

Hosea

MEANING “Salvation.”

AUTHOR: Hosea

TIME WRITTEN: Written during the early years of Hezekiah.

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 28th Book in the Bible
- 28th book in the Old Testament
- 6th of 17 books of Prophecy
- 1st of 12 Minor Prophet Books
- 27 have preceded it. 38 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 14

VERSES: 197

WORDS: 5,175

KEY WORD: The Loyal Law of God for Israel

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **Hosea 4:1** - “Hear the word of the LORD, you children of Israel, for the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: “There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land.”
2. **Hosea 11:7-9** - “My people are bent on backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, none at all exalt Him.

How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; my sympathy is stirred.

I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, the Holy One in your midst; and I will not come with terror.”

KEY CHAPTER: Hosea 4

1. The nation of Israel has left the knowledge of the truth and followed the idolatrous ways of their pagan neighbors.
2. Central to the book is **Hosea 4:6** - “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT HOSEA:

1. Hosea ministers to the northern kingdom of Israel (also called Ephraim, after its largest tribe).
2. Outwardly, the nation is enjoying a time of prosperity and growth, but inwardly, moral corruption and spiritual adultery.
3. Hosea, instructed by God to marry a woman named Gomer, finds his domestic life to be an accurate and tragic dramatization of the unfaithfulness of God’s people.
4. During his half century of prophetic ministry, Hosea repeatedly echoes his threefold message:
 - a. God abhors the sins of His people.
 - b. Judgment is certain.
 - c. God’s loyal love stands firm.
5. Hosea:
 - a. Is the son of Beri. (1:1)
 - b. Husband of Gomer. (1:3)

- c. Father of:
 - 1. Two sons.
 - 2. One daughter.
- d. Nothing more is known about him since he is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible.
- 6. Hosea has a real compassion for his people, and is personal suffering because of Gomer gives him some understanding of God's grief over their sin.
 - a. Thus, his words of coming judgment are passionately delivered but tempered with a heart of tenderness.
 - b. Using metaphors and images, he upbraids his people for their:
 - 1. Lying
 - 2. Murder
 - 3. Insincerity
 - 4. Ingratitude
 - 5. Idolatry
 - 6. Covetousness
 - c. Nonetheless, his messages are punctuated with consolation and future hope.
- 7. Time background.
 - a. Hosea ministered to the northern kingdom of Israel.
 - b. According to 1:1, the kings of Judah during his ministry were:
 - 1. Uzziah. (767-739 B.C.)
 - 2. Jotham. (739-731 B.C.)
 - 3. Ahaz. (731-715 B.C.)
 - 4. Hezekiah. (715-686 B.C.)
 - c. When Hosea began his ministry, Jereboam II (782-753 B.C.) was still reigning in Israel.
 - 1. This would make Hosea a younger contemporary of Amos, another prophet to the northern kingdom.
 - 2. He was also a contemporary of two southern kingdom prophets:
 - a. Isaiah
 - b. Micah
 - d. Hosea's long career continued after Jereboam II and spanned the reigns of the last six kings of Israel from Zechariah (753-752 B.C. to Hoshea (732-722 B.C.)
 - 1. Zechariah (753-752 B.C.) Israel's 14th king reigned 6 months
 - 2. Shallum (752 B.C.) Israel's 15th king reigned 1 month
 - 3. Menaem (748-738 B.C.) Israel's 16th king reigned 10 years
 - 4. Pekahiah (738-736 B.C.) Israel's 17th king reigned 2 years
 - 5. Pekah (748-730) Israel's 18th king reigned 20 years
 - 6. Hoshea (730-722 B.C.) Israel's 19th and last king reigned 9 years
- 8. Hosea's long career of about forty-five years stretched from about 755 B.C. to about 710 B.C.
- 9. The Book of Hosea represents approximately forty years of prophetic ministry.
- 10. Concerning the key concept of the book, the loyal love of God for Israel:
 - a. The themes of chapters 1-3 echo throughout the rest of the book.
 - b. The adultery of Gomer in chapter 1 illustrates the sin of Israel in chapters 4-7.
 - c. The degradation of Gomer in chapter 2 represents the judgment of Israel in chapters 8-10.
 - d. Hosea's redemption of Israel in chapter 3 pictures the restoration of Israel in chapters 11-14.

- e. More than any other Old Testament prophet, Hosea's personal experiences illustrate his prophetic message.
- f. In his relationship to Gomer, Hosea portrays God's faithfulness, justice, love, and forgiveness toward His people.
- h. The book contains a fitting parallel.
 - 1. An adulterous and a faithful husband.
 - 2. An adulterous Israel and a faithful Lord
- i. Hosea utters about 150 statements concerning the sins of Israel, and more than half deal specifically with idolatry.
- j. The theme of God's justice is contrasted with Israel's lack of justice.
 - 1. There has never been a good king in Israel and justice is long overdue.
 - 2. The theme of God's love is seen in contrast to Israel's hardness and empty ritual.
 - 3. God's loyal love is ceaseless.
 - 4. In spite of Israel's manifold sins, God tries every means to bring His people back to Himself.
- k. He pleads with the people to return to Him, but they will not. **Hosea 14:1** - "O Israel, return to the Lord Your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity."

SUMMARY OF HOSEA

INTRODUCTION:

- A. God calls Hosea to prophesy during Israel's last hours, just as he will call Jeremiah to prophesy during Judah's last hours.
- B. As one commentator has noted, "What we see in the prophecy of Hosea are the last dew swirls as the kingdom of Israel goes down the drain."
 - 1. The Book of Hosea represents God's last gracious effort to plug the drain.
 - 2. Israel may have given up on God, but God hasn't given up on Israel.
 - 3. I wish every erring brother and sister would realize that.
- C. Hosea's personal tragedy is an intense illustration of Israel's national tragedy.
 - 1. It is a story of one-sided love and faithfulness that represents the relationship between Israel and God.
 - 2. As Gomer is married to Hosea, so Israel is betrothed to God.
 - 3. Both relationships gradually disintegrate.
 - a. Gomer runs after other men. (Physical adultery)
 - b. Israel runs after other gods. (Spiritual adultery)
 - c. Israel's spiritual adultery is illustrated in Gomer's physical adultery.
- D. There are two major divisions in the book:
 - 1. The Adulterous Wife and Faithful Husband. (1-3)
 - 2. The Adulterous Israel and Faithful Lord. (4-14)

THE ADULTEROUS WIFE AND FAITHFUL HUSBAND. (1-3)

- A. Hosea marries a woman named Gomer who bears him three children appropriately named by God as signs to Israel.
 - 1. "Zezreel" - "God Scatters."
 - 2. "Lo-Ruhamah" - "Not Pitied."
 - 3. "Lo-Ammi" - "Not My People."
- B. Similarly, God will judge and scatter Israel because of her sin.

- C. Gomer seeks other lovers and deserts Hosea. In spite of the depth to which Gomer's sin carries her, Hosea redeems her from the slave market.

THE ADULTEROUS ISRAEL AND FAITHFUL LORD. (4-14)

- A. Because of his own painful experience, Hosea can feel some of the sorrow of God over the sinfulness of His people.
1. His loyal love for Gomer is a reflection of God's concern for Israel.
 2. Israel has fallen into the dregs of sin and is hardened against God's gracious last appeal to return.
 3. The people have flagrantly violated all of God's commandments and they are indicted by the holy God for their crimes.
 4. Even now God wants to heal and redeem them (7:1, 13), but in their arrogance and idolatry they rebel.
- B. Chapters 9 and 10 give the verdict of the case God has just presented.
1. Israel's disobedience will lead to her dispersion.
 - a. In chapters 4-7 they "sow the wind."
 - b. In chapters 8-10 they "reap the whirlwind."
 2. Israel spurns repentance, and the judgment of God can no longer be delayed.
- C. Concerning God in Hosea:
1. Four major attributes are seen:
 - a. In chapters 4-7 God is HOLY.
 - b. In chapters 8-10 God is JUST.
 - c. In chapters 11-14 God is LOVING and GRACIOUS.
 2. God must discipline, but because of His endless love . . .
 - a. He asks in **Hosea 11:8** - "How can I give you up, Ephraim? . . ."
 - b. He answers His own question in **Hosea 14:4** - "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him."