

**Getting to Know Hosea  
You Want Me to Marry Who?  
Hosea 1:1 – 11**

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This will sound like, at first, like a modern love story which we see way too many young believers fall into. In Hosea, we will learn what it is like to be unequally yoked. We will learn what it is like to not only be married to a non-believer, but one who participates in all that the culture has to offer sexually. This includes having children who may not look like you or anyone else in your family, because they might not really be yours. Also, there is that potential issue of his bride to be also being an employee of the Baal workers local, fund-raising division. Suffice it to say, we will discover that Gomer is a working girl.

Hosea will marry a liberated working girl. He is entirely transparent in this book and will reveal “more personal emotions and struggles than any other prophet as he recounted his attempts to renew his relationship with his wife. The story’s intimacy and emotion suggests personal historical reality in the first chapters of Hosea.” (Butler 2016)

Hosea will become an example of what it means to love no matter what.

As we begin our study of Hosea, here is the picture. Hosea is a young Jewish man growing up in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He has grown up as a faithful follower of YAHWEH in a culture that has departed from Him and is deeply engaged in the worship of idols and all that would mean as well as child sacrifice. There is a possibility that he came from Judah as Jerome postulated, but there is nothing in the text or anywhere else in the scriptures to give us a hint of where he is from.

He is a follower of YAHWEH in a culture gone mad (Deuteronomy 28:34).

On the northern border of Israel is Mount Hermon, demon central. The nexus of everything evil that took place in Genesis 6:1 – 4. This is where the Watchers descended and corrupted creation. The results of the sin of the Watchers, a group of fallen divine beings, resulted in the Nephilim; a hybrid being coming from the union of Human and fallen Angel. This union resulted in the flood and subsequent destruction of the entire planet except for those who were on the ark.

The location of Mount Hermon comes to us from the pseudepigraphal book of 1 Enoch. We get an expansion of the story there.

1 Enoch 6:1 – 6

And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: 'Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children.' And Semjâzâ, who was their leader, said unto them: 'I fear ye will not indeed agree to do this deed, and I alone shall have to pay the penalty of a great sin.' And they all answered him and said: 'Let us all swear an oath, and all bind ourselves by mutual imprecations not to abandon this plan but to do this thing.' Then swore they all together and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. And they were in all two hundred; who descended in the days of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon, and they called it Mount Hermon, because they had sworn and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. (Charles 1912, 13-16)

Once they are on earth, they immediately transgress the established boundary between heavenly and earthly beings, taking wives to themselves and going into them and in so doing, defile themselves (7:1). The outcome of this transgression is the production of the Nephilim, the "great Giants" (7:2). (Sullivan 2014, 94)

We later learn in 1 Enoch 15:9 that the spirits of the Nephilim became demons, "Evil spirits have proceeded from their bodies; because they are born from men, and from the holy watchers is their beginning and primal origin; they shall be evil spirits on earth, and evil spirits shall they be called." (Charles 1912, 36)

Mount Hermon and the border area to the north of Israel is literally, demon central. Fallen angels, demons and idol worship are the thing to do in Israel.

According to 1 Enoch 16, the angelic transmission of heavenly knowledge to earthly humans can also be understood as a contamination of distinct categories within God's orderly Creation. As inhabitants of heaven, the Watchers were privy to all the secrets of heaven; their revelation of this knowledge to the inhabitants of the earth was categorically improper as well as morally destructive. (Sullivan 2014, 95)

Growing up in Israel, Hosea would be very familiar with this background as well as the high places and idolatry established by Jeroboam when Israel split from Judah. This high place became a center for idol worship.

2 Chronicles 11:14–15

"For the Levites left their common lands and their holdings and came to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons cast them out from serving as priests of the LORD, and he appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat idols and for the calves that he had made." (ESV)

There is a reason why this area became the base of operations for Jesus when He was here. This area was and still is a hot bed of activity involving the unseen realm.

Hosea would be very familiar with the entire complex for idol worship as well as the way in and out of the complex.

He would also be aware of the area he was growing up in, the activity of the enemy, and that he is in the minority because he is a follower of YAHWEH.

### High Place of Jeroboam



(Bolen 2012, Used with Permission)



(Bolen, Dan high place with reconstructed altar 2012, Used with Permission)

## Dan City Gate



(Bolen, Dan Middle Bronze mudbrick gate 2012, Used with Permission)

## Mount Hermon



(Bolen, Mount Hermon 2012, Used with Permission)

Hosea 1:1

“The word of the LORD which came to Hosea the son of Beeri, during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.” (NASB 2020)

We get a sense of the task being assigned to Hosea at the very beginning of the book. Hosea, whose name means “Jehovah is help or salvation; salvation; causing to save;” is the son of Beeri. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 106)

Beeri means Well of God; expounder; man of the well. My well. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 34)

Beeri signifies a well, which may put us in mind of the fountain of life and living waters from which prophets are drawn and must be continually drawing. (Henry 1994, 1463)

By tying the two names together in the order they are given to us, we see the word of YAHWEH coming to the savior of the well of God.

The difference between a well and a pool or cistern is that a well has unlimited water flowing from a living fountain. A cistern, which cools, holds water coming from without. (Jerome 2017, 152)

Hosea has been given a charge by a call from “the word of YAHWEH,” the preincarnate Christ. This implies his having been involved in a job interview with the Divine Council and the result being “the word” has come to him to lay out his mission.

He has been specifically charged to be the savior of the well of God. The way the names have been arranged point to that. Hosea is to be the one who will point Israel back to the well of living water and away from the cisterns, or holes in the ground, that they have dug for themselves. A cistern has no source of water, but the well is a picture of what Jesus later refers to as the Holy Spirit, living water which does not run out. He is being challenged to call his people to the source of living water. This same theme shows up in Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 2:11–13

“Has a nation ever changed its gods (even though they are not really gods at all)? But my people have exchanged me, their glorious God, for a god that cannot help them at all! Be amazed at this, O heavens! Be shocked and utterly dumbfounded,” says the LORD. “Do so because my people have committed a double wrong: they have rejected me, the fountain of life-giving water, and they have dug cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns which cannot even hold water.” (NET)

There are several with the name Hosea in scripture, notably, that was Joshua’s name before it was changed.

We also learn about the time frame for Hosea’s ministry and an idea of where he is working from. After introducing us to who he is and the source of his message, he gives names of kings in Judah and Israel; these names help us determine “the beginning of Hosea’s public life at 748 B.C. and Hezekiah’s death at 690 B.C., which would make the prophet’s ministry extend over a period of about fifty-eight years. The book furnishes strong presumptive evidence in support of this chronology.” (Unger, et al. 1988)

Hosea is a contemporary of Isaiah, Micah, and Amos. The list of Kings from Judah coincide/overlap with the lists in Isaiah 1:1, Micah 1:1 and Amos 1:1. There is also the possibility that just as Amos had to flee to Judah to complete his ministry (Amos 7:12), the fact that only one northern king is listed may also mean that Hosea was forced to do the same.

The only northern king listed is Jeroboam II.

Jeroboam II was a significant figure in the history of the north, and under him Israel was a considerable local power. Territory was regained (2 Kgs. 14:25) and the land enjoyed security and economic prosperity. But it was affluence accompanied by religious apostasy, and that scenario provides the background for the initial period of Hosea’s ministry during the closing years of Jeroboam’s reign. After his death the land lurched into internal chaos in a series of short reigns during which no monarch of any great significance arose, certainly none who could effectively combat the dangers facing the land. Throughout these troubled times for the northern kingdom Hosea’s ministry provided the LORD’S commentary and his call for repentance as the way to avert further disaster. (Mackay 2012, 47)

As Hosea’s ministry kicks off, life is good in Judah and Israel, there is peace, prosperity, and apostasy. That sounds familiar. Two chariots in every garage is nice, but the hearts of YAHWEH’S people were far from Him. Hosea is in a distinct minority as a YAHWEH follower in Israel.

Hosea 1:2–5

“When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, “Go, take for yourself a wife inclined to infidelity, and children of infidelity; for the land commits flagrant infidelity, abandoning the LORD.” So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. And the LORD said to him, “Name him Jezreel; for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for

the bloodshed of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.” (NASB 2020)

Hosea has been praying to YAHWEH about his future bride. He is a good Jew and wants the right person that the Lord has for him. He is also a faithful follower of YAHWEH and as we learned in the first verse, a called Prophet of God. God lets Him know that what Hosea thought he knew about his future wife, is not what the Lord had in store. No names are provided, just the lifestyle of his bride to be...prostitute.

The Hebrew word used here is the word זְנוּנִים (zenunim).

The word has a very clear meaning, “prostitution, i.e., the illicit sex act. given in exchange for valuables, idolatry.” (Swanson 1997)

“This verb is used in both literal and figurative senses. Figuratively, the thought may concern forbidden international intercourse, of one nation (especially Israel) having dealings with other nations. It may also refer to religious intercourse, of Israel worshiping false gods. The literal meaning is illicit heterosexual intercourse. The word regularly refers to women; it refers only twice to men (Ex 34:16; Num 25:1). The participial form is regularly used to designate the harlot (Gen 34:31). Such persons received hire (Deut 23:19), had identifying marks (Gen 38:15; Prov 7:10; Jer 3:3), had their own houses (Jer 5:7), and were to be shunned (Prov 23:27).” (Wood 1999, 246)

If it was me, I would have been asking for clarification from the Lord. Something like, “Can we talk about this?” or “But Lord?”

Hosea though is walking by faith, and we see something about his faith in that the text does not reflect any question or hesitation at all. Everyone knows where the cult prostitutes spend time together, over at one of the temples to Baal or any other false god. Hosea simply goes to the local temple center, picks one out, runs over to the local priest and gets hitched.

He is obedient. Uncomfortably obedient.

Does obedience sometime feel uncomfortable? Yes. King Saul had a choice, uncomfortable obedience, or expediency. In 1 Samuel 13 Saul is at war with the Philistines. He had 2000 troops and his son Jonathan had 1000. They were attacked by a consolidated Philistine army of 30,000 chariots, six thousand calvary, and a whole lot of ground troops. The people he was now King of decided to hide in caves. Samuel told Saul “wait until I get there, then we will worship and deal with the situation.” Saying that, he then delayed the trip by a week. Consider this a test for Saul, how much does he trust YAHWEH?

Saul, is left to struggle with the meaning of obeying a command that seems to fly in the face of rational judgment. (Cartledge 2001, 178)

Over the week of waiting, Saul sees those troops he does have, start to return home. Decision time, trust in the Lord or take decisive action. Saul opted for what he thought was decisive action, he put an end to the waiting, and he did the burnt offering himself. In other words, he blew it.

1 Samuel 13:9–14

“Saul said, “Bring me the burnt offering and the sacrifice of well-being”; and he presented the burnt offering. He had just finished presenting the burnt offering when Samuel arrived; and Saul went out to meet him and welcome him. But Samuel said, “What have you done?” Saul replied, “I saw the people leaving me and scattering; you had not come at the appointed time, and the Philistines had gathered at Michmas. I thought the Philistines would march down against me at Gilgal before I had entreated the LORD, so I forced myself to present the burnt offering.” Samuel answered Saul, “You acted foolishly in not keeping the commandments that the LORD your God laid upon you! Otherwise the LORD would have

established your dynasty over Israel forever. But now your dynasty will not endure. The LORD will seek out a man after His own heart, and the LORD will appoint him ruler over His people, because you did not abide by what the LORD had commanded you.” (Jewish Publication Society 1985, 1 Sam 13:9-14)

If only he had waited and remained obedient. But are we any better? We believe God helps those who help themselves. False.

Proverbs 3:5–7

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the LORD in everything you do, and he will show you the right way. Never let yourself think that you are wiser than you are; simply obey the LORD and refuse to do wrong.” (GNB)

Saul thought he was wiser than Samuel who was communicating God’s word, and then when he was caught, he used god talk to justify his actions, I forced myself. Really?

Hosea opts for obedience because he knows this is what the Lord wants. The context tells us that he is to be married and have a loving relationship with his wife and family. There is more though. He is getting the whole package deal with the marriage. Remember who he is marrying. Are they going to see eye to eye on anything? She also has a lifestyle that must be supported, one which Hosea will show no interest in at all. Again, this is an example of what it means to marry someone who is not a believer and has their own standard of morality rather than one from the Lord. Gomer has her own truth.

Hosea was called not to proclaim God’s Word, but to marry a woman of adultery and produce children of adultery...His personal family struggles provided the images Hosea used to describe Israel and God. The struggles also taught him to share the divine emotions of deep, self-giving love and a powerful desire for justice and retribution. (Butler 2016)

There is more to this as well.

The Hebrew here intensifies the meaning. He is told to marry a woman who “has been habitually committing fornication (temporal)” and is “guilty of the vilest adultery or great harlotry (type of sin).” (Utlely 2006, 126)

This is a woman with a promiscuous lifestyle and lots of boy friends. The kids are going to be the children of prostitution. In other words, Hosea may not be the biological father. Hosea is to be an example.

He learns that all of this is to be a picture to Israel of their spiritual harlotry. Israel has abandoned their first love and responsibility to chase after other gods and the outcome is not exactly what they thought it would be. Hosea knows that he and his family will be a living example of this. God still loves Israel and Hosea will reflect that in his love for Gomer in spite of what she does.

He follows the command of the Lord and marries Gomer. Hosea will become a picture of unconditional love. It is entirely possible that Hosea was unaware of this background instead marrying the one God said he was to marry.

Thus the Lord’s command should be understood as follows, “Go, take to yourself a wife who will prove to be unfaithful.” (Chisholm, Jr. 1985, 1379)

Hosea 1:3

“So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.” (NASB 2020)

Gomer means Complete; completion; heat; perfect; conclusion; i.e., filling up of the measure of idolatry or ripeness of consummate wickedness. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 89)

Her daddy's name was Diblaim. His name means Two cakes of figs; double embrace. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 59)

Some commentators say that means she will work at times for only a couple of figs. We do not know that for sure. There is good news to start with though, we know the first child really does belong to Hosea.

The text tells us that.

Hosea 1:4–5

“And the LORD said to him, “Name him Jezreel; for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.”” (NASB 2020)

The child is a boy, and the Lord provides a name and what the name means. Jezreel is the name. That is not only the name of a city but is also the name of the valley located there as well.

Jezreel means “God sows; he will be sown of God; i.e., have a numerous progeny; God scatters; the Lord sows.” It is also the name of a valley and a city. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 145)

This is a word of judgment first, on the house of Jehu for what Jehu did at Jezreel. Jezreel is where Jehu massacred all the descendants of King Ahab (2 Kings 10:11). Jeroboam II is a descendant of Jehu and after he died, his son, Zechariah, was assassinated only 6 months into his reign (2 Kings 15:8 – 10).

Jehu was prophesied by Elisha to be the one who overthrows Ahab and Jezebel, but he went a bit too far. “After marching on the city of Jezreel, he calls on the populace to choose sides, and Jezebel is thrown from a balcony to her death (2 Kings 9:32–33). A general purge of Ahab's “house,” which is a euphemism for his political supporters and government officials, then takes place. At Jehu's orders the terrified officials in Jezreel behead seventy “sons of the house of Ahab” (2 Kings 10:6–8).

The next day Jehu publicly denied any responsibility for the deaths of these seventy men and used this as a pretext to have all of the officials executed (2 Kings 10:9–11). It is this mass bloodletting, which swept away the dynasty and supporters of Ahab, that is the basis for the symbolic name for Hosea's first son.” (Matthews, Chavalas and Walton 2000, Ho 1:4)

The name also means scattered, as such it also points to the end of Israel as a nation and the tribes in Israel being scattered as the result of a battle in the valley near Jezreel. Not only is Jehu's house going to be eliminated, but in “a display of poetic justice the Lord would break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel, the site of Jehu's sin.” (Chisholm, Jr. 1985, 1381)

This means that this would be the location of the destruction of the military might of Israel.

2 Kings 15:29

“During Pekah's reign over Israel, King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria came and captured Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, including all the territory of Naphtali. He deported the people to Assyria.” (NET)

Notice the names of the cities, one of which is Kedesh, which is located in the Jezreel valley. In 734 – 722 BC, the prophecy of Hosea was fulfilled.

Hosea 1:6–7

“Then she conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. And the LORD said to him, “Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer take pity on the house of Israel, that I would ever forgive them. But I will take pity on the house of Judah and save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, sword, battle, horses, or horsemen.”” (NASB 2020)



So, what is the big deal, a period of time went by and Gomer has another baby. There is no reference as before, there is no reference to she bore him a daughter. Why is that? The child is not Hosea's. The key is in the name, Lo-ruhamah.

God named her Lo-ruhamah, which means that she "never knew a father's pity." As I indicated previously, it was not that she was an orphan, but she did not know who her father was. This reveals the scandal in the home of Hosea! God is saying through this circumstance to the people of the northern kingdom who had gone into idolatry, "You will not know My pity, for I am not your Father." (McGee 1997, 616)

The name is significant as it tells us that the marriage covenant has been violated. This is not Hosea's child, and the name reflects to the nation of Israel that as the marriage covenant has been violated, so has the covenant Israel had with YAHWEH.

Even though it appears that things are seriously bad for Israel, it gets worse with what is said in verse 7. Israel will be destroyed while that same enemy will be dealt with by the Lord on behalf of Judah.

He makes it clear Judah will be saved by an act of God and no single individual could take responsibility for it.

This was fulfilled just a few years later, after the fulfillment of the prophecy regarding Jezreel. Assyria, after taking Israel and sending them into exile, moved against Judah. It did not end well for them.

Isaiah 37:36

"The LORD's messenger went out and killed 185,000 troops in the Assyrian camp. When they got up early the next morning, there were all the corpses!" (NET)

2 Chronicles 32:20–22

"King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed about this and cried out to heaven. The LORD sent a messenger and he wiped out all the soldiers, princes, and officers in the army of the king of Assyria. So Sennacherib returned home humiliated. When he entered the temple of his god, some of his own sons struck him down with the sword. The LORD delivered Hezekiah and the residents of Jerusalem from the power of King Sennacherib of Assyria and from all the other nations. He made them secure on every side." (NET)

Hosea 1:8–9

"When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the LORD said, "Name him Lo-ammi, because you are not My people, and I am not your God."" (NASB 2020)

Family issues continue for Hosea. Once again we read of another child and once again the missing parentage clause. This is son is not the son of Hosea. How do we know for sure, the name. Loammi. "Not of my people; not my people." (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 160)

"Not my people," indicates a reversal of the covenant. The declaration "I am not your God" (lit. "I am not I AM for you") negates God's self-revelation to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM ... this is my name forever" (Exod 3:14–15). Hosea's words of judgment convey not a denial of that awesome name but a poignant statement of Israel's self-exclusion from the relationship. (Emmerson 2003, 677)

Child number two, the girl Lo-ruhamah reflected, in her name, that the marriage covenant between YAHWEH and Israel had been breached and was no longer currently valid. The severity of that breach is reflected in the name of child number three, the covenant has been undone, not by God but by Israel.

YAHWEH has been excluded by Israel. They do not consider the marriage covenant valid, in fact, they do not even consider Him to be their god as they have willingly breached the covenant of marriage and done so willfully and habitually.

And remember, this is being reflected in Hosea's family life.

God's judgment is simply the consequence of Israel's attitude and conduct, and therefore this judgment consists of a remarkably negative reaction from Yahweh. Since Israel seeks love and help elsewhere, Yahweh discontinues any demonstration of his fatherly love, which is his essential activity. (Wolff 1974, 23)

The picture being drawn is simple. "God chose Israel and brought her into a most blessed relationship with Himself, likened to the marriage bond, and while in this state she committed harlotry." (Feinberg 1990, 15)

Hosea has three children and only one is biologically his. The other two, unknown as to who the father is. The names Hosea was told to give them are reflective of what is going on between Israel and YAHWEH, but also between Gomer and Hosea.

The situation for Israel looks very dark indeed. But grace suddenly jumps up with what we see next. Judgement is promised, but I will not last forever.

Israel, having lightly esteemed the privilege she sustains toward God (a veritable Gomer), will not enjoy the blessing and reality of it. The patriarchal blessings and promises are never abrogated, for Israel nationally is "beloved for the fathers' sake" even while they are enemies of the gospel for the sake of the Gentiles (Ro 11:28-29). (Feinberg 1990, 18)

Hosea 1:10-11

"Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or counted; And in the place Where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God." And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, And they will appoint for themselves one leader, And they will go up from the land, For the day of Jezreel will be great." (NASB 2020)

After such a clear statement about the breached covenant, breached by Israel, comes a reaffirmation of the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 22:17. The grace of God is in operation here. God's unconditional love for His people.

The sin of the people and the faithfulness of God are two realities he simply treats as equally true. (Garrett 1997, 71)

There are five promises made in these two verses. Amazing promises considering the current condition and apostasy of Israel as seen by Hosea. At a future date:

1. Israel will have an unimaginably large population.
2. Israel, the entire nation, will love and serve the Lord.
3. Israel and Judah will be reunited as one nation.
4. The reunited Israel and Judah will have only one leader.
5. The reunited nation will keep all the feasts.

We end chapter one with the other meaning of Jezreel coming into play. Jezreel means God scatters, but it also means God sows, He expands the numbers in the nation.

When the two nations are reunited as one and they explode in numbers, we see the other meaning of Jezreel come into play. The day of their unheard of yet to be seen population growth will be great. Some of what is discussed here in the last two verses we see in the process of being fulfilled today.

Israel and Judah have been reunited as a nation. That took place in 1948.

When they became a nation, they did so with technically, one ruler, a Prime Minister. As we have clearly seen in recent years, that subjects the nation to a lot of turmoil. But a day is coming where they will truly have one leader.

Jesus will return to rescue His people and rule the world from Jerusalem. God's presence will be in the Temple in Jerusalem and David will rule Israel (Hosea 3:5).

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