

## Hosea Outline

**Introduction:** Hosea is one of two prophets living and doing ministry in the Northern Kingdom of Israel- the other being Amos. Both Hosea and Amos were active in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE- around the year 745. Much is known about the Northern kingdom at this time, not only from Biblical record but from archeology as well. One of the things that marked this region was conspicuous consumption with a small minority of the people experiencing extraordinary amounts of wealth, while the vast majority of people went without. Another cultural aspect common at this time was the mixing of Judaism with other indigenous faith traditions. (What's important to remember here is not that Judaism was somehow quantitatively better than these other faith traditions- but that it is qualitatively different. The Holy One of Israel isn't a god who would do more things for you if you offered sacrifice like any other idol- the Holy One of Israel simply is what he is: uncontrollable, uncajorable. The problem of mixing the desert faith with the indigenous faith is turning Yahweh into just another idol- albeit a powerful one.)

The dominant image of Hosea, Hosea's wife Gomer as a temple prostitute, stems directly from this indigenous tradition. Gomer is a stand in for the people of Israel who sometimes are faithful to God...and mostly aren't. The most striking thing about Hosea is that while he offends against our modern sensibilities by naming Gomer as a "wife of whoredom", the point here isn't about misogyny or lack of faith; the point is God's faithfulness in the face of our willingness to follow other paths.

### Section One: Hosea's Unfaithful Wife

- Chapter 1: Setting the stage; command to take a "wife of whoredom"; symbolic naming of Hosea's children
- Chapter 2: Initial judgment against Gomer; then God's promise of faithfulness to Gomer; The restoration of the children
- Chapter 3: Alternative account of Hosea bringing home Gomer

### Section Two: Hosea's Sayings

- Chapter 4: Judgment against the people; the priests- due to increase. "The more they increased, the more they sinned." (v. 7)
- Chapter 5: Judgment against the priests- they allowed the people to stray
- Chapter 6: Vision of people again seeking God; God desires steadfast love- not sacrifice
- Chapter 7: Judgment against the people- they cry not from the heart but just want grain  
And wine
- Chapter 8: Judgment against the Northern religious path- rulers established but not through Davidic covenant; sowing wind and reaping the whirlwind (play with fire  
You're going to get burned)
- Chapter 9: No more religious festivals when there is no justice; problem started at Gilgal
- Chapter 10: Israel looks good on the outside but is rotten on the inside
- Chapter 11: God looking back on Israel like a child; cannot come in wrath
- Chapter 12: Israel soared too high- God will make them live in tents again
- Chapter 13: Vision of Israel being brought down
- Chapter 14: God caring for Israel who will again flourish

**Stories to know:** Know the story of Hosea taking Gomer, the unhappiness there, and the ultimate vision of grace (Chapter 1-2); the problem of wealth (Chapter 4); God's grace preventing God from coming in wrath (Chapter 11)