

Hosea (4:1-6)

God desired to enter into a communion with his people. But Israel turned to other loves, established a kingship, relied on alliances with foreign nations for security (Hos 5:13, 7:8-11, 8:9-10), & worship idols (Hos 13:2).

God is going to punish Israel in two ways, corresponding to the 2 primary forms of Israel's sin. First, He will cause infertility (Hos 2:9-13, 9:11-14). Second, He will cause them to be conquered (Hos 9:3, 6, 17) → Jeroboam, the first king of Northern Israel, was from the tribe of Ephraim^{howe}. (Hos 11:5-6).

God's plan, however, is for Israel's redemption (Hos 2:14-23) which is illustrated by Hosea ^{buying} bringing his wife back (Hos 3:1-5).

* (Every promise of destruction is followed by a promise of redemption.)

Timeline

- Hosea & Amos prophesied around the same time.
- Hosea begins during the last years of the reign of Jeroboam II (786-746 BC).
- During this time, there is stability & economic prosperity for the well off, but severe poverty also exists. There is a breakdown of public morality.
- The book of Hosea corresponds to 2 Kings 15-17.
- Menahem, king of Israel (2 Kings 15:17-20), was invaded by Pul (~~Pul~~ Tiglath-Pileser), king of Assyria, & forced to pay a heavy tribute. ^{Tiglath-Pileser returned a short time later} & deported some Israelites to Assyria.
- Later, the king of Israel, along with the king of Aram, marched against the king of Judah, Ahaz. Ahaz practiced detestable religions & even sacrificed his son (2 Kings 16:3). To fight off Israel, Ahaz took the silver & gold out of the temple of the Lord & gave it to the king of Assyria in return for military aid. Ahaz then traveled to Assyria & met with the king. Taking notes, he had Assyria's altar to a false god reproduced in Judah, taking the place of Yahweh's altar. Then Ahaz removed several parts of the temple of the Lord to honor the king of Assyria.
- Hoshea, king of Israel, stopped paying tribute to Assyria & attempted to form an alliance with So, king of Egypt. Assyria marched against Israel for 3 years & deported all the ^{remaining} Israelites to Assyria. People from other nations were brought in to live there in place of the Israelites.

The Lord did this as punishment because the Israelites had worshiped other gods + adopted the practices of their neighbors.

- Hosea 13:16 reflects Samaria under siege.

The first 3 chapters of Hosea are a summary of the rest of the book.

Hosea's marriage to Gomer, a woman of harlotry, was a living symbol of Israel's participation in pagan religions. Gomer likely participated in the common fertility rituals of baalism as a prostitute. This practice is the cause of God's punishment of infertility.

- Gomer's first child (Hos 1:4) is named Tezreel as a sign of punishment ^{+ 10:20-27} on the house of Jehu for the massacre at Tezreel (2 Kings 9-10) (sp 2 Kings 10:6-7). Verse 31 shows Jehu's downfall. Tezreel was the name of a location linked with violence + mass murder. A modern equivalent might be Auschwitz or Hiroshima. This promise is fulfilled in 2 Kings 15:8-12.

- Gomer's second child (Hos 1:6-7) is a girl + named Lo-Ruhamah which means not pitied. Though the last two children are not explicitly stated to be Hosea's, this does not mean they have other fathers. The structure of the chapter implies a continuation from the first child. The daughter is named Lo-Ruhamah because God will no longer show pity to Israel. However, in verse 7, God says He will show pity to Judah + save them. This salvation will not come, though, by military might or human efforts. Instead, their salvation will come only by the Lord. This theme is repeated in chapter 14.

- Gomer's third child (Hos 1:8-9) is a son named Lo-Ammi, for God said "you are not my people + I am not your God." This is a breaking of the covenant He first established with Abraham in (Gen 17:7-8). It is expanded in Leviticus (Lev 26:9-13).

Immediately following the prophecy of doom symbolized by the names of Gomer's 3 children comes a promise of restoration (Hos 1:10-11). God makes 5 promises in these 2 verses. 1) The Israelites will be as numerous as the sands on the sea; 2) The covenant with the Lord will be restored; 3) Israel & Judah will be reunited; 4) They will be ruled by one leader; + 5) They will again inhabit their own land.

This is a complete reversal of every element Hosea has been preaching.

They are called sons of the living God. While this phrase appears in the NT, this is the only occurrence in the OT.

This reversal is foretold in Leviticus following the previous reference to the same book (Lev 26:40-45).

Paul explains in (Romans 9:22-26) how this promise is for a future after the arrival of the Messiah & is to be applied to Gentiles as well as Jews.

The end of this verse, "great will be the day of Jezreel", is likely figurative rather than literally meaning the city. Jezreel means "God sows", therefore it could be taken as "great will be the day (when) God sows." This corresponds to (Hos 2:23) when God says "I will plant (sow) her for myself in the land." This promise means the Israelites will be returned to the land of Canaan & their numbers will multiply.

In chapter 2, God describes how He will punish Israel by taking away the fertility of the women & the land. These are both things Baal was supposed to provide them with the fertility rituals. Therefore this serves as both a punishment & a reminder all fertility is a gift from the Living God. → All life comes from God ←

God's promise of redemption begins with verse 14 & the word, "therefore". So the promise of redemption, of God calling His people back, is not a decision made in the circumstance. Instead, the word "therefore" indicates this is a natural progression based on previous events. This is the same progression which is foretold in Leviticus.

In verse 16, God says we will call Him "my husband" instead of "my master" or "my baal". Baal means master. In those days, the Israelites viewed the Lord as their master, or baal, which is the same title other nations gave to their local gods. Therefore, when the Israelites worshipped other gods, they were choosing a new master to serve. So God is saying He wants to do away with the master - servant relationship & move to a husband-wife relationship. This is the same message & imagery of the NT. In carrying out this change, God says He will remove the names of other masters (other lovers) from the lips of His bride.

Chapter 4, verse 6, God says because Israel has rejected knowledge, He will reject them as His priests. God continues to accuse Israel for the rest of chapter 4 & all of chapter 5. He concludes chapter 5 by saying He will tear Israel to pieces & leave them until they have borne their guilt & earnestly seek Him in their misery.

Chapter 6 begins with a plea from Hosea, craving this repentance, to the people of Israel. Hosea tells it will take 3 days for God to revive & restore us. Then he pleads for Israel to press on to know the Lord. Some translations use the word "acknowledge", but the Hebrew word is יָדָע, to know.

In verses 4-6, God complains of Israel's love & loyalty being inconsistent. Here, God tells us He desires for us to know Him more than any offering we could give Him. Again, this shows a desire for relationship.

rather than only obedience.

In chapter 7, verse 14, we can see the Israelites' reaction to God's promise of infertility in the land. They lie in their beds, crying out & cutting themselves for their baal. This ritual can be seen during Elijah's ministry in (1 Kings 18:27-28).

Beginning in chapter 11, God recounts the beginning of the Israelite nation, when He called them out of Egypt. He uses imagery of a father with a young son. He calls to & trains the young son, but the son continually turns away from his Father. The Israelites did not realize their blessings were coming from the Lord and instead credited the baals of other nations.

Chapter 14 is the end of the book. Hosea makes another plea for the Israelites to repent & return to the Lord. He seeks for them to acknowledge their salvation will not come through military might or even another nation. Instead, they must depend solely on the Lord for their needs & salvation. Lastly, Hosea pleads for them to turn away from all idols. God ends the chapter with a promise of redemption following the Israelites' repentance.