
SURVEY OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA

Eyanrin Sunday (Evang.)

INTRODUCTION

At this time, Israel was filled with Idolatry, had abandoned God and His commands, and was spiritually and morally Bankrupt. They worshiped pagan shrines and adopted pagan deities, practicing ritually prostitution, and human sacrifice. This led Hosea and other prophets to use prostitution as a “word picture” of the people’s unfaithfulness to the Lord.

It is absolutely necessary that we give a brief biography of “Hosea”.

Who is “Hosea”?

Hosea, is the son of Beerī, *Hosea* means: “Yahweh has rescued” or in other word “salvation.”

In Hebrew, it is the same name as *Joshua* (**Numbers**

13:16; Deuteronomy 32:44).

Both *Hosea* and *Joshua* are related to the name *Yeshua* (meaning “to save”), **Marriage as a Metaphor for the Covenant (*Hosea 1:2-3:5*)**

The first section of the book is organized around the theme of marriage as a metaphor for God’s relationship with the people.

According to this metaphor, God is like a faithful husband who is married to Israel, a faithless wife. This section announces judgment on Israel and then promises restoration following punishment.

A. Hosea’s Marriage to Gomer and the Names of Their Children (*Hosea 1:2-2:1*)

Hosea marries Gomer, “a wife of prostitution,” as an act symbolizing the covenant relationship between God and the people; God is the faithful husband and Israel the faithless wife. Hosea gives the children symbolic names—“Jezreel,” which means “God sows,” but was also the name of a place in which the kings of Israel had committed atrocities;

“Lo-ruhamah” (or “Not Shown **Mercy**”), because God no longer will have mercy on the people; and “Lo-ammi” (or “Not My People”). The end of the chapter reverses the condemnation implied by the children’s names into a proclamation of hope: “For great shall be the day of Jezreel. Say to your brother, Ammi [“My People”], and to your sister, Ruhamah [“Shown Mercy”]” (1:11b-2:1).

B. God the Husband’s Speech to Israel the Wife (2:2-23)

This is a long and complex speech in which the prophet proclaims a message from God to the people. In the message, God first says, “She is not my wife, and I am not her husband” (2:2). God promises to punish the people for their unfaithfulness.

The chapter closes with God promising restoration and reunion: “*On that day...you will call me, ‘My husband,’...And I will take you for my wife forever*” (2:16, 19)

C. God’s Command to Hosea to Love “an Adulteress” (3:1-5)

God commands Hosea “again” to love an adulteress, “*just as the Lord loves the people of Israel.*”

The chapter includes the hope-filled announcement that the Israelites will return to God.

3. Prophetic Messages of Hosea (4:1-14:9)

The second section of the book consists entirely of prophetic messages that Hosea delivered. These messages are generally grouped into sections chronologically;

Chapters 4-8 likely reflect the earlier period of Hosea’s ministry, from the reign of **Jeroboam II** (died 746 BCE) until the reign of Pekah (died 732 BCE); chapters 9-12 reflect the time of peace following the Syro-Ephraimite war (735-732 BCE); and chapters 13-14 reflect the last years of the **Northern Kingdom**, which was destroyed in 722 BCE. Chapters 4-11 present one subsection; chapters 12-14 a second subsection.

A. The Lord’s Lawsuit against Israel (4:1-11:11)

Opening Summary of Hosea’s Proclamation (4:1-3)

A brief prophetic message was declared at the beginning of the collection of Hosea’s messages, which serves as a summary of Hosea’s proclamation: “*The Lord has an indictment [lawsuit] against the inhabitants of the land.*”

Further Messages of Judgment 4:4-10:15)

This is a collection of prophetic messages of judgment sent by God through Hosea. The messages highlight the corrupt and incompetent leadership of the priests and prophets, especially

those who worship other gods alongside the Lord and who try to silence Hosea's witness. Hosea also condemns the moral evil and political intrigues of the nation.

God the Loving Parent (11:1-11)

A tender, even heart-wrenching, message from God about the Lord's love for the child Israel: "When Israel was a child, I loved him....It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them in my arms" (11:1, 3). God promises that on the other side of judgment, the relationship will continue: *"How can I give you up, Ephraim?...I will not execute my fierce anger"* (11:8-9).

B. The Lord's Lawsuit against Israel and Judah (11:12-14:19)

Messages of Judgment (11:12-13:16) This is another collection of prophetic messages of judgment. The messages highlight the corrupt and wicked political leadership of Israel; they also include the announcement that God has a lawsuit with Judah. In addition to the condemnation of the nation's leaders, the wealthy are condemned as are those who worship gods other than the Lord.

Summary of Hosea's Proclamation: A Call to Repent (14:1-3)

"Return...to the Lord your God," says the prophet; "say to him, 'Take away all guilt ... Assyria shall not save us...we will say no more, 'Our God,' to the work of our hands'" (14:1-3). This call to repent has been made to serve as the closing summary of Hosea's proclamation.

God the Faithful Father (14:5-9)

A hopeful message has been placed last in the book; it promises that God will make Israel blossom, take root, grow, be fragrant, and flourish.

THREE LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE SURVEY OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA

LESSON ONE

God is faithful to his people, even when they are unfaithful.

In the book of Hosea, God uses Hosea's marriage to represent his love for his people. Hosea's wife was unfaithful. She continually ran from Hosea and forgot about his loving care for her.

She chased other lovers but Hosea went after her and brought her home.

We are so much like Hosea's wife when we chase after the things of this world, rather than chasing God. God loves us and intimately cares for us, provides for us, protects

us and is completely faithful to us. Hosea didn't ask his wife to change – to earn his love, but rather his love for her was meant to change her.

That is how Jesus Christ loves us! Jesus Died on the cross for us – to grant us “Salvation” through sincere repentance.

LESSON TWO

God disciplines his people when they are unfaithful. Israel had been unfaithful to God and rejected Him and replaced him with pagan idols. They had sown to the wind and God warned them that they would reap a whirlwind of judgment. But they refused to listen and continued to sow to the wind. Their sowing was slow over many years, but when God's judgment came, it was swift – like a whirlwind. But even in their sin, if they would turn back and sow righteousness, steadfast love and seek the Lord, God would bless them. But instead they continued to trust in their own way and harden their hearts.

If we sow bad decisions in our lives, we will suffer. Sometimes we might be tempted to think that we can get away with doing wrong, but God always sees and knows. Eventually, it does catch up with us.⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he

also reap.⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

⁹And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:7-9)

LESSON THREE

God has a deep affection for his people. The final chapter of Hosea is a beautiful chapter in the Old Testament. It reveals the loving heart of God, as his people experience his mercy, love, blessings and complete restoration after a time of discipline and judgment.

God has a deep affection for his people. He compares his people to the beauty of a lily, the strength of the roots of a tree, the value of the olive, and the delightful fragrance of Lebanon.

It was not their sin that was bringing discipline but rather their refusal to repent of their sin, that was leading to discipline. But God took no pleasure in knowing that they would face judgment. He promised to leave a remnant to restore them because of his deep affection for them.

In the end, the fame of Israel is restored as God promises to look after them and be like an evergreen cypress, providing fruitfulness to them.

Conclusion:

In the book of Hosea, we see that we serve a God of love and a God of wrath. The final words of Hosea 14 tell us, Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the Lord are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.

Those who are wise, understand these things and whoever is discerning, knows them. For the ways of the Lord are right and the upright walk in them, but those who decide to continue in their sin, will stumble.

MAY GOD BLESS HIS WORD IN JESUS NAME.. AMEN