

Ir-ot-34
I Will Betroth Thee Unto Me in Righteousness
(Hosea)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Hosea teaches much about similitudes. This includes how **Hosea's life was a similitude of Christ betrothing Himself to a people who would become faithless, yet redeem them**).

I. The Lord confirmed through Hosea that He teaches through parables. That is by types, foreshadowings and similitudes. He did this first by clear statements.

A. "I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, *and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets*" (Hosea 12:10) (Emphasis added).

B. A similitude is a living parable.

1. The Lord put men through situations that were living parables. I.e., Moses led Israel out of bondage to a promised land, to witness of Jesus' salvation from the bondage of sin into the Promised Land of Eternal Life. And especially by saving Israel through the sacrifice of the blood of the Passover lamb, which taught of Christ's ultimate sacrifice which is the only way to Eternal Life.

C. In fact all of Exodus contained living parables of what Jesus would do to help us overcome the bondage of Sin and Death and inherit Heaven.

D. Our modern prophets also verify the Lord's usage of similitudes.

"...many [ancient prophets] lived in special situations or did particular things that singled them out as types and patterns and shadows of that which was to be in the life of [Christ]" (Elder Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, p. 448).

II. Furthermore, the Lord continued teaching through parables in Mortal Life.

A. Some of them were oral, as in the parables of the Sower or the Good Samaritan.

B. But **some were living parables!**

1. For example, when He cleansed lepers, who were considered "unclean," He was not just having compassion; He was also performing a living parable showing He had the power to cleanse the spiritually unclean.

2. Similarly, when He healed the blind, deaf, lame, these were living parables teaching He had power to heal the spiritually blind, spiritually deaf, and spiritually faltering.

3. And finally when He raised the dead to mortal life, He was giving living parables that He would eventually Raise all the Dead into Immortality.

III. Furthermore, He asked Hosea to live his very life as a similitude of Him. This "living parable" affirmed that Jehovah is like a Covenanted Bridegroom. And Israel is His Covenanted Bride.

A. When one considers the immense gap between the Lord and man, it should create awe that He would speak of His relationship to us in terms of something so endearing and personal as an intimate marital relationship. Yet so He does!

B. Furthermore, this was His consistent portrayal. To review other examples of Christ as Bridegroom, refer to my previous Lesson 4 on Adam and Eve [See Section I:C&D]; and Lesson 20 on Ruth and Boaz [See all of Section II].

- C. Another example is Isaiah who portrays the Lord calling Israel His bride. “For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name.” (Isaiah 54:5).

III. When the Lord covenanted with Israel at Mount Sinai, Israel was set apart as His people, and the covenant they made with Him was considered as holy as a marriage betrothal. Betrothals were considered as sacred as the final wedding vow.

- A. Through Hosea’s living parable, the Lord shows **Israel’s worship of other gods has made them as a faithless harlot.**
- B. For those who are appalled at the thought of a prophet deliberately marrying a harlot, Hosea’s wife was not likely a literal harlot. If we read the scriptures carefully, we find that she came out of a people **[Israel as a whole] who had begun to worship false idols, rather than the Lord. Thus they were all as adulterers.**

IV. We should feel awe that the Lord is revealing, through Hosea, that in spite of all the faithlessness of His people, eventually He would cleanse them and forgive them. He would “betroth [them] unto me in righteousness.”

A. Note that He is really speaking of all the generations of Israel as a whole, and in the far distant future. That is: **He would eventually come to offer Himself in atonement for their sins in the Meridian of Time, and particularly in the last days He would re-gather a more humbled people who would accept His atonement, and His mercies, and prove themselves faithful.**

B. However, His message is also valid for any individual who strays from his covenants, but returns in repentance and in true humility. Through proper authority and ordinances, they can be received again into His powerful covenantal relationship.

V. So dominant is the symbolism of the Lord as Bridegroom, not only in Hosea, but throughout the *Bible*, **it can be shown to make up a great chiasm encompassing the entire Bible!**

- A. The Bible begins with the story of Adam and Eve as Bridegroom and Bride. For Adam is a “figure” of Christ as Bridegroom (Romans 5:14). Throughout the Old “Covenant [or Testament],” the imagery of the Lord as Bridegroom is continually reinforced. For it was based on the Old Covenant made between Jehovah and Israel at Sinai.
- B. When Christ came in the flesh, **His words and actions deliberately portray Him as the Bridegroom who has now come!** Such as with the Woman at the Well; such as in the Parable of the Ten Virgins and in more than one parables of the ultimate Wedding Feast. [But there are far more examples].
- C. Above all, His Sermon on the Mount was a portrayal of **The New Covenant now being offered to replace the Old Covenant as given previously by Jehovah on Mount Sinai!**
- D. Like all chiasmi, the “Christ as Bridegroom” imagery has its great turning point --- actually occurring upon the True Cross! [Chiasm means “Cross:”. There He fulfills at least eight manifestations of Himself as Bridegroom: One of which is that He has paid the Bride price for His people. Another is that He offers to His Bride His

Covering, as is part of Israelite weddings. A third is that His Bride, as Adam's, comes to Him from wounds in His side.

- E. Like all Chiasmi, the same concepts in the Old Testament are now repeated in The New Testament, which does indeed continue to use Christ as Bridegroom imagery, particularly in Revelations (See for example Revelation 3:18-21).
- F. Finally, in "Revelation" Chapters 21 and 22, Christ's Return is powerfully imaged as the Bridegroom returning to receive His Bride (the faithful Saints).
- G. There all the imagery given first in Genesis [the Tree of Life, the Living Fountain, etc.], are not only repeated, but are highly magnified! [Another feature of a chiasmic structure]. And the Bride now reigns in glory beside the Faithful Bridegroom!

- H. To demonstrate this powerful chiasmic structure, I have produced a video which shows more detail of how prevalent the same Bridegroom imagery is throughout the Bible, and how it thus forms the Bible into a great Chiasmic Structure. For background inspiration, the video can be found [free] on the following website and on YouTube.

To access the website go to www.thefinaldaysofawe.com. View the video entitled "Jehovah as Bridegroom."

And to access the same video on YouTube, go to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=225&v=RBCkN40L2Jw.

Hosea revealed the Lord would eventually redeem His faithless Bride. The atonement/Cross, would be the great turning point of when He would do so.

The Atonement fulfilled many elements of the Bridegroom/Bride relationship. However, because most of Israel in Jesus' time rejected Christ's covenant, and it went to the Gentiles, it would be in the Latter-days that Israel, as Hosea foretold, would be brought back into this choice, covenanted relationship with their Bridegroom.

Then all His people of every generation would eventually reign at His side in His Eternal and glorious Promised Land.