

# HOSEA

## Outlined Bible

### Personal Background

The name *Hosea* comes from the Hebrew language. It means *salvation*. Although not specifically stated, it is believed Hosea was a native of Samaria (he refers to the ruler of Samaria as "*our king*" --- Hosea 7:5). His family seems to be of significant social standing for the name of his father to be mentioned (Hosea 1:1).

As to his occupation, nothing is known for certain. It seems clear that he occupied "some position or place of distinction." Many scholars feel he may have been a priest.

### Date

Based upon his reference to the kings (Hosea 1:1), most scholars date his prophetic ministry during the years 753 - 715 BC. The book bearing his name is a combination of many sermons and actions delivered over a period of several decades.

### Historical Background

**Religious** --- Hosea summed up the religious activities of Israel in one word: *Whoredom*. As a harlot, she had prostituted herself before the false gods. The people lacked knowledge (Hosea 4:6; 5:4), and were ignorant of God's Law (Hosea 8:12). Idols had been set up and women were serving in the temples as cult prostitutes.

**Moral** --- "Their conduct was the very opposite to that which God desired and demanded. The people were guilty of swearing, breaking faith, murder, stealing, committing adultery, deceit, lying, drunkenness, dishonesty in business, and other crimes equally abominable before Jehovah. The picture painted in the Book of Hosea is truly that of a nation in decay" (Homer Hailey).

**Political** --- It was a period of political upheaval in Israel. Upon the death of Jeroboam, several kings came to the throne but were quickly assassinated; some reigning only a few weeks. Tiglath-Pileser (king of Assyria) came against Israel and exacted heavy tribute from them. Finally, in 722 BC, the northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians, with many of the people being carried off into captivity. "These were trying years of political conniving and intrigue, of anarchy and rebellion, of treachery and murder. God was completely left out of the picture and out of the people's thinking. The prophet's task was to turn the thinking of the people back to God, but they were too deeply steeped in their idolatry to heed his warning. They had passed the point of no return; they refused to hear" (Homer Hailey).

Their faithlessness was manifested in two major ways:

- • Rebellion against all constituted authority.
- • Dependence upon human defenses and foreign alliances, rather than upon the power of Jehovah.

The cause for this widespread immorality and faithlessness toward God was two-fold:

- • Corruption of the priests, with whom the false prophets were in league.
- • Corruption of worship.

### The Message of Hosea

God, His nature and character. There is but ONE God! He is omnipotent ...He is righteous ...He is love! He is pictured as both a loving husband and a loving father. One of the favorite expressions of this prophet is: *Lovingkindness*.

The covenant between God & Israel. Hosea views Israel as the "chosen ones" of God; God had entered into a union with them. The intimacy of this relationship is described under two figures --- a marriage relationship, and a father/son relationship. Hosea emphasizes that a covenant always involves *mutual* obligations.

The doom of the nation is inevitable. Because of the faithlessness of the nation, Hosea prepares the people for impending punishment. The *Righteous* Husband demands that the unfaithful wife be put away from Him, but the *Loving* Husband looks hopefully to a time of restored relationship!

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### Summarized Bible

Hosea prophesied in Israel (Northern Kingdom) at or about the same time Isaiah prophesied in Judah (Southern Kingdom). They both declared destruction if the people did not cease worshipping idols and return to God.

Hosea use whoredom, prostitute and adultery many times to describe the situation between Israel and God. Whoredom, prostitution, in the physical life is the disregard of morality especially in regard to one's sexual conduct. Whereas in the spiritual life, it is the disregard of one's covenant relationship with God by not living righteously. Adultery in the physical sense, is the breaking of one's covenant of marriage; having sexual relations with anyone other than spouse or not fulfilling the marriage covenant. Whereas in the Spiritual sense, it is having any worship relationship with anything other than with God, of which one is idol worship.

“The Lord said to Hosea, ‘Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord.’ So, he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. And the Lord said to him, ‘Call his name Jezreel, for in just 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.’ ... She conceived again and bore a son. And the Lord said, ‘Call his name Lo-Ammi, (meaning not my people) for you are not my people, and I am not your God.’” (Hos 1:2-4; 8-9)

“Say to your brothers and sisters, ‘You have received mercy. Plead with your mother (referring to Israel), plead—for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband—that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts; lest I strip her naked.’ ... I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals when she burned offerings to them and adorned herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers and forgot me, declares the Lord.” (Hos 2:1-3; 13)

“There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.” (Hos 4:1-2)

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.” (Hos 4:6)

“My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore. They sacrifice on the tops of the

mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good.” (Hos 4:12-13)

“Hear this, O priests! Pay attention, O house of Israel! Give ear, O house of the king! For the judgment is for you; ... They have dealt faithlessly with the Lord; for they have borne alien children.” (Hos 5:1, 7)

“I will carry off, and no one shall rescue. I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress earnestly seek me.” (Hos 5:14-15)

“Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn us, that he may heal us. ... Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away. ... For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” (Hos 6:1; 4, 6)

“Israel has spurned the good; the enemy shall pursue him. They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not. ... With their silver and gold, they made idols for their own destruction. I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence? For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.” (Hos 8:3-5, 7)

“Their heart is false; now they must bear their guilt.” (Hos 10:2)

“They utter mere words; with empty oaths they make covenants.” (Hos 10:4)

“You have plowed iniquity; you have reaped injustice; you have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your own way and in the multitude of your warriors.” (Hos 10:13)

“God once let loose against Ephraim a terrifying sentence against Israel: Caught and convicted in the lewd sex-worship of Baal — they died! And now they're back in the sin business again, manufacturing god-images they can use, Religion customized to taste. Professionals see to it: Anything you want in a god you can get. Can you believe it? They sacrifice live babies to these dead gods — kill living babies and kiss golden calves! And now there's nothing left to these people: hollow men, desiccated women.” (Hos 13:1-3)

“When Ephraim spoke, men trembled; he was exalted in Israel. But he became guilty of Baal worship and died. Now they sin more and more; they make idols for themselves from their silver, cleverly fashioned images, all of them the work of craftsmen. It is said of these people, ‘They offer human sacrifice and kiss the calf-idols.’” (Hos 13:1-2)

“Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.” (Hos 14:9)

#### Key Points from Hosea

- The Israelites were at one time God’s chosen people. They forsook and abandoned Him, first by ceasing to worship in Jerusalem, then by worshiping the idols of their neighbors. Therefore, they broke the covenant made between them and God, becoming adulterous people.
- God is faithful, loving, merciful and forgiving to any of His covenant people who repent, return begin to live righteously.
- Heart-felt love was and is greater than any ritual worship.