



HOSEA

1-3 INTRODUCE HOSEA'S MAIN THEMES:
ISRAEL HAS REBELLED & GOD WILL BRING SEVERE CONSEQUENCES...
BUT GOD'S LOVE & MERCY ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN ISRAEL'S SIN.

1-3 HOSEA'S MARRIAGE TO GOMER

THE MARRIAGE

THE ADULTERY

THE RESTORATION

COVENANT AT MT SINAI

ADULTERY = ADULTERY

OPTION 1: ~~END THE COVENANT~~

OPTION 2: ~~RENEW THE COVENANT~~

REASON: GOD'S "LONG, COMPASSION & FAITHFULNESS" (29:20)

PROPHETIC SYMBOL OF GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL

COVENANT RESTORATION & HOPE

IMMINENT DEFEAT & EXILE...

GOD'S BLESSING

4-11 ACCUSATIONS & WARNINGS FOR ISRAEL

4-10 CAUSES & EFFECTS OF ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS

THERE IS NO KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN THE LAND!

"KNOWLEDGE" = KNOW HIM & EXPERIENCE HIS LOVE.

HERESY: SYDNEY MORE THAN RELATIONSHIP INCLUDES RELATIONSHIP

ISRAEL'S SIN

HYPOCRISY OF ISRAEL'S WORSHIP

24

PRaise the LORD ISRAEL AND BAIL!

25-27 COMPROMISES SOBBEN

TRUSTING IN POLITICAL ALLIANCES WITH OTHER NATIONS

ASSYRIA

EGYPT

GOD-LOVING FATHER

63-64

"I THOUGHT ISRAEL TO WALK TIED WITH LOVE"

ISRAEL = REBELLIOUS SON

GOD IS EMOTIONALLY TOOK

65

"HOW CAN I GIVE YOU UP, EPHRAIM? MY HEART CHURNS AGAIN ME. ALL MY COMPASSION IS AWOKED."

AUTHOR'S CONCLUDING NOTE:
"WHO IS LOVE & DISCOVERING TO UNDERSTAND ALL THIS? THE DAYS OF THE LORD ARE RIGHT. THE RIGHTeous WALK IN THEM, BUT THE REBELIOUS SIBBLE IN THEM." (1:7)

• HOSEA'S POETRY REVEALS DEEP TRUTHS ABOUT GOD'S CHARACTER & HUMAN NATURE.
• GOD'S ULTIMATE PURPOSE IS TO

Heal & Save

12-14 MORE ACCUSATIONS & WARNINGS

12-13 HOSEA'S HISTORY LESSON

JACOB'S LYING TREACHERY
SEE GENESIS 27-28

ISRAEL'S WILDERNESS REBELLION
SEE NUMBERS 12-20

ISRAEL'S CHOICE OF KING SAUL
SEE 1 SAMUEL 12 & 15

NOTE FOR THE FUTURE

REPENT! BUT I KNOW IT WON'T LAST

GOD'S PROMISE: I WILL HEAL THEIR UNFAITHFULNESS & LOVE THEM TIGHT

IMAGE OF GOD BLESSING THE NATIONS THROUGH ABRAHAM'S FAMILY

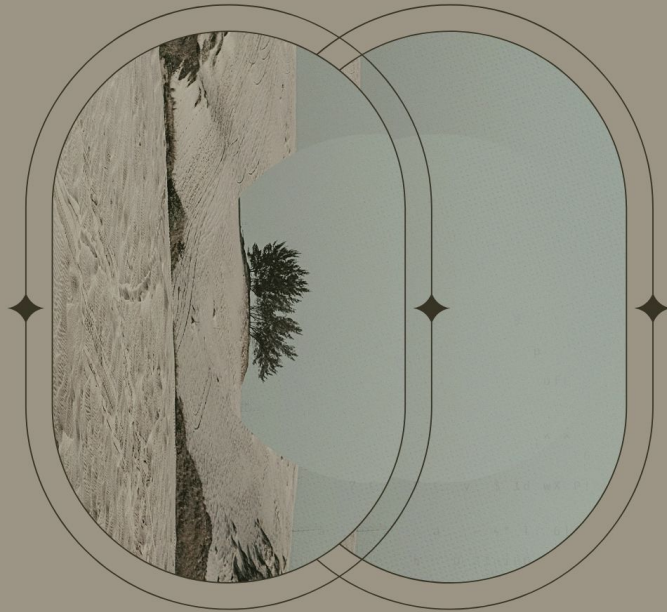
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author's note *

WEEK 2

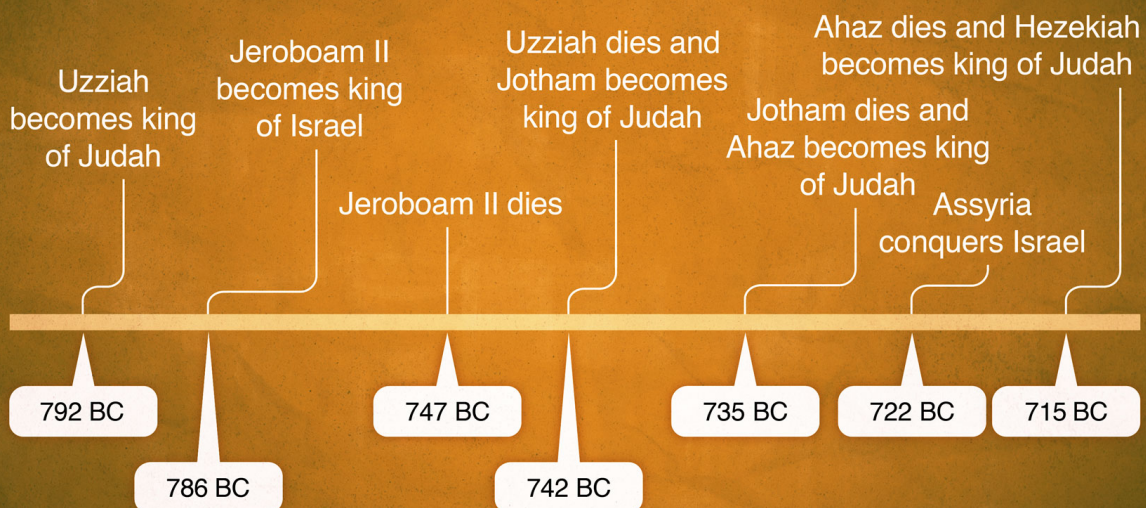
KEY IDEAS

- Yahweh's Unchanging Love for Israel.
- Yahweh's Jealousy for His Covenant.
- Yahweh's Just Judgment.
- Yahweh's Healing and Restoration of the Remnant.



TIMELINE

HOSEA



*All dates are approximate

ISRAEL AT THE TIME OF HOSEA

THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE 7-8TH CENTURY B.C.



THE BASICS

- Along with Jonah and Amos, Hosea is a prophet to pre-exilic Israel.
- Hosea was active from 760-730 BC — the same period as Amos. He begins prophesying slightly before Isaiah was commissioned as a prophet to Judah.
- Hosea was a very common name, meaning “help” or “deliverance”.
- God commanded Hosea to marry a prostitute named Gomer.
- The circumstances surrounding Hosea's marriage are integral to his prophetic activity since Gomer's behavior was analogous to Israel's spiritual adultery and breached covenant with Yahweh.
- He was the father of 3 children who resulted from Gomer's unfaithfulness (Hosea 2:21-23)
 - **Jezreel**: God scatters
 - **Lo-Ruhamah**: no mercy
 - **Lop-Ammi**: not my people

THE BACKGROUND

- The reign of Jeroboam II is generally considered the golden age of the northern kingdom.
- Jeroboam had continued his father Jehoash's policy of military expansion, nearly reestablishing the territorial boundaries to the east and north, such as they were during the time of David and Solomon.
 - Jehoash is discussed in 2 Kings 11-12 and 2 Chronicles 22:10-24:27.
 - Jeroboam II is discussed in 2 Kings 14.
- A wealthy merchant class was created due to the military prowess and political stability in the land.
- Architectural splendor, material luxury, and agricultural abundance resulted.
- However, God evaluated this golden age differently.
- Before Hosea, God had commissioned Amos (760-750) to warn the "cosmopolitan" nation about their violent, oppressive, and self-indulgent policies.

THE BACKGROUND

- Amos' warning went unheeded, and he was ordered out of the country and commanded to never again prophesy in Bethel.
- Yahweh then delivered a "lawsuit," and Hosea conveyed the divine indictment and certainty of God's verdict.
 - Hosea 4:1 *The LORD accuses Israel, "Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the lands."*
- Evidence presented: (1) the people's selfishness, pride, and greed fueled by their wealth and prosperity, (2) social and moral decay, and (3) religious apostasy.
- The people had forsaken God, pursuing an empty foreign policy, turning to Baal, idolatry, and other great wickedness.
- Hosea 4:2a: *"There is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed."*

THE BACKGROUND

- After Jeroboam II's death, Israel went into steady decline. Hosea is often called the "Deathbed Prophet to Israel" because he was the last of the writing prophets to address the northern kingdom of Israel before the Assyrian onslaught.
- A series of assassinations and overthrows quickly destroyed any inner political stability.
- During the last 30 years, in Israel, 4 of the 6 kings on the throne were murdered.
- External pressures from the Assyrians, Egyptians, and Judeans cause a series of fatal missteps:
 - Menahem makes Israel a vassal state of Assyria to avoid Assyrian invasion.
 - Pekah attacks Judah for not joining them in an alliance against Assyria, which forced Ahaz of Judah to enlist the help of Assyria to repel Israel (Judah became a vassal state of Assyria).
 - Israel was defeated, lost a large amount of territory, in addition a large portion of the people were deported.
 - Hoshea attempted to ally Israel with Egypt against Assyria, which was unsuccessful, and then withheld the tribute payment.
 - The brutal Assyrian response in 722BC ended Israel's political history.

HOSEA'S PURPOSE STATEMENT

- Hosea's purpose was (1) to warn Israel of the impending Assyrian exile, (2) to demonstrate God's steadfast love for his people through Hosea's marriage to Gomer, and (3) to call the people to repentance and covenant renewal with Yahweh.
- Hosea's relationship with Gomer typified Yahweh's tie with faithless Israel.
- When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, *"Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord."* (1:2)
- The prophet's exhortation to Israel to walk in the ways of the Lord was rooted in his own heart-wrenching experience with Gomer.
- Ultimately, it was Hosea's personal experience with Gomer that was probably the most profound message a prophet could deliver about Yahweh's desire and ability to heal and freely love an "adulterous" Israel: "I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them" (14:4).

HOSEA'S MARRIAGE

- Hosea was married to a "prostituting" woman named Gomer.
- Not only was she an unchaste bride, but she was also a promiscuous wife.
- Later, Hosea had to purchase her from a slave market.
 - He redeemed her from a life of indebtedness and prostitution.
 - He reclaimed her as his wife.
- Hebrew priests were forbidden by law to marry harlots, but no such prohibition existed for prophets.
- His marriage to Gomer was very unusual, but certainly not unethical.
 - The character of God should not be questioned, and He made this command of Hosea.

**The buying
back of
Gomer
foreshadows
the work that
Christ did on
the cross:**

"For you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." (1 Cor 6:10)

"You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men." (1 Cor 7:23)

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith." (Gal 3:13-14)

HOSEA'S PROPHETIC MESSAGE

- Mercy and judgment played key roles in Hosea.
- He was a prophet of eventual hope (2:14-23) and immediate doom (3:8-9).
- Hosea stood proudly in the tradition of God's prophets. He deeply understood the reality of covenant blessings and curses as outlined in the Torah.
- He was bold in his rebuke of Israel's political and religious leadership: "Hear this, O priests! Pay attention, O house of Israel! Give ear, O house of the king! For the judgment is for you; for you have been a snare at Mizpah and a net spread upon Tabor." (5:1)
- Yet, Hosea also identified with Yahweh's heart. It recoiled as He wrestled with the dilemma of punishing the child He so dearly loved: "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender." (11:8)

HOSEA'S PROPHETIC MESSAGE

- His task was to "hew and slay" Israel with words of judgment and to call a "straying people" back to the knowledge of God through repentance and covenant renewal.
- "Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity." (14:1)



IDOLATRY

- Idolatry, for Hosea, is about covenant betrayal. The Israelites have renounced their loyalty to the God who gave them everything.
 - This disloyalty results in swearing, deception, murder, stealing, sexual perversion, etc.
- This is especially inexcusable given that this is the God to whom the Israelites owe everything.
- Israel's covenant betrayal is the reason why you get this emotive language on God's part. No other biblical book includes such a detailed description of God's inner feelings.

IDOLATRY

- The Hebrew root **zanah** (prostitution or whoredom) occurs fourteen times in this book!
- Israel, by turning to pagan gods, has broken its covenantal bond with Yahweh, the God who led them out of Egypt and made them his people.
- The strong sexual language has a double purpose. It's a metaphor for Israel abandoning the Lord in favor of Baal and a description of the kinds of behavior the Israelites were engaging in as part of the Canaanite cult religion. This is what life looks like when you abandon God for the demonic, pagan gods of the Canaanites.

What did the Israelites/Canaanites worship?



Fig. 2 Canaanite God BAAL

A picture of Baal, Canaanite god of Thunder, who became a chief rival of Yahweh after King Josiah began his project to unify north and southern kingdoms under a single god.

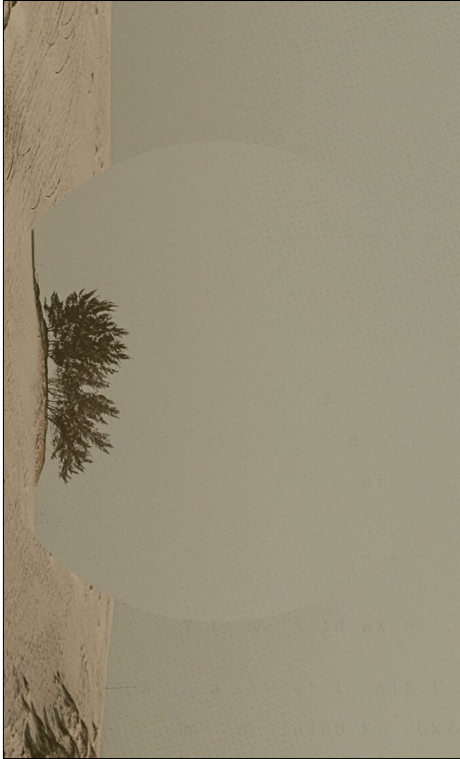
- They worshipped various gods including El, his wife Asherah, grain god Dagon, a sea god Yam and his serpent ally Lotan, a huntress Anath, a love goddess Quadeshtu, and the storm god Baal Hadad, who superseded El in the Canaanite pantheon.



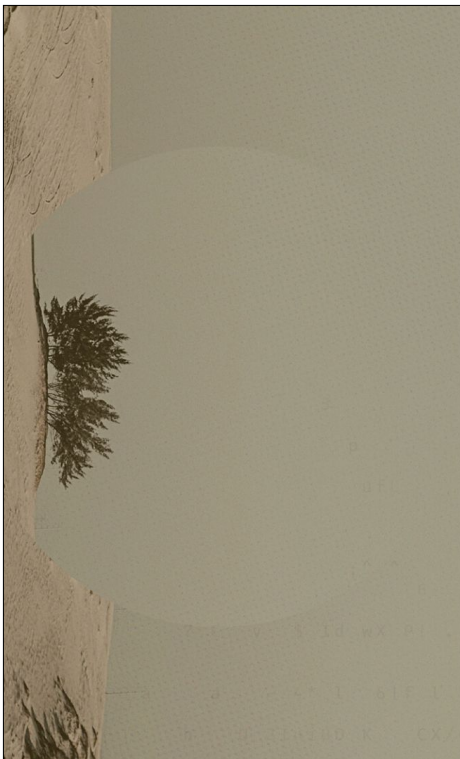
A picture of Asherah, who was worshipped in hill shrines through poles and teraphim. In the King James bible, her name is translated as grove; in others, sacred pole. Compare the Good News translation of Deuteronomy 16:21: "When you make an altar for the Lord your God, do not put beside it a wooden symbol of the goddess Asherah" to the King James: "Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee."



- According to the stipulation of Israel's covenant with Yahweh, the nation was bound by oath to worship him alone (Ex 20:1-6).
- Any religious syncretism jeopardized this relationship.
- Syncretism was a result of Israel's compromise and coexistence with the Canaanite people after Joshua's incomplete conquest.
- This coexistence eventually led to intermarriage and the worship of Canaanite gods.
- Baal was the god of rain, storms, agricultural fertility, and sexual reproduction among animals and mankind.
- Baal's enemy was the god Mot, who controlled sterility and death.
- Seasons of rain and plenty and doubt and famine were the consequences of this conflict between the two gods



- Canaanites attempted to aid Baal in his struggle with Mot by offering human sacrifice and ritual prostitution.
- The people of Canaan engaged in sexual intercourse with cult prostitutes as part of Baal worship to ensure fertility.
- Hosea and Gomer were paralleled to Yahweh's relationship with a people who had left their god to play the harlot with Baal.
- For Hosea, Israel's idolatry had a double meaning.
 - They were committing spiritual adultery against Yahweh by turning to Baal
 - In addition, they physically prostituted themselves in the sex acts associated with the fertility cults.
 - The Israelites believed they couldn't trust Yahweh for the rain needed in the land, so they chose to turn to Baal.



- The sentence of judgment on faithless Israel was aimed at the things most sacred to the Baal cult
 - **Agricultural abundance** (8:7-10)
 - **Material prosperity** (9:1-4)
 - **Sexual vitality and fertility** (9:10-17)
 - **Shrine and idols** (10:1-6)
 - **Military might** (10:9-15)