

Lesson 98

God Loves Israel

Hosea and Gomer illustrate God's relationship with Israel.

Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

Slide #3

Slide #4

Refer to Lesson 96 Theme Poster. We talked about the prophet Amos. He was a shepherd called to deliver God's message to the northern kingdom of Israel. God used him to warn Israel that God would judge the people because of their sin.

Refer to Lesson 97 Theme Poster. God called the prophet Jonah to deliver a message to an enemy people, the Assyrians, in the wicked city of Nineveh.

Did Jonah obey and go right away? What did he do? He didn't obey. He boarded a ship headed in the opposite direction.

God used a terrible storm and a great fish to stop Jonah. Jonah repented of his disobedience, and God delivered him from the belly of the fish. The fish vomited Jonah onto dry land, and Jonah headed straight to Nineveh. He went throughout the city,

warning the people that they would be judged.

How did the people respond? They believed Jonah's message from God and repented.

The people, including the king, mourned over their sin and prayed for mercy. And God showed them mercy! He did not destroy their city. But this made Jonah angry. He didn't want God to show mercy to a people he hated. God had to teach Jonah about his love for all people, not just Israel.

Have Face Game instructions and the pictures ready to show.

This week, we will learn about another prophet. His name is Hosea. He wrote the book in the Bible that bears his name—Hosea. His life was full of ups and downs—from happiness and heartbreak to love and loss.

Slide #5

Slide #6

Slide #7

Slide #8

Slide #9

Slide #10

Slide #11

Slide #12

Slide #13

Slide #14

We're going to play a short game to see how well you recognize emotions. Follow

the instructions to play Face Game with the class then continue with the lesson.

Some of those faces were hard to guess while others were easier. We can usually tell how a person is feeling by the look on their face and how they act. Did you know that God has emotions, too? We'll read about some of God's emotions like anger and sadness in our lesson today.

Pass out the Class Notes.

Hosea's Love for Gomer

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Hosea. What section of the Old Testament is Hosea in? Minor prophets.

Hosea's book is before the book of Amos in the Bible, but God sent Hosea to Israel after Amos. The people were worshipping false gods, again. And, like Amos, Hosea's message was to call Israel back to God. God wanted Israel to stop sinning against him and to worship him alone.

Hosea's life was a message to the people. His book is a love story about a man and his wife AND about God and his people! You see, God used Hosea's marriage to his wife, Gomer, as a picture of his love for Israel. God wanted the people to see an example

of his love for them through Hosea's love for Gomer.

Slide #15

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. This is what happened. God commanded Hosea to take a wife. Hosea obeyed and married a woman named Gomer. They had three children. But then Gomer left Hosea! She didn't love him anymore and thought she would be happier with other men. What a terrible experience for Hosea! His heart was broken by the way Gomer had treated him. She had sinned against her husband by breaking her marriage vows. Hosea had loved her, cared for her, and provided for all her needs, but she chose to be unfaithful to him.

How would you feel if you were Hosea?
Allow discussion.

Most people would feel sad, hurt, angry, or bitter if they were Hosea. We saw some of those emotions in our Face Game, and they aren't fun! But then God gave Hosea a shocking command—he told Hosea to take his wife back and love her!

What?! This was a difficult command to obey. But Hosea did it! He went and found Gomer and brought her back to be his wife again. He forgave her for leaving him and going to other men. He loved her.

Let's go to the Class Notes. We'll fill in the blanks and then draw some simple pictures in the boxes. The first one is just a fill-in-the-blank.

Slide #16

Slide #17

Slide #18

Slide #19

Slide #20

Slide #21

Who will read #1 and give us the name of the prophet we're studying? Choose a reader. Hosea. Have students complete #1.

You may want to draw the pictures from the answer key on the board for students to copy or show the pictures in the slides. Encourage students to be creative and personalize their drawings.

And what word goes in the blank for #2? Loved.

Fill in the word "loved" and then draw a heart in the box next to #2. Have students complete #2.

What word is missing in #3? Who will read that? Choose a reader. Left.

For this picture, you can draw a broken heart. Have students complete #3.

Who will read #4 about how Hosea felt after Gomer left him? Choose a reader. Sadness.

What picture do you think goes with pain and sadness? Allow answers.

Let's draw a crying face to show sadness. Have students complete #4.

Any guesses for what word is missing in #5? Separated.

Draw a man and woman (stick figures) separated by a jagged line. Have students complete #5.

Who will read #6? Choose a reader. Back.

For this last picture, draw a man and woman holding hands. You could add a heart above them, too. Have students complete #6.

When the people in Israel watched Hosea, God's prophet, take his wife back after she had been so mean to him, they began to see what God wanted them to see. God wanted to teach his people a lesson using Hosea and Gomer.

God's Love for Israel

Remember, God loved his people, Israel, like Hosea loved his wife, Gomer. How else are Hosea and Gomer similar to God and his chosen people, the nation of Israel?

Slide #22

Slide #23

Hosea 4:1–3

Turn in Hosea to chapter 4, and we'll read verses 1–3. Assign readers.

Whose word was this? The word of the Lord. Who was this word, or message, for? The children of Israel.

The Lord said he had a controversy, or problem, with the Israelites. What did he say was not in the land in verse 1? No faithfulness, steadfast love, or knowledge of God.

There was more to this problem than that. What other sins were the people committing in verse 2? Swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery.

What was the effect of these sins? Look in verse 3. The land mourns, all who dwell in it languish.

When Hosea delivered this message from God to the Israelites, was he teaching, warning, or predicting future events? He was warning them of the consequences of their sins.

The people of Israel were sinning against God just as Gomer had sinned against her husband, Hosea. Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea when she left him, and the people of Israel were unfaithful to God when they turned to other gods.

God compared the pain and sadness Hosea felt when his wife left him to the pain and sadness God felt when he saw his people turning to idols and committing terrible sins. Sin had separated Gomer from her husband, and sin had separated the Israelites from God. Hosea was now warning them that the land would mourn and the people would waste away because of God's judgment on their sin.

Hosea was going through the same thing with his wife as God was with the people of Israel!

Slide #24

Look at the statements under the heading "God and Israel" in your Class Notes. We'll fill in the blanks for these.

Who will read #7 about how God felt toward his people? Choose a reader. Loved.

Complete #7.

What did the people do in #8? Choose a reader. Left. Complete #8.

And #9? How did God feel? Choose a reader. Sadness. Complete #9.

Who will read #10? Choose a reader. Separated. Complete #10.

Even though the Israelites continued to sin and worship false gods, God's love remained. He had a special love for Israel, his chosen people. He had brought them

out of slavery in Egypt to give them the promised land.

Slide #25

Slide #26

Slide #27

Hosea 11:7–11

After all the great blessings God had given Israel, how did they treat him? Let's read Hosea 11:7–11 to find out. Assign readers. What does Hosea 11:7 say the people were bent on doing? Turning away from God. Look in Hosea 11:8. Do you know who Ephraim is? Allow discussion.

Ephraim was one of Joseph's sons, and his descendants became one of the largest of the northern tribes of Israel. Because of this, Ephraim was often used as another name for Israel.

So, what did God say to Israel/Ephraim? How can I give you up? How can I hand you over?

The Lord said he didn't want to give up on Israel. How did God feel toward his people? Look at the end of verse 8. He had compassion for them.

God felt compassion, or mercy, toward Israel. He wanted them to turn back to him. Because God loved his people, he wanted to forgive them for their sins.

In spite of their disobedience, God made them a promise. What did God tell them in Hosea 11:9? He would not again destroy Ephraim. He would not come in wrath (anger).

God was angry at Israel's sin, but he loved his people. And he continued to send his prophets to warn them and to tell them to repent of their sins and turn back to God. We know from the prophet Amos that eventually God would send an enemy to punish Israel. That enemy was Assyria, and Assyria would take the nation of Israel and scatter the people in different lands. But Hosea was giving the people hope that one day, because of God's love for them, they would return to their land.

Look in Hosea 11:11. The people of God would one day come back to their homes from where? From Egypt and Assyria.

God warned the people that an enemy would come. But at the same time God offered them hope that the enemy would not destroy Israel forever. He promised that his people would one day come back to their land.

The lesson here in Hosea is easy to understand. Hosea loved his wife, Gomer. In spite of her sin against him, he took his wife back, forgave her, and promised to care for her. And the Lord loved his people. In spite

of Israel's sin against God over and over, God still gave the people hope. God promised that one day the people of Israel would return to their land.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. We have talked a lot about God today, and several of his attributes are shown in the book of Hosea. First, God is just. How was God just toward his people? Allow discussion. He sent an enemy, the Assyrians, to conquer the people as punishment for their sin.

God's justice demands that sin be punished. And that is what God finally did to Israel when he sent the Assyrian army to conquer the land. But God also showed his amazing love and mercy for his people by warning them for so long.

Who will read the definitions of loving and merciful from the Attributes of God Poster? Choose readers. Loving: always wants what is best for his children. Merciful: kind to those in misery; withholds deserved punishment.

Even after the Assyrians would come and conquer the land, God told the people that there would be a time when they would come back and he would forgive them.

Slide #28

Let's complete the Class Notes. Who will read #11? Choose a reader. Back. Complete

#11.

ApplicationSlide #29

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God called the prophet Hosea to be a living picture of his relationship with Israel. He asked Hosea to marry Gomer to demonstrate his love for his chosen people. Then God described Israel as sinners with no faithfulness, no love, and no knowledge of God. They were continually breaking his commands. Yet God loved them as a husband loves his wife. He had sympathy for his people and longed to protect and care for them. Like Hosea who took his wife back after she had sinned against him and left him, God would take his children, Israel, back if they would turn back to him in repentance.

God instructed Hosea to write this book so that we would see that God is loving, merciful, forgiving, and faithful to his children. Israel sinned repeatedly against God over many years. God showed his mercy and his love by taking them back, forgiving them, and promising to never leave them.

Hosea's love story is also about us! Just as sin separated Israel from God and Gomer from Hosea—our sin separates us from God. But just as Hosea showed his wife love and forgiveness and God showed Israel love and forgiveness—

God shows us love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We sin and deserve God's punishment because of our sin. But God is faithful and merciful to forgive us if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus Christ. God's wonderful attributes are immutable; they never change!

Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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