and vices, of the world seem so much more alluring than the service of Christ. John 6, 66 f.; Gal. 1, 6; 2 Tim. 4, 10; Rev. 2, 4. 14. 20; 3, 2. 15. And does not worldliness, unionism, conforming to modern ideas, actually seem to build the Church, increase its numbers and its influence?

Does the Church not seem justified in following after other gods, in making common cause with the world? No, never. "Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way," literally, behold me a-hedging, stopping up, thy way, "with thorns and make [literally, wall] a wall, that she shall not find her paths." She shall be lost as in a labyrinth. Note the change in the beginning of this verse from the third to the second person. No longer is Israel simply "she," "this one," but turning to her, as though overwhelmed by His everlasting love, God again speaks *to* her, v. 6. Though the address is in the form of a threat: I am going to stop you, yet the purpose of that threat is her salvation, her return. Immediately, however, He turns away from her, again speaking of her in the third person, v. 7, bringing out to the fullest measure her folly in leaving God. She had said: I will go after my lovers for my needs and luxuries and love; God says: "She shall follow after," pursue, run after, "her lovers," the hot lust of her adultery driving her on; "but she shall not overtake them, and she shall seek them, but shall not find them." The Lord has walled her in. The Lord has withholden His hand from her. And her lovers, where are they? If they love her, why do they not hear her pitiful wail? If they are able to give bread and drink, why do they not help? Israel has left God, and not only has God left her, her very idols have left her, they will not hear. She is lost, helplessly lost. How often has the Church in time of need called to her idols only to make a similar experience! Worldliness, unionism, Modernism, is suicidal. See Deut. 32, 37; Judg. 10, 14; Jer. 2, 28.

"Then she shall say, I will go and return to my first Husband,

for then it was better with me than now." The efforts of God to win back His wayward spouse shall not be in vain. As the prodigal son in misery and shame turned his thoughts back to the erstwhile despised home, so in the hour of her utter forsakenness apostate Israel will think of her former Husband. No longer will she seek, no longer run after, no longer go after, her lovers; no, "I will go." The same word used v. 5, there the ungodly resolve to serve idols, here the blessed determination to return to God. I will retrace my steps, I will "return to my Husband," for there, after all, I was better beloved, better taken care of, than by my lovers. See Luke 15, 17. 18. That is ever the language of repentant sinners who have come to a knowledge of their folly in leaving God and running after idols.

At the moment that God speaks these words, Israel was far from returning and submitting to her Husband in willing obedience. Therefore He must continue to show her the folly and wickedness of her way. "And she, וְהִיא , she knew not that I, וְאֲנִי , I gave her the corn and the must and the oil fresh from the press," the raw material in the form presented by God. The article before each item denotes that which is in her possession, consequently all she had. "And silver I multiplied to her and gold." Not only the necessities of life, but riches in great abundance I gave to her. Like a loving husband, I richly supplied her with all and more than she needed, not only necessities, but comforts and conveniences and luxuries. All that she had, and she had a-plenty, all she owed to Me, "she made for Baal." The asyndetic construction makes the contrast the greater, the ingratitude, the wickedness, of Israel the more prominent. Whether we translate: They made, or prepared, for Baal, *i. e.*, into ornaments, etc., for Baal, used it for his worship, or: They made it into Baal, cf. Is. 44, 17, or: They offered it unto Baal (Jerome), cf. Ex. 10, 25; 2 Kings 17, 32, the meaning is clear. What I had given them, they used for their idolatry. Alas, not only heathens use their God-given riches, talents, etc., in serving their idols! How many Christians spend money, time, energy, and other gifts of God not in His service, but for selfish, even sinful, purposes, their god being their belly! Else why so many and such great deficits in church treasuries?

V. 9. "Therefore will I return and take away My corn in the time thereof and My wine in the season thereof and will recover My wool and My flax *given* to cover her nakedness." Israel had spoken of "her bread," etc., v. 5. In a certain sense it was hers, the gift of a loving Husband to His beloved wife. Since she did not and would not recognize it as such, I will show her that it is not hers absolutely, that, after all, all she has is *Mine*, Mine to give if I so wish, mine to withhold if I so desire, mine to take away if I am so inclined. I shall take away My corn in its time, etc. Seemingly these gifts are already in her possession, the harvest is ready to be gathered in, the

flax and wool already spun and ready to be woven into beautiful dressing material, — and suddenly all is gone. Israel's garners remain empty, their cups, already stretched out to be filled, are drawn back empty; yea, their very bodies lack clothing, for the Lord hath taken away His gifts, withheld them from their selfish, idolatrous hands.

V. 10. "And now," at this time, "will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no man shall deliver her out of My hands." The word lewdness, נבלה, occurs only here. It has undoubtedly a meaning similar to that of נבלה, derived from נבל, to wither, to act foolishly, with the connotation of wickedly. נבלה is frequently used for extreme moral depravity, especially in *puncto sexti*, to show its folly and wickedness. See 2 Sam. 13, 12; Judg. 19, 23. 24. God will show up Israel before her friends, lovers, the heathen idols, v. 13, as a wicked, foolish woman; I will show her up stripped of all her fineries, all her beauty gone, worn out by her adulteries, having nothing to show but lewdness. And then her gods will be the first ones to turn away from her in disgust, to forsake her; and no one shall rescue her out of My hands, not only because they cannot, but because they will not; even if they could, they are no longer interested in her. Can the folly, the foolishness, of idol-worship be more graphically described? Yet, how true to reality is this description! The Christian idolizing the world, selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, flirting, coquetting, with the world, worshipping her idols, may be welcomed by the world as long as he seems successful; but in the hour of need, in the hour of shame, where is his idolized world? His gods forsake him. The world is the first to clear her skirts of him, has only contempt and words of bitter mockery and disdain. He that prefers the world to God will be put to shame before the world by God. Cf. Nah. 4, 5; Lam. 1, 8; Jer. 13, 26; Ezek. 16, 41; Is. 47, 3.

V. 11. "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast-days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts." חג, the name of the three festivals recurring annually: Passover, Pentecost, Feast of Tabernacles, Ex. 24, 14 ff. New moons are monthly, Sabbaths weekly festival days. Solemn feasts מועדי, are enumerated Lev. 23 as follows: Sabbath, v. 3; Passover, v. 5; Pentecost, v. 10; Feast of Trumpets, v. 24; Great Day of Atonement, v. 27; Feast of Tabernacles, v. 33. The new moons did not belong to this latter class; cf. Num. 10, 10. The distinguishing feature of the "solemn feasts" was the holy convocation, Lev. 23, 2 ff., the assembling of the congregation. All these various feasts were instituted by God to be days of rest and worship, days sacred to the Lord, memorials of His unbounded grace and merciful kindness, and, for that very reason, days of joy and nation-wide rejoicing in the Lord. Num. 10, 10; Ps. 122, 1 ff.; 42, 4. Israel still retained the outward celebration of these festivals of God; yet she had made them feasts of her own. Mark,

God says not *My* feasts, but *her* feasts, new moons, etc. Israel had stamped them with a character altogether foreign to their intention. Her purpose was not to come to worship God, her joy not the holy joy of serving her gracious Lord. No; they were to them merely national holidays, occasions for social gatherings, for joyous merry-making, yea, for grossly carnal enjoyments and pleasures. Since she had desecrated God's feasts, God as a punishment will take away *her* feasts, even that outer shell to which she still clung after having thrown away the kernel. Every festival shall be removed, every joy taken away. Alas, how often are the festivities of the Church of our day not so much memorials of God's grace as occasions for self-aggrandizement, spread-eagle orations, publicity for publicity's sake, etc.! How long will the long-suffering of God permit these miserable shells to be retained by the Church?

V. 12. "I will destroy her vines and her fig-trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers gave me." These, like their products, v. 5, Israel had regarded as gifts of Baalim, her lovers, as a reward for the faithful service rendered to her gods. Mark, however, that the prophet uses a word for "reward" which properly means the reward or wages paid to a harlot, רְמַיִם. If the vines and fig-trees are rewards, they are rewards paid out to adulterous Israel, the wages paid her for her harlotry. But they *are* not rewards granted by her idols. Folly supreme to imagine that Baalim can grant vines and fig-trees, wealth and prosperity. It is the Lord who alone can give them; and ungrateful, idolatrous Israel, attributing her prosperity to her idols, shall to her sorrow experience the impotence of these dead idols. The Lord who gave will destroy not only the products, but the very vines and fig-trees; He will change the beautiful vineyards and orchards into a forest, a thicket, a jungle; and the beasts of the field shall eat the fruits, because there will be no more people to pick them. Cp. 2 Kings 17, 25 for a literal fulfilment of this prophecy.

V. 13. "I will visit upon her the days of Baalim wherein she burned incense to them," so will I punish her for the days in which she served Baalim, "and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels," not in order to meet her God as a bride adorned for her husband, no, "she went after her lovers *and forgot Me,*" Me, אֲנִי, she forgot, "saith the *Lord.*" Can it be possible to forget Jehovah, the God of the Covenant, her Creator, her Redeemer, her Husband? Israel did. Me she forgot, says Jehovah, the Unchangeable One, the ever Holy One, to whom idolatry is and remains an abomination. Did we never forget Him?

V. 14. "Therefore"—the unalterable Lord is about to proclaim His sentence. What will that be? "Behold!"—we listen with bated breath, trembling at the thought that now He will forever reject her.

What do we hear? "Behold, I will allure her," I will speak to her as does a lover to the chosen maiden of his heart. Because she has forgotten Me, the Lord, therefore, behold, I will woo her, I will renew My efforts to win her back to My heart and bosom. Here is the mystery of divine grace. Here is mercy such as God alone is capable of. Our sin, our apostasy, our shameful ingratitude, our vile adultery, moves Him to pity, to love us. We bow in adoration before this incomprehensible God of mercy. Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of hosts! For He is the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, Ex. 34, 6. 7.

THEO. LAETSCH.

In Memory of Prof. George Mezger, D. D.

1857—1931.

On the sixth day of November there was laid to rest in the land of his birth, which he had left fifty-six years ago and to which he had returned in 1923, a man whose name deserves to be retained in loving and grateful memory within our circles. It is Prof. Georg Mezger, D. D., for twenty-seven years the teacher of Homiletics, Catechetics, and Pastoral Theology at our Seminary, for the past eight years teaching at the Seminary of the German Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Saxony at Berlin-Zehlendorf. Mezger was a quiet, unassuming, unobtrusive person, at all times "Gentleman George," as he was frequently called. And still he exercised a far-reaching, wholesome influence, due to the thoroughness of his work, his calm, objective judgment, and his splendid gift of logical reasoning and clear presentation.

Mezger was born in Braunschweig, Germany, December 18, 1857, and came to America in 1875. After graduating from our St. Louis Seminary in 1881, he served the congregations at Waterloo, Iowa, for four years, at Okawville, Ill., for ten years, and at Decatur, Ill., for one year. During this pastorate of fifteen years under varying conditions he gathered that practical experience which he put to such good use later in the classroom and in his literary work. At the same time his pastoral work, varied and oftentimes arduous as it was, did not keep him from continuing his studies. His clear, Scriptural, well-arranged sermons, his essays at conferences, attracted the attention of his fellow-pastors to him as a man of outstanding gifts. In 1896 he was nominated and chosen for the chair of Homiletics and Catechetics at Concordia Seminary and, in September of the same year, installed in his new sphere of duties. Side by side with those men who at that time constituted the faculty — Pieper, Stoeckhardt,