

## Hosea ('salvation') - Introduction

### A. Historical :

After Amos, God sent Hosea as the next prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel. He preached for a long time: through 6 Northern kings (Zechariah to Hoshea). The historical period of his preaching is found in 2 Kings 14-20 and 2 Chronicles 26-32. (note: While he was in the North, Isaiah and Micah were preaching to the South.) Hosea began his ministry during the time of King Jeroboam II. Israel was doing well politically and economically: they were enjoying peace and prosperity. But spiritually, they were *departing from God* (1:2) by rejecting *God's law* (4:6) and learning the ways of the heathen (4:12-13). After Jeroboam's death *sin abounded* (4:2) and Israel declined into virtual anarchy ending in final judgment.

Hosea mostly referred to Israel as *Ephraim*, the first tribe to backslide. Hosea prophesied the Assyrian invasion, and lived to see it in 721 B.C. and he wept over it as Jeremiah wept over the Babylonian captivity (in *Lamentations*).

### B. Spiritual :

Hosea was used by God as a personal 'object lesson'. He was told to marry a woman named Gomer who would become unfaithful to him and her own children. "Hosea is the tragedy of a broken home; the story is a sad one. Gomer left home, and became a harlot. Hosea went after her and she refused to come. He sent the children to plead with their mother; still she would not return. Then, as was common in those days, she sold herself into bondage." *McGee*

Gomer 'went bad'. Hosea was brokenhearted, he still loved Gomer. Meanwhile the children struggled, the neighbors murmured and shame filled their home. Gomer may have wondered, like Joseph, if he should *put her away privily*, Mt 1:19. God now tells Hosea : (1) to go and buy her back and bring her home, chapter 3; and (2) step out of your shame-filled home and go preach to the nation with a broken heart.

### C. Doctrinal :

Hosea pictures God as the faithful husband and Gomer as unfaithful Israel. Israel knew God's deliverance, His redemption, His revelation, His protection, His forgiveness, and His love. Yet, they *played the harlot...as a backsliding heifer...they joined to idols*, Hos 4:15-17. Two golden calves stood in the northern kingdom during Hosea's days, 1 K 12:28-29.

Hosea is quoted multiple times in the New Testament.

2:23 in Romans 9:25

6:6 in Matthew 9:13

10:8 in Luke 23:30

11:1 in Matthew 2:15

13:14 in 1 Cor. 15:55

The book is both personal and prophetic. It speaks to the mind and the heart. Hosea's heart was wrung with anguish and his reputation shamed by association. For a prophet to speak of deep things he must suffer; this is the economy of God. He must enter in to the '*fellowship of his suffering*' by suffering personally. And from this suffering may the prophet speak for God, in true communion with God.

### **Great Truths of Hosea :**

God uses Hosea to unveil three cardinal truths : the nature of sin, judgment and love.

**1. The nature of sin** - there are different grades and degrees of sin. Lost men live in a state of unbelief. In such darkness they build a heathen world of animism, animalism, demonism and self-indulgence. But this is nothing compared to sinning against God's light and love. This was Israel's sin; it is spiritual adultery and lodges in idolatry. Sadly, it has been repeated in the New Testament. When "Christians" turn from God's light (i.e. His word) and embrace the world's idols (e.g. education, emerging social norms, media, political correctness...) their testimony is silenced and God's nature, name and word is blasphemed.

**2. Judgement** - is a necessary result of sin. Man is free to choose his actions, but God has pronounced His chosen reaction of Judgment. Man has no right to expect to escape God's judgment, Romans 2:3. Furthermore, God has no alternative but to judge sin to maintain His word and His throne of righteousness.

**3. Love** - the only true, eternal, and unconquerable love is God's !

His love is constant and certain. God's love suffers and God hurts when his children sin against Him, Hos 11:8 . Yet, He bears with sin because of His love. And He regathers His own thru bearing the sin thru suffering Himself and then pardoning the sinner when they repent. In the end, God's love conquers and restores the wandering sinner, Hosea 14:8.

**Hosea : Outline** (by Dr. Wiersbe)

- I. Israel's Unfaithfulness Pictured      ch 1 - 3**
- II. Israel's Sins Proclaimed              ch 4 - 7**
- III. Israel's Judgment Pronounced      ch 8 - 10**
- IV. Israel's Restoration Promised        ch 11 - 14**

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