

Hosea's Marriage

1. Review the political situation in the northern kingdom following the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II. Discussion would include the rise of Assyria's king, Tiglath-pileser (Pulu) who quickly embarked upon a mission of conquest and exile that swept through Israel, Judah down into Egypt. On the domestic front we see the rapid succession of kings due to assassination and intrigue. One king, Menahem, had to surrender the northern part of his kingdom (Galilee) and pay a heavy tribute to the Assyrian monarch in order to hold his royal throne. This capitulation was unpopular. The first chapters of Hosea were written against a background of the last months of prosperity under Jeroboam II. Hosea foresaw both the doom of Israel's destruction and, unlike Amos, saw God's restoration to follow.
2. The woman identified in 3.1 is unnamed. Is she Gomer?
3. Hosea was the first to interpret Israel's rescue from slavery and ongoing relationship with God as comparable to a marriage. How was Israel's behavior like that of Gomer? How was God's behavior like that of Hosea?
4. How does God instructing Hosea to marry Gomer etc. make God's message to the Northern Kingdom (Israel) more powerful?
5. How must God have felt when Israel had broken its covenant?
6. Hosea is putting his finger on a problem deeper than social immorality, political confusion, or religious formalism. He is concerned with the people's devotion of the heart and where they place their deepest trust. What is implied about Israel's heart in Hosea's message?
7. Jesus twice asks his readers to reread Hosea 6.6. (*13Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.* - *Matthew 9.13.* and *7But if you had known what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice", you would not have condemned the guiltless.-Matthew 12.7*) What is Jesus seeing in Hosea's vision that is important to Christians?
8. Is it possible for God's people today to be harlot-like and simply lack the faithfulness or loyal love that God shows to us and asks for in return?

9. What is implied in Hosea's marriage about God's mercy and restoration?
10. Give examples in your experience of spiritual harlotry within the Christian community.
11. Share ways that these song lyrics by Andrew Peterson add meaning to your reading of Hosea 1-3:

Every time I lay in the bed beside you
Hosea, Hosea
I hear the sound of the streets of the city
My belly growls like a hungry wolf
And I let it prowl till my belly's full
Hosea, my heart is a stone

Please believe me when I say I'm sorry
Hosea, Hosea
You loveable, gullible man
I tell you that my love is true
Till it fades away like a morning dew
Hosea, leave me alone

Here I am in the Valley of Trouble
Just look at the bed that I've made
Badlands as far as I can see
There's no one here but me, Hosea

I stumbled and fell in the road on the way home
Hosea, Hosea
I lay in the brick street like a stray dog
You came to me like a silver moon
With the saddest smile I ever knew
Hosea carried me home again, home again

You called me out to the Valley of Trouble
Just to look at the mess that I've made
A barren place where nothing can grow
One look and my stone heart crumbled
It was a valley as green as jade
I swear it was the color of hope
You turned a stone into a rose, Hosea

I sang and I danced like I did as a young girl
Hosea, Hosea
I am a slave and a harlot no more
You washed me clean like a summer rain
And you set me free with that ball and chain
Hosea, I threw away the key
I'll never leave.

1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beerī, in the days of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel.

2 When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, 'Go, take for yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.' ³So he went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4 And the LORD said to him, 'Name him Jezreel; for in a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. ⁵On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.'

6 She conceived again and bore a daughter. Then the LORD said to him, 'Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them. ⁷But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God; I will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by horsemen.'

8 When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. ⁹Then the LORD said, 'Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people and I am not your God.'

10 Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered; and in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people', it shall be said to them, 'Children of the living God.' ¹¹The people of Judah and the people of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head; and they shall take possession of the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

3 The Lord said to me again, 'Go, love a woman who has a lover and is an adulteress, just as the Lord loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.' ²So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer of barley and a measure of wine. ³And I said to her, 'You must remain as mine for many days; you shall not play the whore, you shall not have intercourse with a man, nor I with you.' ⁴For the Israelites shall remain many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim. ⁵Afterwards the Israelites shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; they shall come in awe to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days.