**Jezreel, Immanuel**

Hosea 1: 3-5 and 10-11

Arkansas Loving Church, Pastor Sungtae Hong, 6/27/2021

The image of God that most Christians come to think of is the image of 'loving God.' However, the image that the book of Hosea introduces to us is that of 'enraged God.' We are quite unfamiliar with this image. Why does the book of Hosea introduce to us the God that we are not accustomed to? Let's find out the answer by examining the name of the son of Hosea, the son that the lewd wife, Gomer, gave birth to her husband.

[Hosea 1: 3-4, ESV] 3 So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. 4 And the LORD said to him, "Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.

God told Hosea to name his son, 'Jezreel.' The meaning of the name was 'God plants seeds.' In fact, Jezreel was the name of a fertile land that most people knew. It was so famous that the name was not necessarily needed to be translated. Why did God tell Hosea to name his son such a famous place? Wasn't it supposed to be a blessing?

In the time of Hosea, the name of the king of Israel was Jeroboam II. He belonged to the 'kingdom of Jehu.' This kingdom was made through treason against the kingdom of Omri, of which king Ahab was well-known. The place where Jehu committed treason and annihilated the entire family of Ahab was Jezreel. So, the meaning of the name of Hosea's son was 'the house of Jehu shall be punished for the blood of Jezreel, and the kingdom of the house of Israel shall come to an end.' Furthermore, God was telling that the kingdom of Jehu would be destroyed, that all the wealth that Israel had enjoyed would vanish, and that the kingdom would come to an end.

Jeroboam II built a rich nation with the help and grace of God. However, he gave all glories to Baal and Asherah, the idols that his great-grand father, Jehu, destroyed together with the house of Ahab. God regretted having established the kingdom of Jehu. Why? Because they worshipped idols nonetheless God had helped them so much. Thus, God gave a son named 'Jezreel,' to Hosea, and told him that the kingdom of Jehu would come to an end before his son became an adult.

Hosea delivered the word of God to the people, but they did not listen to him. They made the 'loving God who had chosen their ancestors' their shield. Then, they hid their sins and lewdness of worshipping idols behind the shield. They lived in the false peace believing that 'the people of God would not perish.'

While the son of Hosea, 'Jezreel,' was growing as the 'symbol of judgment' of the 'enraged God,' another child was growing in Jedah. Who would he be?

[Isaiah 7: 14, ESV] Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

This verse is well-known to almost all Christians. This verse was, as a matter of fact, the message to the king of Juda, Ahaz, of that time, from Isaiah who was sent by God. Ahaz was one of the wickedest of all the kings of Judah, and was an ardent idol worshipper.

We know how this verse was fulfilled. Later, the son of God came to this world through a virgin and the verse was completed as such. However, actually, this message was given to Ahaz in person and, thus, a real son named 'Immanuel' must have been given to Ahaz.

We don't know 'how' this verse was realized, but one thing is sure. 'Immaneul' was growing in South Judah, and 'Jezreel' was growing in North Israel. 'Immaneul' of Judah was the symbol of the salvation of God, and 'Jezreel' of Israel was the symbol of the judgment of God.

In this situation, God in Hosea suddenly gave the message of hope for a while right after he had poured over his wrath in giving the meanings of the names of the three children of Hosea.

[Hosea 1: 10-11, ESV] 10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," it shall be said to them, "Children of the living God." 11 And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall be the day of Jezreel.

I think that these verses were accomplished, at first, through Hezkiah, son of Ahaz. Hezekiah had had the rightful mind-set even before he sat on the throne of kingdom. One of the greatest things that he had done was not making the Passover the feast of his own people only. He invited the people of North Israel to the Passover. Many people ridiculed, but some of them listened to the invitation of Hezkiah. They came down to Jerusalem. The people learned the love of God shown in the form of wrath and judgment, and they knelt down to God. After that, the grace of restoration was given to them. The chief of all these things was Hezkiah. Because of him, they became the people of God.

When the son of God came to this world, the wondrous miracle happened again. Both the Israelites and the gentiles knelt down to angry God, repented, and confessed their sins, the sins that they obscenely kissed to the idols. Then, the grace of salvation was given to them. The chief was Jesus himself. Because of him, we all became the family of God.

We need this, too, today. We need to follow our chief, Jesus Christ, and face the wrath and anger of God. We should not seek a shielding idol in disguise of 'loving God.' In such lives of seeking the shielding idol, only 'Jezreel' exists and the judgment of God approaches rapidly. We should rather go forward to face the 'wrath and anger of God.' We need to offer a true service by going forward to him in the name of Jesus Christ, confessing our lewdness and sins, kneeling down to God, and truly experiencing the joy of salvation. Then, we will be able to experience 'Immaneul' in our daily lives.