

HOSEA.

Introduction

The book of Hosea is about the life of a man called Hosea, the son of Beeri, but God uses this life to give a message to the Northern Kingdom. He was a prophet in the Northern Kingdom during the reign of Uzziah. This was the same time that Isaiah was preaching to the Southern Kingdom, the other half of the Jewish kingdoms, Judah.

See [Hosea 1:1](#)

[Isaiah 1:1](#).

The name “*Hosea*” means “*deliverance*” or “*salvation*”. The father of Hosea is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible, though some Bible students point to [1 Chronicle](#) where a man called “*Beerah*” was carried off to exile.

The prophet Amos,

[Amos 1:1](#),

Was also preaching to the Southern Kingdom but Hosea’s message to the Northern Kingdom was with a broken heart, he was prophesying of the coming exile, due to the idol worship and rejection of the Lord,

[Hosea 3:4](#).

However, his prophesy also looked beyond the exile to the restoration of the Jews, when the people would acknowledge the Lord. Because Hosea does not mention the fall of Samaria it is assumed that he was giving his message mainly before 722 B.C. probably during the period 750 to 725 B.C. The main contents of the book are based upon the wife of Hosea who turned her back on her faithful husband so that she could follow a life with evil lovers. The story of the relationship is depicting the unfaithful Israel, who had turned away to worship idols.

The Hosea Time

The prophesies of Hosea were first given during the reign of Jereboam 2. Unfortunately Israel was enjoying external riches but their hearts were seeking corruption and sin. The richer people were regularly attending the places of worship, [Amos 4:4](#) , but it was only shown externally, they had no desire to help others,

See [Amos 4:1](#),

Those who were poor were not cared for. Because most of the people had a prosperous life the just did not care that there might be a judgement for their behaviour and attitude to God. The Assyrian empire was about to spread out into Asia, following the death of Jeroboam 2 , Tiglath-pileser III came to the throne of Assyria who during his reign expanded the area under the rule of Assyria. By 732 b.c. Damascus had fallen to the Assyrians, followed 10 years later by Samaria. The capital of Israel fell and the people were deported. It was during the later years of this period that Hosea and Amos were bringing God’s message to the Northern while Jeremiah was taking the message of God to Judea.

Hosea’s Marriage

In [Hosea 1:2](#)

We are told that the Lord spoke to Hosea, giving him instructions “*to marry a wife of whoredom.*” There is some discussion on the meaning of this passage, did Hosea marry a woman known to be a prostitute, did he marry a woman who he thought was pure but later turned her back on him to become a prostitute or were the instruction “*to marry a wife of whoredom,*” a prophetic message from God to Hosea.

When Hosea starts writing the book he believed that God had blessed his marriage to Gomer his wife, but as the story develops we can see only great sadness and a tragedy developing. Following the marriage Hosea finds that his wife Gomer has a preference to commit adultery. As a result of her terrible behaviour Hosea feels he must separate from her and,

[Hosea 2:2](#) indicates a divorce.

The statement. Hosea’s love for Gomer continued, and later he remarried her,

[Hosea 3:1](#).

The story of this marriage very closely parallels God’s dealing with Israel. Following the people of Israel’s promise to faithfully follow the Laws of the Lord they turned their backs on Him and went seeking the

worship of the god's of Canaan, mainly Baal worship. This situation continued until God brought about the punishment by using the Assyrian's to take the people into exile. Later a very changed Israel was to return to the worship and obedience of God.

Hosea's Married Life.

Hosea 1:1 to 3:5

The word's of Hosea tells us that he was obeying the instructions of God concerning this marriage, [Hosea 1:1-9](#).

Hosea is instructed to *"marry a wife of whoredom and to have children of whoredom,"* the wording seems to indicate and describe the marriage of Hosea. Hosea would believe that his marriage was ordained(controlled) by God, he is therefore able to address Israel as *"a land which has committed whoredom,"* As Gomer had proved unfaithful to him so had Israel become unfaithful to God. It is of interest that the Canannite cult involved fertility, which included ritual prostitution.

Gomer was the daughter of Diblaim, this was a very common name so we cannot read any meaning from the name.

Hosea and Gomer now had a son, they gave him the name of Jezreel, meaning "God sows." This name had two prophetic significant's:-

1) After the people of Israel had been taken off because of their sin God would plant or "sow" them back into the land.

2) Sins which were committed in the valley of Jezreel by Jehu would be punished,

See [2 Kings 10:1-11](#),

Where Jehu attempted to defend the cause of the Lord by murdering all the Baal-worshippers.

verse 5: God predicts His judgement on Israel, the "bow" showed the might of Israel which was about to end. A bow which was broken signified a loss of power, Israel would suffer a defeat.(consider [Genesis 49:24](#).

verse 6: Hosea and Gomer have a second child, a daughter , "God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. " God is telling the people of Israel that He would have no mercy or pity for them, they would suffer the judgement of God because of their sin.

verse 7: Israel fell to the Assyrian's in 722 b.c., The area called Judea, however, will not be punished, God will have mercy upon them initially. When Sennacherib attacked Jerusalem, God acted to save the city. [2 Kings 19:35](#).

verses 8,9: The second son of Gomer is born and is named "Loammi," the meaning is "not my people." This name is referring to the covenant with Israel on mount Sinai, [Exodus 19:1-7](#),

They would be God's people, He would be their God. Unfortunately, the people continually broke that agreement. Hosea is therefore predicting that the people of Israel would be rejected.

verses 10,11: This rejection would not be permanent, but the people will go into exile and the Northern Kingdom will be destroyed. However, the original promise to Abraham, [Genesis 15:5](#),

God said, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." Hosea is now looking into the future, punishment first, then redemption, they will again be the "the sons of the living God.

The Marriage fails

Hosea 2:1-13

Gomer has found a life more interesting away from Hosea, she had become a prostitute. Hosea realized with a very sad heart that his marriage has broken, he pleads through his children to Gomer to come back but then realized it is over and he speaks to Gomer, denies that she is his wife, telling her to return or she will be exposed as a prostitute.

This threat is very similar to,

[Ezekiel 16:35-40](#),

Where the Lord is speaking to the people of Jerusalem and their turning away from God. Hosea's wife said

“I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.”

verse 5: She preferred the good life supplied by her lovers.

Gomer reflected the attitude of the Israel to the Lord, who preferred the god's of Baal and any of the other Canaanite god's.

In verse 7: We find things are not working out for Gomer, her lovers are avoiding her, she was finding no satisfaction in her life. “I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.” Just like Israel's attitude to God, Gomer had taken Hosea for granted.

verse 9: God, in discipline, says the blessings are to be taken away from Israel, by doing this Israel will realize what was missing and the source of blessing.

v10-13 The people of Israel had preferred to worship the Baal idol, God was about to show the world how evil Israel was, including removal of all His blessings.

Judgement

Hosea 5:1-14

The priests and the ruling class, the king etc. had ignored the messages from God, a generation had grown up who did not know God. People had turned against God, “the revoltors,” they had effectively killed of a faith in and through the worship of God.

verse 5: The people were full of pride and arrogant, this was about to be humbled.

verse 6: Israel was still making offerings but God did not accept them.

verse 7: Each family had turned away from God, parents and children worshipped idols. Judgement of God was not far away, “shall a month devour them.”

verses 8-14: Despite many warnings and even turning to foreign nations for help by Ephraim.

Look at [2 Kings 16:5ff](#);

[Hosea 5:15-6:6](#).

The people “turn” to God. The suffering has some effect, the people appear to turn back to God, but it is just like the “dew” which evaporates each morning.

Hosea 6:7 - 7:16.

A list of crimes of Israel. The priests, the king and others had turned to evil plans, intrigue (illegal or did harm) and murder. ([Hosea 7:8,9,11](#))

Israel turns to foreign nations for help, and also the foreign gods, verse 16, for help, but **never** back to the Lord.

Hosea 8:1ff.

God is forgotten, Israel has ignored the laws of God, then made up their own, now Israel is about to receive the judgement. Israel is about to become a slave nation of Assyria, just as once she was a slave of Egypt.

God was about to withdraw, His love and protection.

Hosea 10:1ff

Though outwardly Israel still made a show of religion, their hearts were not in anyway worshipping God. It was now that they were about to reap the result of their life. The altars and high places of worship of Baal were about to be destroyed. The Israel's cities emptied by the enemy. Hosea still tells them they can still turn back to God, but to no avail.

Hosea 11:1ff

Though the people have rejected God, He still loves them and does not want to destroy them, though they deserve it, Admah and Zeboim were by the south of the Dead Sea and possibly been involved in Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction. God has to have justice but His great love is full of mercy.

Hosea 12:1ff

Lessons from the history of Israel.

[Hosea 13:1ff](#). There is no other God but God, this will never change and though men will turn away He exists and has all the power needed to carry out all His warnings. Just as the East wind burns up the crops and land so He will come.

[Hosea 14:1ff](#). God gives a final show of his love for Israel, judgement does not need to happen, just turn back to me, a promise of pardon was given, verse 4, “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.” for “the ways of the LORD are right.”