

Hosea 01 - Hosea Marries a Prostitute; Hosea's Three Children; Prophecy of Israel's Restoration

I. Wayward wife and faithful husband (Hosea 1:1—3:5)

(1) Historical setting (1:1)

(A) Prophet (1:1a)

(B) Time (1:1b-c)

(a) Southern kings (1:1b)

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1 The word of the LORD which came to **Hosea** the **son of Beerī**, 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.

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.

1 A message from the LORD came to Beeri's son Hosea during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Joash's son Jeroboam, who was king of Israel.

1 The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

- "...Hosea" - his name means "He [*Yahweh*] has saved"

- "...son of Beeri" - his father was Beeri, meaning "The Well of *YHWH*"

— They were of the tribe of Issachar, born in Beth-Shemesh, according to Jerome

- "...Jeroboam" - only one Israelite king is mentioned vs. four Judean kings, perhaps to emphasize the legitimacy of the Davidic dynasty (Cf. Hosea 3:5) in contrast to the violence and instability of the Northern Kingdom (Cf. 7:3-7)

The Northern Kingdom ("Israel") Timeline

- Jeroboam II (790-749) - Great prosperity; Hosea begins
- Zechariah (748) - Reigned six months; killed by Shallum
- Menahem (748-738) - Extremely cruel; a puppet of Assyria
- Pekahiah (738-736) - Killed by Pekah
- Pekah (738-730) - Killed by Hoshea; Galilee captivity, 734 BC
- Hoshea (730-721) - Fall of Samaria; End of the kingdom
- Jeroboam II died in the fifteenth year of Uzziah's 41-year reign
- From his time forward *all* Israel's kings worshipped false gods:
 - Zachariah (2 Kings 15:9)
 - Menahem (2 Kings 15:18)
 - Pekahiah (2 Kings 15:24)
 - Pekah (2 Kings 15:28)
 - Hoshea (2 Kings 17:2)

As Israel was the most flourishing externally under Jeroboam II, who recovered the possessions seized on by Syria, Hosea's prophecy of its downfall at that time was the more striking as it could not have been foreseen by mere human sagacity. Jonah the prophet had promised success to Jeroboam II from God, not for the king's merit, but from God's mercy to Israel; so the coast of Israel was restored by Jeroboam II from the entering of Hamath to the sea of the plain (2 Kings 14:23-27).

Southern Kingdom ("Judah") Timeline

- Uzziah (737-735) - a good king; Hosea begins
- Jotham (749-734) - a good king
- Ahaz (741-726) - very wicked; Galilee captivity, 734 BC
- Hezekiah (726-697) - a good king

[Dates are approximate, sources vary; reigns recorded in 2 Chr 26-32]

As foreseen by Hosea, the Assyrians under Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BC) expanded westward. In 733 BC the Northern Kingdom was made a puppet state within the Assyrian Empire (2 Kings 15:29). After plotting revolt, Israel was defeated in 722 BC and deported (2 Kings 17:1-6; 18:10-12). Judah was also incorporated as a vassal state into the Assyrian Empire during Hosea's time (Cf. 2 Kings 16:5-10).

(2) Hosea's family (1:2-9)

(A) His wife Gomer (1:2-3)

2 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."

2 When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and *have* children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the LORD."

2 When a message from the LORD came to Hosea, the LORD told him, "Go marry a prostitute and have children with her, because the land is prostituting itself by departing from the LORD."

2 The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD.

- God gave Hosea this unusual command because the people of Israel (northern kingdom) were committing flagrant harlotry in the sense that they had departed from the Lord to pursue other loves

— The Lord used personification to picture the land as a woman acting like a prostitute

— Marriage relationship in OT—warnings of harlotry: Ex 34:15-16 (warning re: Ahab, Jezebel); Lev 17:7; 20:5-6; Deut 32:16,21; Is 54:5. Also: Ruth (Cf. Eph 5:25-32) and Adam (Cf. Rom 5:14)

3 So he went and took **Gomer** the daughter of **Diblaim**, and she conceived and bore him a son.

3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

3 So he went out and married Diblaim's daughter Gomer. She conceived with him and gave birth to a son.

3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

- "...Gomer" - means "filling up the measure" (harlotry?)

- "...Diblaim" - "a double cake of figs"; suggestive of sensual pleasure

(B) His children (1:4-9)

(a) Jezreel = God scatters (1:4-5)

4 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.

4 And the LORD said to him, "Name him Jezreel; for yet a little while, and 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.

4 The LORD told Hosea, "Name the child 'Jezreel,' because in a little while I'll avenge the blood that was shed by Jehu's dynasty at Jezreel. I'll put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.

4 And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little *while*, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

- "...Jezreel" - "sown of God [by scattering seed]"; refers to both blessing and judgment
— It was not just the meaning of the name that was significant in this case, but also the associations with the town in Israel that bore that name

— King Jehu of Israel (841-814 BC) massacred many enemies of Israel, including King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, King Jehoram, and many prophets of Baal, which was good (Cf. 2 Kings 9:6-10,24; 10:18-28,30). But he also killed King Ahaziah of Judah and 42 of his relatives, which was bad (2 Kings 9:27-28; 10:12-14).

— Ahaziah and his relatives did not die in Jezreel, but their deaths were part of Jehu's wholesale slaughter at Jezreel. Jehu went too far and thereby demonstrated disrespect for the Lord's commands (Cf. 2 Kings 10:29-31).

— Because of Jehu's atrocities (which overstepped his authority to judge Israel's enemies), God promised to punish his dynasty. The fulfillment of this prophecy came in 752 BC, when Shallum assassinated Zechariah, the fourth of Jehu's descendants to rule the Northern Kingdom, thereby cutting off Jehu's dynasty forever (2 Kings 15:10).

Judgment on Jehu's Dynasty

Many think the attitude expressed by the Lord (Hosea 1:4) contradicted the accounts in 1 and 2 Kings. But a closer examination of the historical record suggests a resolution to the problem.

- Jehu's slaughter of Jezebel and Ahab's descendants had been prophesied by Elijah (1 Kings 21:21-24), commanded by Elisha (2 Kings 9:6-10), and commended by the Lord Himself (2 Kings 10:30).
- Jehu also killed Joram (2 Kings 9:24), Ahaziah, king of Judah (2 Kings 9:27-28), 42 of Ahaziah's relatives (2 Kings 10:12-14), and several functionaries of the Baal cult (2 Kings 10:18-28).
 - Though the execution of Baal's servants was certainly in accord with the Lord's will (Cf. 1 Kings 18:40), Jehu's attack on the house of David went too far
 - Despite the fact that Ahaziah's assassination could be attributed to God's providence (2 Chr 22:7), it demonstrated an underlying lack of regard for the Lord's commands
 - This disregard subsequently came to the surface in other ways (2 Kings 10:29-31)

So Hosea 1:4 probably refers to the slaughter of Ahaziah and his relatives. Though their deaths did not actually occur in Jezreel (Cf. 2 Kings 9:27; 10:12-14), they were associated with the wholesale slaughter at that place.

5 On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

5 On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

5 At that time I'll shatter the military strength of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

5 And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

- The name of Hosea's first son would also point to a future judgment that would also take place in the valley of Jezreel

— It would happen on "that day"—a future, unspecified date

— *Yahweh* promised to "break the bow" of Israel's military strength (symbolized by the bow)

— This prophecy was fulfilled when Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III invaded and defeated Israel in that valley in 733 BC (2 Kings 15:29; Cf. 2 Kings 17:3-5)

Jehu's dynasty came to the throne through the blood of Jezreel, but failed to profit from the lesson of God's hatred of sin, and abhorrence of idolatry in particular. This same Valley of Jezreel would be the scene of their judgment: in that very spot (then called Esdraelon) the Assyrians defeated Israel and their captivity began.

(b) Lo-ruhamah = no compassion (1:6-7)

6 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.

6 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 have compassion on the house of Israel, that I would ever forgive them.

6 Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter, so the LORD told Hosea, "Name her 'Lo-ruhamah,' because I will no longer be showing mercy to the house of Israel, nor will I forgive them.

6 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And *God* said unto him, Call her name Lo-ruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.

- "...Lo-ruhamah" - means "not loved"; from the verb *racham*, describing tender feelings of compassion as those expressed by a parent for a child

— It was not that she was an orphan, but she did not know who her father was; she was likely born of fornication by Gomer

— The Lord told Hosea to give her this name because He would not have compassion on Israel to forgive her sins

— *Yahweh* had been very compassionate toward Israel in the past, but her persistent unfaithfulness to Him and His covenant with her made continuing compassion impossible

— God (*el rachum*, the Compassionate), who is willing to forgive iniquity (Ex 34:6), will eventually come to the point where, despite His gracious character, He will no longer leave the guilty unpunished (Ex 34:7)

7 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."

7 But I will have compassion on the house of Judah and deliver them by the LORD their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses or horsemen."

7 But I'll have mercy on the house of Judah, and I'll save them by the LORD their God—I will not save them by the bow, by the sword, by battle, by horses, or by cavalry."

7 But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

- In contrast to the northern kingdom (Israel), the Lord would have compassion on the southern kingdom (Judah); He would save and protect them by Himself, not through military might

— The Israelites relied on military power and alliances, but the Judahites trusted in the Lord, generally speaking

- This was supernaturally fulfilled in 701 BC when God had an angel annihilate 185,000 Assyrian soldiers one night after dinner, ending their campaign against Judah (2 Kings 19:32-36)

- 2 Kings 19 and Is 37 (esp v36-38), you will learn how God miraculously delivered the people of the southern kingdom at this time; He did not deliver the northern kingdom

The Northern Kingdom had arrogated the name of Israel to itself. It clung obstinately to the belief that its greater riches, area and strength showed that it was the true representative of God's people. The mention of Judah underlines the vital truth that the rejection of the North in no way involved God's complete repudiation of Israel's sonship.

(c) Lo-ammi = not my people (1:8-9)

8 When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and gave birth to a son.

8 When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and gave birth to a son.

8 After Gomer had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived again and gave birth to a son,

8 Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.

- The reference to after she had weaned Lo-ruhamah is a detail that would seem unnecessary if this were an allegory or vision

9 And the LORD said, "Name him **Lo-ammi**, because you are not My people, and **I am not your God.**"

9 And the LORD said, "Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God."

9 so the LORD told Hosea, "Name him 'Lo-ammi,' because you are not my people, and I will not be your God.

9 Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye *are* not my people, and I will not be your God.

- "...Lo-ammi" - literally "Not My People"; the Lord no longer regarded the kingdom of Israel as His people or Himself as their God

— He did not mean that He would break His unconditional promises to His people (Cf. Ex 6:7; Lev 26:12; Deut 26:17-18), but that the relationship that they had enjoyed so far would come to an end

— In the ancient covenant formula God declared, "I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be My people" (Lev 26:12; Cf. Ex 6:7; Deut 26:17-18); now that relationship had been severed

- Having broken the covenant entered into at Sinai and ratified in the plains of Moab, God gives them up for the time being; this sentence remains unrepealed to the present day...
- This accounts for the name of God hidden in the Book of Esther, which sets forth His providential care over them while they are scattered among the nations, even though He doesn't publicly identify with them
- This is also a rebuttal to amillennialism, which insists that God is finished dealing with the nation Israel
- "...I am not your God" - literally, "and I [am] not I AM to you" (Cf. Ex 3:14)
- The Lord would withdraw the covenant He had made with the revelation of the same name. He would remove protection that He had formerly provided and allow another nation to invade and discipline His people.

[Hosea 1:9 ends Chapter 1 in Hebrew Bible.]

(3) Israel's eventual restoration (1:10-11)

(A) Nation to become innumerable (1:10a)

(B) Nation to again become sons of God (1:10b)

10 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.**"

10 Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; 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.*"

10 Despite this, the number of the people of Israel will be like ocean sand, which can neither be measured nor counted. And the time will come when instead of it being said, 'You are not my people,' it will be said, 'You are children of the living God.'

10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are not my people*, *there* it shall be said unto them, *Ye are the sons of the living God*.

- In a remarkable shift of tone, the Lord then declares that the effects of judgment would someday be reversed

— This is a wonderful promise of future restoration, which immediately follows the revelation of judgment

— Paul quotes this re: Gentiles (Rom 9:24-27)

— The Jew and Gentile are on the same ground: grace, not legal performance ("works")

- "...sand of the sea" - original covenant of pure grace made with Abraham by *El Shaddai* (Gen 22:17; 32:12)

— Despite the judgment promised, *Yahweh* revealed that the number of Israelites would be innumerable

- He also said that in the same place (the land of Israel) where they heard His word of rejection (v9), they would hear His word of acceptance

- "...*You are* the sons of the living God" - points to the restoration of intimate covenant relationship and privilege

— "living God" recalls Joshua 3:10, where Joshua told the Israelites that they would know that the living God was among them when they saw Him defeat their enemies in the Promised Land

(C) United kingdom (1:11a)

(D) United leadership (1:11b)

(E) Occupation of her land (1:11c)

(F) Future blessing (1:11d)

11 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.

11 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 great will be the day of Jezreel.

11 And the people of Judah and the people of Israel will be united as one. They will appoint for themselves a single leader and will take dominion over the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

11 Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great *shall be* the Day of Jezreel.

- That which had been divided after Solomon would be reunited under One Leader (Cf. Ezek 37:22), the Davidic Ruler of the Kingdom Age (Cf. Hosea 3:5; Is 9:6-7; Amos 9:11; Micah 5:2)

— This is the time that the promise to David of an everlasting throne will be fulfilled (2 Sam 7:11b-16)

— At this time, Israel will grow strong in the Land ("come up out of the land")

— When this happens, it will be a great day for Jezreel

- "...day of Jezreel" - eschatological reference (Is 9:4-7; 41:8-16; Amos 9:11-12; Joel 3:9-17; Cf. Rev. 19:11-21)

— Jezreel was a place of former victory for Israel (Judges 7), so it would be again in the future; this day of restoration will be ushered in by a great military triumph, like that of Gideon (Cf. Is 9:4-7; 41:8-16; Joel 3:9-17; Amos 9:11-12; Rev 19:11-21)

Prophecy in v10-11

- Israel will experience a great increase in population (v10a)
- In the nation there will be a great turning to God (v10b)
- The Northern and Southern Kingdoms will be reunified into a single nation (v11a)
- They will appoint themselves one head—who will be the Messiah (v11b)
- ...and now, national restoration (2:1)

The History of Israel

1. Jezreel (1:4) means “scattered” referring to the time when God would scatter Israel among the nations
2. Lo-ruhamah (1:6) means “unpitied” meaning that God would lift His mercy from the nation and permit her to suffer for her sins
3. Lo-ammi (1:9) means “not my people” indicating this present time in God’s program when Israel is out of fellowship with God and its people are not His people as once they were
 - In Hosea 2, we see there will be a time when God will again call Israel “My people” and they will “obtain pity” when Christ returns, restores the nation, and establishes His righteous kingdom.

Lessons For Us

We cannot leave these chapters without pointing out that spiritual adultery can be a sin of NT Christians as well as the OT Jew (1 John 2:15-17; Rev 2:1-7; James 4:1-10). Christians who love the world and live for sin are false to their Savior and break His heart. Paul warned the Corinthians against this (2 Cor 11:1-3).