

28 – Hosea: God’s Love for an Unfaithful Wife

- Hosea, whose **name means “salvation,”** ministered to northern kingdom of Israel (also called Ephraim, after its largest tribe).
- The names *Hosea*, *Joshua*, and *Jesus* are all derived from the same Hebrew root word. The word *hoshea* means “salvation,” but “Joshua” and “Jesus” include an additional idea: “Yahweh Is Salvation.” As God’s messenger, Hosea offers the possibility of salvation if only the nation will turn from idolatry back to God.
- Hosea prophesied to the Northern Kingdom of Israel for about **45 years immediately before its judgment and destruction by the Assyrians.** Hosea served Israel as Jeremiah did Judah – the final warnings before judgment of both kingdoms. Jeremiah prophesied to Judah around 625 to 585 BC, while Hosea spoke to Israel from about 755 to 710 BC. Like Jeremiah, God had Hosea do some strange things, and he suffered great personal tragedy which became a dramatic illustration of Israel’s tragedy.
- **Hosea’s personal tragedy is an intense illustration of Israel’s national tragedy.** It is a story of one-sided love and faithfulness that represents the relationship between Israel and God. Gomer is married to Hosea, Israel is betrothed to God. Both relationships gradually disintegrate—Gomer runs after other men, Israel runs after other gods. Israel’s spiritual adultery is seen in Gomer’s physical adultery. God is ready to divorce His wife, Israel, but He promises reconciliation and renewal of the covenant between them.
- **Hosea’s Message:** a complete outline of the ways of God with His earthly people:
 - ✓ **God suffers when His people are unfaithful to Him;**
 - ✓ **God cannot condone sin;**
 - ✓ **God will never cease to love His own, and, consequently,**
 - ✓ **He seeks to win back those who have forsaken Him.**
 - ✓ **Although a loving and caring God had provided their abundance and prosperity;**
 - ✓ **Their sin, disloyalty and abandonment of Him will force Him to vindicate His justice with judgment.**
 - ✓ **Thus, God is going to use their enemies as His instrument of judgment. Shortly they will be history.**
 - ✓ **Ultimately, however, He will reconcile with them, and renew them.**
- Hosea is a book about God’s redeeming love. It is about the consequences of betrayal, but the restoration out of consuming love. *NOTE: If you want to better understand this kind of love, and get a better idea of what is happening in this book of Hosea, read Francine Rivers’ book “Redeeming Love.” This is a fictional story, but it is based on Hosea. It is a wonderful way to further understand the love God has for Israel, and His love for us.*
- In Hosea 12:10 God says **“I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.”** Throughout the Word we see over 200 other literary devices used to get our attention and help us understand just what God is saying. This book of Hosea is a dramatic illustration of this concept. This story was actually lived by Hosea, but it is allegorical and metaphoric in nature, and Gomer stands as a type for Israel. God does this repeatedly in scripture.
- **Christ in Hosea**—Matthew 2:15 applies Hosea 11:1, to Christ in Egypt: **“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.”** Matthew quotes the second half of this verse to show that the Exodus of Israel from Egypt as a new nation was a prophetic type of Israel’s Messiah who was also called out of Egypt in His childhood.



Early manuscript illustration: *Hosea, Gomer and the Three Children*

Do these verses echo here? **“Hear the word of the LORD, You children of Israel, For the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: “There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying, killing and stealing and committing adultery, they break all restraint, with bloodshed upon bloodshed.”** (Hosea 4:1-2) Sound familiar? The nation of Israel has left the knowledge of the truth and followed the idolatrous ways of their pagan neighbors. A central message is in chapter 4, verse 6—**“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”**

