

HOSEA

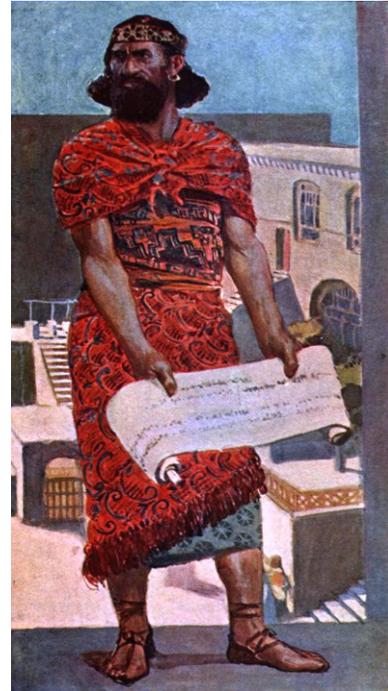
Message:

God's Loyalty-Love for His Adulterous People!

Hosea's marriage to faithless Gomer serves as a "living metaphor" to picture God's *loyalty-love* (דֶּסֶדֶד, *hesed*) for His adulterous wife, the children of Israel—a love that requires condemnation and judgement for sin, but also ensures an ultimate restoration to be brought about by David's greater Son, Jesus Christ.

Title:

The Hebrew title, *hoshea*, "Hosea," as in the case of the other Minor Prophets, is derived from the book's author and principal character. Hosea's name means "salvation is of Yahweh" and should be spelled "Hoshea," but has come down to us in English as Hosea. The name of the prophet Hosea is the same as the last king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, also named Hoshea (ca. 732-722). In order to help distinguish between the two names, the English Bible has always spelled the name of the prophet "Hosea" without the second "h." This is the difference between the Hebrew letters *sin and shin*.



Author:

All that is known about the prophet is derived from what he records about himself in the first three chapters of the book. Apart from the name of Hosea's father Beerī (1:1), nothing is known about his family ancestry. He does mention the name of his wife Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim (1:3). Hosea's marriage to adulterous Gomer was commanded by God to vividly illustrate Israel's covenant unfaithfulness to God through her incessant spiritual adultery. In the same way, God assigned a symbolic name to each of Hosea's three children to illustrate Israel's upcoming judgment and exile. Hosea's firstborn son was named *Jezreel* in order to remind Israel of the atrocities that Jehu had done there. God would soon judge Israel for the sins committed there by bringing about their military defeat at the same city. His daughter was named *Lo-ruhamah*, meaning "Not loved," in order to announce that Israel's sins were going to cause Yahweh to temporarily withdraw His love from Israel. Hosea's third child was named *Lo-ammi*, meaning "Not My people," to symbolize the approaching disruption of the people's covenant relationship with Yahweh.¹

Objections of Critical Scholars. Many critical scholars have conjectured that Hosea's prophecies and references to Judah (1:7; 4:15; 5:5, 10-14; 6:4, 11; et al.) are interpolations by later editors (redactors) since most of the book contains prophecies against the Northern

¹The development of the *symbolic significance* that lay behind God's naming of Hosea's children was adapted from Ronald B. Allen's insightful contribution on "Hosea," in *Nelson Study Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher, et al. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 1445.

Kingdom of Israel.² Harrison provides a good discussion on Hosea’s Judean prophecies in which he points out that there is no good reason to deny that Hosea recorded the Judean prophecies.³ Other critics say that the salvation passages (e.g., 11:8-11; 14:2-9) are so different from the judgment passages that someone else must have written them. However, the mixing of judgment and salvation messages is quite common in the prophets.⁴ Nearly all Jewish and Christian scholars have regarded the entire book as the product of Hosea himself.⁵

Date of Composition:

Hosea 1:1 provides the chronological framework for the time period in which Hosea prophesied. He list four kings in Judah and one king of Israel.

Judah	Israel
Uzziah (792-740 B.C.)	Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.)
Jotham (750-736 B.C.)	
Ahaz (735-715 B.C.)	
Hezekiah (729-686 B.C.)	

Many commentators have puzzled over Hosea’s mention of four Judean kings, and the obvious lack of any reference to Israel’s remaining six kings, following the death of Jeroboam II. That is, he did not mention Israel’s later kings who ruled at the same time as their Judean counterparts Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (i.e., Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea). It is conjectured that he only mentions Jeroboam II because he was the last king assigned by divine appointment. God had promised Jehu that because of his obedience in carrying out His wrath against Ahab and Jezebel his descendants would rule Israel for four generations (2 Kgs. 10:30; 15:12). This promise was fulfilled by Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, and Zechariah. Zechariah, who only reigned six months before being assassinated, was the last legitimate king in Israel (2 Kgs. 15:8-10). The remaining five kings of Israel were all bloody usurpers (Hos. 4:2b; 7:7; 8:4a).⁶

Duration of Hosea’s Prophetic Ministry. According to the record, Hosea may have prophesied for nearly 35 years, from 755-722 B.C.⁷ He began during the latter part of the reign of Israel’s greatest king, Jeroboam II, and continued until Israel fell to Assyria in 722

²See William R. Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, International Critical Commentaries (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1905), clix-clxii; H. W. Wolff, *Hosea*, trans. Gary Stansell (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), xxix-xxxii.

³R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969), 868-70.

⁴C. Hassell Bullock, *Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 97-98.

⁵Hobart E. Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets* (Chicago: Moody, 1976), 174.

⁶I adopted this view from Charles H. Dyer, “A Handout on Hosea” (unpublished class notes for course #304 *Old Testament Prophets*, Dallas Theological Seminary, Fall 1996), 1.

⁷Kiel suggests that Hosea held his prophetic office for about sixty or sixty-five years (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, Commentary on the Old Testament, trans. James Martin, [reprint Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986; Peabody: Hendrikson, 1989], 10:15).

B.C.⁸ While Hosea does not mention the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to Assyria, he most likely lived to witness the downfall and exile of his people by King Shalmeneser V (or Sargon II [722-705 B.C.]).⁹ Some maintain that Hosea may have made his way to Judah with other refugees from Israel.

Hosea's Contemporaries. While Hosea and Amos prophesied in Israel during the closing years of the Northern Kingdom, *Isaiah and Micah followed as prophets to Judah.*

Recipients:

Hosea prophesied essentially to the Northern Kingdom of Israel (5:1), which he refers to as Ephraim, after Israel's largest and most influential tribe, or because Israel's first king, Jeroboam I, was an Ephraimite (5:3, 5, 11, 13). He also references Judah some fifteen times ([his reference to four Judean Kings in 1:1]; 1:7; 4:15; 5:5, 10-14; 6:4, 11; et al.). His familiarity with cities and locales in Israel (5:1; 6:8-9; 12:12; 14:6) and his repeated mention of Israel by the name "Ephraim" (thirty-seven times), supports the contention that he ministered exclusively in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In addition, he speaks of the king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel as "our king" (7:5).

Historical Background:

Hosea began his prophetic ministry to Israel during that later reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.). This was a time of great economic prosperity (2 Kgs. 14:25, 28) in Israel. Jeroboam II, even though an evil king, had expanded Israel's borders through a series of successful military campaigns against surrounding nations. His prosperity and stability was aided by King Uzziah in the south, who had likewise strengthened Judah's armed forces and defeated several of his nation's surrounding enemies (see 2 Chr. 26:1-15). Unfortunately, Israel's prosperity produced a time of impiety, oppression, carnal luxury and moral and spiritual degeneracy among all classes of the populace (see Amos).

Hosea's later ministry was carried out during Israel's rapid decline. With the death of Jeroboam II Israel fell from being a major political power to being a vassal of Assyria (2 Kgs. 15:19-20; 17:3), and a time of anarchy and confusion ensued in the Northern Kingdom of Israel (see 4:1-2; 7:1, 7; 8:3-4; 9:15). "This was a chaotic period, filled with disorder, bloodshed and strife."¹⁰ Jeroboam had reigned for 40 years, but the next 30 years saw a succession of six different kings to the throne. These king's reigns were relatively brief (see 2 Kgs. 15) with four of the six kings being assassinated (Zechariah, 15:10; Shallum, 15:14; Pakahiah, 15:25; and Pakah, 15:30), and a fifth, Hoshea, was captured and shut up in prison (2 Kgs. 17:4). Hosea refers to the brutality associated with these days as a time when "they [the people] consume their rulers, [and] all their kings have fallen" (7:6-7).

⁸Charles H. Dyer and Gene Merrill, "Hosea," in *Old Testament Explorer*, ed. Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck (Nashville: Word, 2001), 722.

⁹Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*, 179, writes that "the absence of any recorded word as to the actual occurrence of the event [the destruction of Samaria and the captivity of Israel (10:5-8; 13:16)] in the book of Hosea does not prove the cessation of his ministry before this time."

For comments on which Assyrian king (Shalmeneser V or Sargon II) actually conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel (often referred to as Samaria) see comments below under Historical Background.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 177.

Hosea condemned and lamented the debauchery and low spiritual state of Israel. The sin and corruption was witnessed in every strata of society. For example, the priests were guilty of leading the people into sin (4:6-9; 6:9) and idolatry, and temple prostitution was rampant (4:11-14), as were drunkenness and adultery (7:3-5). Hosea proclaimed God's approaching judgment on Israel because of her covenant infidelity. The Northern Kingdom of Israel (Samaria) was about to be destroyed and the people swept away in exile. Hosea watched as Assyria arose to become the most greatest and most feared power in the Middle East. Three Assyrian kings were involved with bringing about Israel's destruction: Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 B.C.), also referred to as Pul (2 Kgs 15:19); Shalmaneser V (727-722 B.C.), and Sargon II (722-705 B.C.),

Hoshea, Israel's last king, attempted to revolt against Assyrian dominance by forming an alliance with So, the king of Egypt (2 Kgs. 17:3). When Shalmeneser heard of Hoshea's conspiracy, he threw him into prison (2 Kgs. 17:4). He then came up against Samaria and besieged it for nearly three years before capturing the city in 722 B.C., and carried the people of Israel away to Assyria (2 Kgs. 17:5-6). The Assyrian records are unclear as to which king actually conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel. While Sargon II (722-705 B.C.) takes credit in his annals for the actual conquest of Samaria (Israel), the biblical record states that Shalmeneser V (727-722 B.C.) besieged Samaria three years before capturing Samaria and leading Israel away into exile (2 Kgs. 17:3-6). It may be that Shalmeneser V, who began the siege, died prior to completing the conquest and was replaced by Sargon II who ascended to the throne and completed the capture, destruction, and deportation of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. Some scholars have conjectured that Shalmeneser V was the king who actually conquered Samaria, and that Sargon II was his field general who later "plagiarized" Shalmeneser's record of victory and claimed credit for himself.¹¹ Ryrie may be correct in his suggestion that "Perhaps they were both involved, Shalmeneser as the king and Sargon as the general (see 18:10, 'they')."¹²

Religious Background:

A. The Priests

The religious leaders in Israel were illegitimate. They were not members of the levitical priesthood, but rather were part of an illegitimate line of priests appointed by Jeroboam I to officiate at his rival religious centers in Israel (1 Kgs. 12:31). Jeroboam, fearing that the people of the northern 10 tribes would go up to offer sacrifices in the house of God in Jerusalem and possibly return to the house of David, set up two golden calves (bulls) to be placed at sights of worship. He cleverly placed one golden calf in Bethel, which was on the road to Jerusalem, 11 miles north, and located the other golden calf at Dan, the northernmost part of his kingdom. The priests themselves were following rather than leading the people (Hos. 4:9) and were hypocritical leaders who participated in sin. They were involved in everything from robbery and murder (Hos. 6:9) to idolatry (Hos. 10:5).

¹¹Dyer and Merrill, "Hosea," in *Old Testament Explorer*, 722.

¹²Charles C. Ryrie, "2 Kings," in *The Ryrie Study Bible* (Moody, 1978), 581.

B. The People

1. Baal worship

Baalism was a syncretistic blending of various religions of the ancient Near East. Religious perversions were gathered from Egypt, Assyria and Babylon, and Canaan (see Josh. 24: 2-3, 13, 14-15, 20, 23—“Put away the gods of Ur and Sumer, Egypt, and Canaan). The Canaanite god Baal (𐤁𐤏𐤃; ba‘al, “lord” or “master”) was worshiped by the Moabites at the time of Balaam (Num. 22:23). As a result of Balaam’s ungodly council, Israel got their first taste of this immoral and degrading religion of the Canaanites as they worshipped Baal of Peor (Num 25:1-18; 31:8, 16). Baal worship incorporated prostitution (Num. 25:1). Following the death of Joshua, Baal worship gained a prominent place in Israel during the time of the judges (Jud. 2:11, 13). Evidently Baal worship was strong in Gilgal near Jericho (cf. Hos. 4:15; 9:15. 12:11). With Ahab’s marriage to the Phoenician princess Jezebel, Baal worship was made the state sanctioned religion of Israel (1 Kings 16:29-33). God raised up Elijah to confront Ahab and his false prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Elijah’s defeat and destruction of the prophets of Baal delivered a serious blow to Baal worship in Israel (1 Kgs. 18:1-46). It wasn’t long before Baalism made a come-back, which was crushed by Jehu (2 Kgs. 10: 18-28). However, like a cancer that cannot be fully eradicated, Baalism rose to prominence once again during the closing years of the northern kingdom (cf. Hos. 2:8, 4:17; 10:6. 13:1-2). The Israelites embraced the Canaanite teaching that Baal was the god of storms, and as such, he was in direct control of the rains that guaranteed fertility and productivity of the land.

2. Religious prostitution

According to Baalism, the goddess Anat (Ashtoreh) was Baal’s consort. When they copulated, the fertility of the land resulted. In another sense, the land was considered to be the consort of Baal. The rain was Baal’s semen which fertilized the land and allowed it to bear fruit.

The Canaanites and Israelites practiced “sympathetic magic” in order to induce Baal to fertilize the earth with his semen, rain showers. They believed that by copulating with male and female temple prostitutes (*qadesh* “temple prostitute” from *qadosh* “sacred, holy”), the “worshippers” were able to imitate Baal and Anat and thereby influence these gods to respond in a similar way. Presumably this would assure them of abundant crops and fertility.

3. Child sacrifices

Child sacrifices were commonly associated with Baal worship (cf. Jud. 11:24; 1 Kings 16:34; 2 Kings 17:16-18). Children were offered alive to *Chemosh* (the god of the Moabites) and *Molech* or *Milcom* (the god of the Ammonites).

4. Calf (bull) worship

Israel's first worship of a golden calf (bull) probably took place in secret in Egypt. When the people of Israel came to Mt Sinai and Moses went up the mountain to speak with God, the people, thinking that Moses had forsaken them, induced Aaron to make them a god to worship—golden calf (Exod. 32:1-6). The people offered sacrifices to their god, ate and drank, and rose up to *play* before their god (this word connotes *sexual promiscuity*). The next incident, as mentioned above, was when Jeroboam I led the ten northern tribes, comprising the Northern Kingdom of Israel, to break away from King Rehoboam of Judah following the death Solomon (931 B.C.). The first thing he did to solidify his rule was to set up two rival religious centers to keep the people from going up to Jerusalem to worship (1 Kgs. 12:25-33). He made two golden calves (bulls) and placed one in Dan and the other in Bethel (the northern and southern most extent of the country). He later set up an additional calf in Samaria (Hos. 8:6). Although Hosea does not refer to the calf at Dan, he does mention the one at Bethel (which he contemptuously calls Beth-aven “house of wickedness”) in 10:5. The **Bull (Mereyl Lynch)** is a symbol of strength, virility, and fertility and was often viewed as a symbol for Baal.

Purpose:

Hosea was called to an extremely difficult prophetic ministry—one that required unquestioning faith in Yahweh, who commanded him to go and take “a wife of harlotry, and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the LORD” (Hos 1:2). So, Hosea went and took “Gomer the daughter of Diblaim” to be his wife (Hos 1:3). Gomer's adultery against Hosea served as a living metaphor of Israel's unfaithfulness to her covenant Lord (see Jer. 2–3; Ezek. 16 and 23). What's more, Hosea's personal tragedy with adulterous Gomer, allowed him to experience something of the heartache that God Himself felt for His bride, Israel. **Hosea's love for his adulterous wife Gomer pictures God's unconditional love for His adulterous wife, Israel!**

Hosea's prophetic activity is directed against the children of Israel who he accuses of being unfaithful to their covenant vows, just as his own adulterous wife Gomer had been to hers. By adopting and participating in the pagan fertility rites of Baalism, the children of Israel violated Yahweh's covenant. Yahweh had warned their fore-fathers through Moses, that if they transgressed His covenant by bowing down and serving other gods, He would be forced to unleash all of the curses of the covenant upon them (Exod. 20:5, 7, 20; 6:6; 20:23; Lev. 26:14-33; Num. 25:1-9; Deut. 4:25, 26, 29; 5:10; 28:15-68; 31:16- 21; 32:15-18; Josh. 2:11-13; 10:6-18; 11:24; 22:5; 23:6-16; 24:2-3, 13-15, 20, 23-25; Jud. 2:2-3, 10-23; 3:6-7; 8:33; 10:6-14; 11:24; 13:1). See the KEY Verses: 2 Kings 17:7-23!

In the second part of the book (4-14), Yahweh “takes Israel to court” (בַּיִת רִיב , *rib*) to prove three charges against them: they had *no faithfulness* (טִרְמַתָּא , 4:1–6:4), *no loyalty-love* (דְּרִסְרִיבָה , 6:5–11:11), and *no knowledge of God* (טִרְמַתָּא ; דָּ , 11:12–13:16). In spite of God's scathing condemnation of the people for covenant violation, and assurance that judgment and deportation were fast approaching, the book concludes with Yahweh's gracious promise to provide a future restoration from Assyrian (and Babylonian) captivity—a restoration that is presented by Hosea as another saving event, similar to the

great Exodus from Egypt under Yahweh's former deliverer Moses. The promised future Deliverer is none other than David's greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (14:4-9).

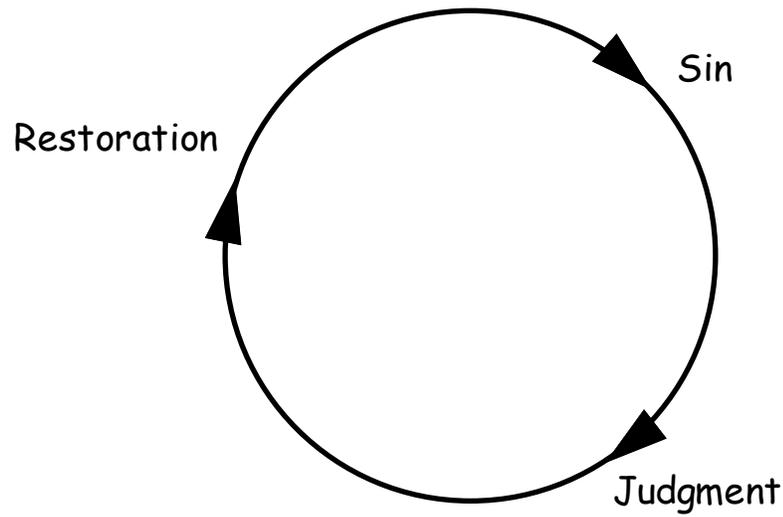
Characteristics of the Book:

1. Hosea, comprised as it is of 14 chapters, is *the longest of the minor prophets*.
2. Hosea is mentioned nowhere else in the Old Testament and is mentioned only once by name in the New Testament (Rom 9:25). However, the book is referred to directly or indirectly 30 times in the New Testament.
3. Hosea refers to the northern kingdom by the name "Ephraim" 37 times. This could be because it was the strongest and most influential tribe or because the first king of Israel, Jeroboam I was an Ephraimite (1 Kings 11:26).
4. Hosea used an arsenal of literary devices to convey his message, including figures of speech, similes and metaphors, and rhetorical and poetical techniques to convey his messages in a most memorable manner (see handout).
5. Hosea was the last writing prophet to minister to Israel before they fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C. He has been called the prophet of "**Israel's zero hour**," because the nation had sunk to a point of such corruption that a major dose of divine judgment could no longer be staved off.
6. Hosea employed a cyclical pattern of sin/judgment/restoration.

Structure and Style of Hosea:

The Book of Hosea evidences a structure common to many of the prophetic books, in that the message is structured around the major themes of *condemnation of sin*, *judgment for sin*, and *an ultimate restoration provided by the grace of God*. Hosea uses the conventional Hebraic thought pattern which employs a cyclical pattern (similar to the Book of Judges) to employ these major themes of *condemnation*, *judgment*, and *ultimate restoration*. This threefold pattern is found in three cycles in the first section of Hosea (chs. 1–3). The second section (chs. 4–14), presents one extended cycle comprised of three rounds outlining separate charges leveled by Yahweh against Israel for covenant violation. Yahweh issues three "charges" (Hebrew **בַּיִתָּר** , *rib*) against His covenant breaking people: 1) *No knowledge* of Yahweh (4:5–5:15); *No loyalty-love* for Yahweh (6:1–11:11); and *No faithfulness* to Yahweh or His covenant (11:12–13:16). The cycle ends with Yahweh's gracious promise of Israel's ultimate restoration (14:4-9).

Cyclical Pattern In Hosea



Robert Chisholm views the book as being comprised of five panels, each of which moves from judgment to salvation. Observe the following chart adapted from Chisholm:¹³

<i>Panel</i>	<i>Judgment</i>	<i>Salvation</i>
1	1:2 -9	1:10ᄡ2 :1
2	2:2-13	2:14ᄡ3 :5
3	4:1ᄡ5:15a	5:15bᄡ6 :3
4	6:4ᄡ11:7	11:8 -11
5	11:12ᄡ 13:16	14:1-9

Hosea 14:4 summarizes Yahweh’s program for the entire book: “I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for My anger has turned away from them.” Following judgment Yahweh will redeem and restore His people to covenant relationship with Himself.

¹³Robert, B. Chisholm, Jr., “Hosea,” in *Interpreting the Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 22.

OUTLINE

The Superscription 1:1

I. The Adulterous Wife and Hosea the Faithful Husband 1:2–3:5

A. Hosea's Marriage to Unfaithful Gomer and Their Ensuing Children, Serve as Symbolic Signs of Yahweh's Coming Judgment on Israel 1:2-9

1. Hosea's wife Gomer 1:2-3

2. Hosea's three children 1:4-9

a. *Jezreel*: "God scatters/sows" 1:4-5

1) Jezreel will be punished 1:4a

2) Israel will be scattered in judgment 1:4b-5

b. *Lo-Ruhamah*: "No compassion" 1:6-7

1) God would no longer deliver Israel 1:6

2) God would continue to deliver Judah 1:7 (cf. 1 Kgs 19:29-35; Isa 37)

c. *Lo-Ammi*: "Not my child" 1:8-9

1) Child of harlotry: Not Hosea's 1:8

2) Israel: spiritual harlots, not God's people 1:9

B. Hosea's Prophecy of Israel's Future Restoration 1:10–2:1

(Note: In the Hebrew Bible 1:10 is 2:1 and chapter 2 contains 25 verses)

1. Israel will experience blessings 1:10

a. Numerical growth 1:10a

b. Spiritual restoration in Jezreel 1:10b

2. Israel and Judah will experience blessings 1:11–2:1

a. National reunification 1:11

b. National Leader: Messiah 2:1

C. Hosea's Prophecy of Israel's Judgment & Restoration as God's Unfaithful Wife 2:2-23

1. The LORD's judgment on Israel pronounced 2:2-13

a. His rejection of Israel for her adultery 2:2-5

b. His retribution upon Israel for her unfaithfulness 2:6-13

1) Her loss of lovers: Adulterous idolatry 2:6-8

2) Her loss of material support: Agricultural disaster 2:9-13

2. The LORD's restoration of Israel promised 2:14-23

a. Renewed love and restored marriage 2:14-20

1) Israel will be courted by God 2:14-15

2) Israel will be betrothed to God forever 2:16-20

b. Renewed fertility and restored favor 2:21-23

3. Hosea's and Yahweh's Reconciliation with Their Unfaithful Wives 3:1-5

- a. Hosea provides reconciliation with his unfaithful wife Gomer 3:1-3
- b. Yahweh promises reconciliation with his unfaithful wife Israel 3:4-5
 - 1) Israel's initial reconciliation: brought back to the land from 70 year captivity 3:4
 - 2) Israel's ultimate reconciliation to God and her Davidic King, Messiah 3:5

II. The Adulterous Nation and Yahweh the Faithful God 4:1–14:9

A. Yahweh's Court case (*rib*) Against Faithless Israel (4:1–13:16)

1. The Lord's case ($\text{byr } rib$) against the sons of Israel (4:1a, 2-3)
2. The Lord's three-fold indictment of the sons of Israel (4:1b)
 - a. No "faithfulness" ($\text{tRmTa } emet$)—(11:12–13:16)
 - b. No "loyalty love" ($\text{dRSRj } hesed$)—(6:1–11:11)
 - c. **No "knowledge of God"** ($\text{tAoa } ; \text{d } daat$)—(4:4–5:15)

First Charge c. **No "knowledge of God"** ($\text{tAoa } ; \text{d } daat$)—(4:4–5:15)

- 1) The condemnation of the people's sins (4:4-19)

Knowledge of God had been rejected for the perverted pursuit of Baal—guilty of religious harlotry/apostasy/idolatry

The term hInIz "to fornicate," or "to be a harlot" occurs 10 times in this section (4:4–5:15). **It emphasizes Israel's sin of harlotry in forsaking Yahweh to pursue Baal.**

"The people are destroyed for *lack of knowledge*" (4:6a)

"They had rejected knowledge" (4:6b)

"They had forgotten the law of God" (4:6c)

"They have stopped giving heed to the Lord" (4:10c)

- 2) The condemnation of priests, people, and kings—the nations idolatry, harlotry, and depravity will be judged (5:1-15)

Second Charge b. No "loyalty-love" ($\text{dRSRj } hesed$)—(6:1–11:11)

- 1) Israel's repentance to Yahweh was false (6:1-3)
- 2) Israel's loyalty to Yahweh was replaced with covenant violation and treacherous harlotry (6:4-11)
- 3) Israel's leaders were lustful and murderous drunkards (7:1-7)
- 4) Israel's destruction and captivity prophesied (8:1–11:7)
- 5) Israel's restoration grounded in Yahweh's loyalty-love (11:8-11)

Third Charge a. No “faithfulness” (תְּאֵמֶת; *emet*)—(11:12–13:16)

1) Israel’s past faithlessness—historical review (11:12–12:14)

2) Israel’s present faithlessness—historical realities (13:1-16)

B. Yahweh’s Certain Promise of Future Restoration for Israel (14:1-8)

The Postscript (14:9)

Argument

Following the introductory Superscription (1:1), the Book of Hosea can be divided into two parts. In the first division (1:2–3:5) Hosea writes about his faithful treatment of Gomer his adulterous wife. Hosea’s marriage to unfaithful Gomer, and their ensuing child-

ren, serve as divine signs of Yahweh's coming judgment on Israel (1:2-9). The names of Hosea's children all serve as prophetic symbols. *Jezreel* means "God scatters" and refers to Israel being scattered in judgment (1:4-5). *Lo-ruhamah* means "No compassion" and refers to the fact that while God would no longer deliver Israel (1:6), He would continue to deliver Judah (1:7). *Lo-ammi* means "Not My people" and refers to Israel as spiritual harlots—they were not God's people (1:8-9). Hosea's retrieval of Gomer from harlotry serves as a prophecy of Israel's future restoration from spiritual harlotry and promise of growth, spiritual restoration, and blessings as the nations National Leader, Messiah comes to deliver and bless the future remnant (1:10–2:1). Hosea prophesies of Israel's coming judgment that will be followed by her eventual restoration as God's faithful wife (2:2-23). Just as Hosea's pursues reconciliation with his unfaithful wife Gomer (3:1-3), so too Yahweh promises to provide future reconciliation with his unfaithful wife Israel (3:4-5).

In the second part of the book (4:1–14:9), Hosea records a series of prophetic messages of Yahweh's judgment against His adulterous nation which will lead to Israel's ultimate reconciliation with their loving and faithful God. In addressing Israel's sin and culpability, Hosea deals with three main topics: Yahweh's rejection of Israel (4:1–7:16), Yahweh's retribution upon Israel (8:1–10:15), and Yahweh's future restoration of Israel following her repentance (11:1–14:9).

Hosea begins with an announcement of Israel's judgment (4:1–5:15), in which he records Yahweh's charge against Israel for apostasy and covenant unfaithfulness (4:1-19), followed by Yahweh's condemnation and pronouncement of coming judgment (5:1-15). The prophet next records Israel's plea for restoration, which is merely an outward profession of repentance void of any inward reality (6:1-3). This is seen from Yahweh's reply, that faithfulness must not be merely external (6:4-11). Hosea shows that Israel's crimes were imputed to the wickedness of the rulers (7:1-7) and the wickedness of the nation (7:8-16). Hosea moves from Israel's sins to delineate a message of Yahweh's retribution upon Israel (8:1–10:15) for their: covenant violations (8:1-14), harlotrous religious practices (9:1-17), and wickedness and deceit (10:1-15). Following his message of impending judgment, Hosea records a message of hope and blessing in Yahweh's promises restoration of Israel following her repentance (11:1–14:9). He develops the LORD's fatherly love for His unfaithful son Israel (11:1-11), details the LORD's forthcoming judgment on Israel for unfaithfulness (11:12–13:16), and discusses the LORD's future restoration of Israel in spite of unfaithfulness (14:1-8). Hosea ends his book by declaring that the LORD's faithful (the wise) will walk in His righteous ways (14:9).