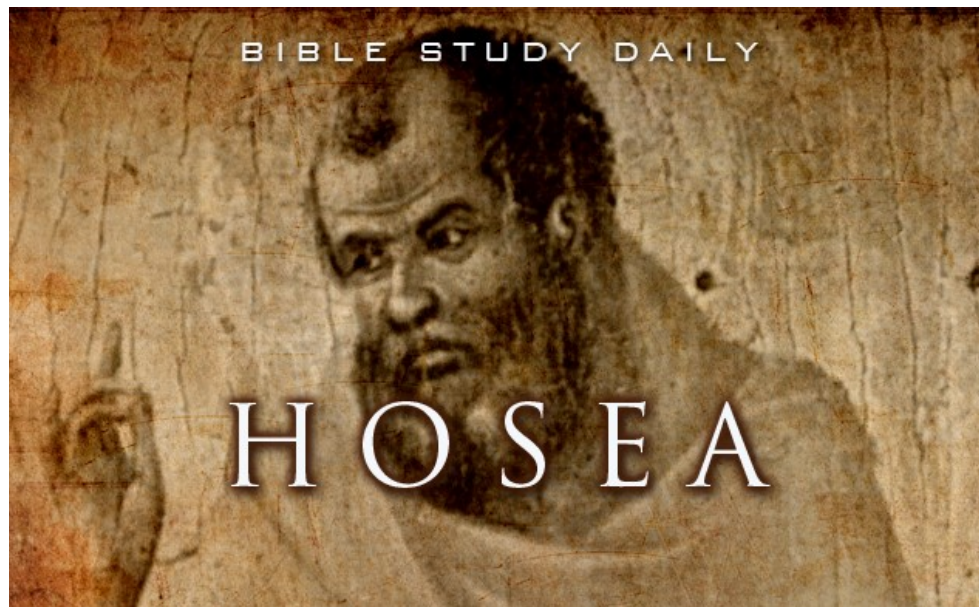




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Hosea as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The book of Hosea is named for its author, Hosea, son of Beeri. Hosea means “salvation.”

Author

Hosea, son of Beeri, received the word of prophecy from the Lord (v. 1).

Genre

Prophecy (first of twelve books commonly referred to as the “Minor Prophets”).

Literary Form

Primarily prophetic poetry except for a prose introduction in chapter 1 and chapter 3.

Time Frame

Hosea does not specifically date the book. However it is clear from verse 1 that the Lord called him to his prophetic ministry sometime during the reign of Jeroboam II (in the northern kingdom of Israel, 793 – 753 B.C.) and ended sometime during the reign of Hezekiah (in the southern kingdom of Judah, 716 – 686 B.C.).


Emphasis

Although the kingdom of Judah is mentioned several times (1:7, 1:11, 6:11, 12:2) the emphasis of Hosea is on the northern kingdom of Israel. The Israelites had sinned against God in four ways: 1) they had rejected God and His Law, 2) they worshiped idols and other gods, 3) they trusted in human works rather than in God, and 4) they committed injustices against each other (murder, theft, lying, and oppression of the poor).

In order to receive the blessings of God the people needed remain faithful to their covenant promise to God (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

The book has five cycles of judgment and restoration in which God describes their sins, warns them of coming judgement, and reveals the blessings of being restored to Him:

- Judgement 1:2-9. Restoration 1:10-2:1.
- Judgement 2:2-13. Restoration 2:14-3:5.
- Judgement 4:1-5:14. Restoration 5:15 – 6:3.
- Judgement 6:4-11:7. Restoration 11:8-11.
- Judgement 11:12-13:16. Restoration 14:1-9.



Outline

- Israel's unfaithfulness a picture of an adulterous marriage (1:1-3:5)
- Israel's sins are proclaimed (4:1-7:16)
- Israel's judgement is pronounced (8:1-10:15)
- Israel's restoration is promised (11:1-14:9)

What I Noticed Today (Hosea 1-6)

Hosea 1:1-3:5

The Lord calls Hosea to his prophetic ministry. The first chapters describe Hosea's marriage and his unfaithful wife as a symbol of the nation of Judah's relationship with God.

Hosea 1

In verse 1 Hosea, son of Beeri, received a word from the Lord during the time of the four kings of Judah (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah), and one king of Israel (Jeroboam II).

Note: This would be sometime during the eighth century B.C. (Uzziah 783-742 B.C., Jotham 758-743 B.C., Ahaz 744-728 B.C., Hezekiah 715-686 B.C., and Jeroboam II 786-746 B.C.)

In verses 2-9 the Lord commands Hosea to marry a "wife of whoredom" and have children with her. So he married Gomer and had a son named Jezreel

Note: the reference to a wife of whoredom does not necessarily mean that Gomer was a prostitute at the time of their marriage. Often in Hebrew we see someone referred to with a title that speaks to their character. For example: "a quarrelsome wife," or "a wife of noble character."

Note: Jezreel's name means "God sows." In this case, the name also has meaning based on history. Jezreel was where Ahab and his family were killed (2 Kings 9-10). Thus the judgment referred to in verse 4 against the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel.

When the judgment against the house of Jehu came the nation of Israel would also fall.

Note: The prophecy against the house of Jehu was fulfilled in 752 B.C. when Shallum killed Zechariah thereby ending Jehu's dynasty (2 Kings 15:10).

Note: This prophecy against Israel was fulfilled in 734-722 B.C. when the Assyrians attacked and conquered Israel (2 Kings 15:29).

The second child born to Gomer was named Lo-Ruhamah, which means "she is not loved" (some translations say "No Mercy"). God's love would be removed from Israel for a period of time but He would show mercy on Judah. Judah would be saved for a time but not by the hands of man.

Note: This prophecy was fulfilled in 701 B.C. when God interceded for Judah and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (2 Kings 19:32-36).

The third child born to Gomer was named Lo-Ammi, which means “not my people” indicating that God would no longer be with His people.

In verses 10-11 God reassures Hosea that conditions will be reversed. The children of Israel will become numerous and they will be His people. Israel and Judah will be reunited once again. The day of Jezreel refers to a time when God will “plant” the people in their land, so the meaning of Jezreel, “God sows” makes sense.

Hosea 2

In verses 1-4 God compares the covenant relationships with His people Israel like a marriage. In this case, he brings charges against the people saying they adulterous. God calls on them to repent and warns them about coming judgment: 1) He will strip them naked, 2) He will make her like an arid desert, and 3) He will reject them as children of adultery.

In verses 5-13 instead of repenting, Israel pursues her lover’s for their food, water, wool, linen, oil, and drink. The Lord will block her (Israel’s) path to her lovers so she will not find them. They did not recognize that God gave them their grain, wine, and oil. Instead, they used their silver and gold to make idols for Baal. Therefore, God decided to take back His provision for the people putting an end to their celebrations, their sacrifices, feasts, and Sabbaths.

Israel had forgotten the Lord (not like I forgot my keys, but in the sense of rejecting God and started worshipping foreign gods).

In verses 14-23 therefore, the Lord will bring the people into the wilderness and speak tenderly to them, he will give them vineyards, and hope, and they will be like the days when they came out of Egypt.

In that day (the day when Israel is restored), Israel will once again worship the Lord, not Baal. God will establish a covenant with the people that will bring them peace. The betrothal price (what the husband is paid to marry) from the Israelites will be their righteousness, justice, love, compassion, and faithfulness. Then they will know the Lord.

Also in that day, the Lord promises to bring blessings to the people in the form of grain, wine, and oil. He will plant Israel in the land and the people called Lo-Ruhamah (not loved) and Lo-Ammi (not my people) will acknowledge God and they will be His people.

Hosea 3

In verses 1-5 the Lord commands Hosea to go get his adulterous wife back even though she loves another. This is another picture of how Israel rejected God and worshiped foreign gods. Hosea bought Gomer back for 15 shekels of silver, plus a homer (six bushels) and a lethek (3 bushels) of barley.

Note: The grain would be valued at approximately 15 shekels, so the full price would be approximately 30 shekels, a common price for a slave.

After buying her back, Hosea tells her she is not to be adulterous; they would be loyal, devoted to each other.

The parallel to Israel is explained in verses 4-5. Israel will be without a king or a prince for many days. They will be without their sacrifices, ephod, or household gods. After this, in the latter days, they would once again seek the Lord and His mercy.

Hosea 4-14

The rest of the book of Hosea expands on the prophecy given in Hosea 1-3. There are three major sections (4:1-6:3, 6:4-11:11, and 11:12-14:9), each of which describes a judgment and conclude with a message of hope for the restoration of Israel.

Hosea 4

In verses 1-3 The Lord brings a charge against Israel for their lack of faithfulness and love and they did not acknowledge God. Instead, they sinned by cursing, lying, murdering, stealing, and adultery (violating 5 of the Ten Commandments: #3, 9, 6, 8, and 7).

Note: The “cursing” is a reference to calling down a curse on someone and in so doing used God’s name inappropriately.

Because of their sin, God would bring drought over the entire land and the land would become unproductive.

In verses 4-11 the Lord prohibits the people from bringing a charge against Him because His charge was against them because they were all guilty. God specifically calls out the priests and prophets for causing the people to stumble and reject God for lack of knowledge about God’s commandments. Even though the number of priests increased they were no help to the people. They fed on the sin of the people by being greedy (offering sacrifices to foreign gods).


In verses 11-14 the Lord expands his charges to now include the people in general. They worship foreign gods and idols made of wood. These people have no understanding of God and a people with no understanding of God will come to ruin!

In verses 15-19 God now warns Judah not to engage in the same sins as their sister Israel.

Note: These are the first of three warnings the Lord makes directing Judah not to follow in the sins of Israel.

The Lord specifically warns them not to imitate the sins of Beth-Aven and Gilgal in Israel. Israel is stubborn like a cow (and they are stubborn!) so God cannot give them the freedom He can give lambs. The Lord also warns against Ephraim where they have idols, they drink too much, they worship foreign gods, and their leaders are shameful.

Hosea 5



Verses 1-7 contain the second warning. The Lord calls out Israel while telling Judah to pay attention. The House of Israel is a reference to the nation's leaders who have led the people astray. Specifically called out are the people of Mizpah and Tabor. The nation could not hide its guilt from God, they are defiled, and their sins keep them from returning to God. Their own actions testify against them and they are making Judah stumble with them. Because of these sins, Israel's sacrifices to the Lord will be ignored; He has withdrawn from them. They have been unfaithful and have given birth to illegitimate children who did not know the Lord.

Verses 8-15 contain the third warning. The Lord warns of the coming judgment. The warning is sounded in Gibeah, Ramah, Beth-Aven, Benjamin, and Ephraim. All the tribes of Israel will face judgment. Likewise, the leaders of Judah (princes of Judah) would also face God's wrath.

When Ephraim experiences its sickness (the start of judgment) they will turn to Assyria for help but they will not be able to help. God will stand against Ephraim and Judah like a lion who will tear them apart and no one will be there to rescue them.

Note: This prophecy against Israel was fulfilled when Assyria conquered Samaria and sent the people into exile (Kings 17), and Judah was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25).

Following the judgment, God will return to his place and wait for the people to admit their sin and return to Him.

Hosea 6

In verses 1-3 a future people of Israel will call for national repentance in hopes that God will restore them. The phrase "to press on" means to pursue or chase after the Lord. Then the Lord will see their devotion and bless them (like spring rains that water the earth).


Hosea 6:4-11:11

In the second major section of the book, the Lord expands His case for judgment against the people of Israel because of their sin.

In verses 4-11 the Lord accuses the people of Israel and Judah of being unfaithful in their love for the Lord. They are like the morning dew that evaporates in the sun. Because of that, the Lord judged them through the words of His prophets. He desires steadfast love more than sacrifice and for people to have knowledge of Him rather than burnt offerings.

The people had been unfaithful, they had broken the covenant with God just like Adam had transgressed. They were a people of evildoers who spilled blood. They laid in wait to rob travelers. Even priests were involved in murdering people on their way to cities of refuge (Ramoth-Gilead and Succoth).

Note: The comments about the priests may be literal but it may



also be hyperbole, suggesting that by leading the people away from God they were in effect murdering them.

The nation of Israel is defiled as is Judah but the Lord will restore the fortunes of His people.



What I Noticed Today

(Hosea 7-14)

Hosea 7

In verses 1-7 the Lord speaks of restoring Israel but they are sinful liars, thieves, and bandits. They don't realize that God sees all their sins. Even the rulers (kings and princes) were full of treachery. The people were adulterers (it is unclear whether this is a literal reference to sexual adultery, or to their worship of foreign gods, or perhaps to both). Their leaders burned with a passion that turned to drinking and assassination.

Note: Four of Israel's kings were assassinated in a 20-year period between 752 and 732 B.C. (2 Kings 15).

In verses 8-16 Ephraim mixed (formed alliances) with foreign nations. A cake not turned will burn and be discarded. This is what happened to Ephraim, it was devoured by strangers. Ephraim is growing weak (old with gray hairs) and doesn't even realize it. Still, they refused to repent and return to God. Ephraim calls out to neighbors (Egypt and Assyria) for help but God will bring them down because they have rebelled against Him. He would have redeemed them but they lied about Him. They do not cry out for Him from their hearts, they only want the grain and wine (blessings) that God provided. Even though the Lord had trained and strengthened them they devised evil against Him. They are like an unreliable bow. They will fall by the sword because of their insolence toward God.

Hosea 8

In verses 1-3 God charges Israel with having rejected Him. They think they know the Lord but ultimately they have spurned Him.

In verses 4-6 God charges Samaria (Israel's capital) with having established their own kings, and making idols of gold and silver. Therefore, God will break the calf idol of Samaria into pieces.

Note: The calf idol reference is probably to the idol set up by Jeroboam I in Bethel (1 Kings 12:28).

In verse 7 the "sow to the wind" reference indicates the futility of their efforts. What they plant (try to accomplish) will bring no yield and even if it does, others will benefit.

In verses 8-14 Israel is already useless as a nation (like a useless pot). They have gone to Assyria to make an alliance and to other nations but soon God will judge them all. Ephraim has multiplied their altars to make sacrificial offerings but God does not accept their offerings because they were not devoted to Him. They had forgotten God (rejected Him) and built palaces and fortified cities thinking that would keep them safe but will bring

judgment that will destroy them.

Hosea 9:1-11:7

This section contains four judgments against Israel: 1) 9:1-9, 2) 9:10-17, 3) 10:1-10:15, and 4) 11:1-7.

Hosea 9

Judgment 1. In verses 1-9 the Lord warns Israel not to rejoice because they had rejected God. The prosperous years of plentiful grain and wine will end. They will be removed from the land, exiled to Assyria, and forced to eat unclean food. They will not have wine for drink offerings and they will be defiled by eating unclean bread. Destruction was coming. Those that escaped the sword would be sent away to exile. God had given them prophets to warn them but the people rejected them thinking they were fools and insane (mad). They had corrupted themselves like in the days of Gibeah.

Note: The days of Gibeah reference alludes to the rape and killing of the Levite's concubine in Gibeah (Judges 19).

Judgment 2. In verses 10-17 the Lord describes His early delight with Israel and his disappointment with their rejection of Him to worship idols. He describes them as first fruits (the best) but soon they changed and began to worship Baal-peor (idol for a fertility god). Therefore, their glory will depart: they will have no children, and even if they do they will have no joy because the Lord has departed from them. Their evil caused God to begin to hate them so He will drive them out of His house. Because they no longer have children they are like a dried up root and will bear no fruit. God has rejected them because they have not listened to him.

Hosea 10

Judgment 3. In verses 1-10 the Lord describes Israel as a luxuriant vine, a prosperous country. But their hearts are false so they must stand in judgment. They would be conquered and lose their king but would still not fear the Lord. Their words were empty promises of covenants to God. Their idols (the calf idol) will be carried away and given to another king as tribute. Samaria's king will be swept away (like a twig in the water). The high places (idols) will be destroyed. No one will worship there any longer and thorns and thistles will grow up. From the days of Gibeah (see note above) they have sinned and they continue to sin. The time will come when God will discipline them for their sin.

In verses 11-15 Israel is compared to a cow trained to thresh grain. (It was relatively easy work and the cow was free to eat the grain as it went.) But the Lord would now put a yoke on Israel and Judah and they would both be forced to do the heavy work of plowing by themselves.

Note: While Israel was faithful to God they were prosperous but once judgment came, their lives in exile would become arduous.

The Lord tells them it is time to sow righteousness and seek the Lord. Instead, they have plowed iniquity, listened to lies, and trusted in themselves rather than God. Therefore, the judgment of war will come upon them, destroy their fortresses their mothers, and even the children. In the end, even their king will fall when they are conquered.

Note: This prophecy was fulfilled when Babylon conquered Israel (1 Kings 17:4-6).

Hosea 11

Judgment 4. In verses 1-7 the Lord again describes how He loved Israel in their youth but they turned away sacrificing to Baal. The more God called them (through the prophets), the more they resisted Him.

God had led them with kindness, made their work light, and blessed them. But they had refused to return to Him. Therefore, the Lord will judge them with the sword. The people are determined to turn away from God, even though they call on Him He will not rescue them.

In verses 8-11 the Lord's compassion and love for Israel is expressed. He will not destroy them like Admah and Zeboiim (they were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah, Deuteronomy 29:23). The Lord promises not to destroy Ephraim again. His children will return to Him from exile.

Hosea 11:13 is a transition to Hosea 12. Ephraim is described as being full of deceit while Judah is still walking with the Lord.

Hosea 12

In verse 1 the Lord describes Ephraim again as one feeding on the wind, multiplying their falsehoods and violence and foolishly making an alliance with Assyria.

In verses 2-6 the Lord announces a judgment upon Judah by describing how Jacob obtained Esau's birthright by grasped Esau's heel. Jacob wrestled with God and at Bethel God met with Jacob again (and changed his name to Israel). Judah, like Jacob, needed to return to God in repentance and hang onto His love and justice.

In verses 7-14 Ephraim is described as a merchant with false weights. One who likes to oppress others to make herself rich, all the while thinking they had not sinned. The Lord sees their sin and will bring judgment upon them. The Lord had given them many prophets who warned the people but they rejected them. Gilead and Gilgal are called out for their sins. Ephraim will receive judgment for their disgraceful deeds.

Hosea 13

In verses 1-3 Ephraim is described as being exalted in Israel but they turned to worshipping Baal. Now they have multiplied their sins by making idols and offering sacrifices to them. Because of this, they will be judged.

Note: Four similes are used to describe how quickly the idolaters will disappear: like morning mist, like dew, like chaff in the wind, and like smoke from a fire.

In verses 4-8 the Lord reminds them how He brought them up out of Egypt and cared for them in the wilderness, yet they rejected Him (forgot Him). The Lord would judge them like a lion, leopard, or bear and devour them because they have rejected Him.

In verses 9-14 Israel is destroyed because they are rebelling against God. They have no king to depend upon. God had given them a king in His anger (probably Saul, 1 Samuel 8:6-9), and had taken him away. God remembers the sin of Ephraim (it is bound up, stored up). Israel had been given a chance to repent but was like an unwise son who did not come out at birth (both mother and son would perish). God will not ransom them from Sheol or redeem them from death. He will not have compassion on them.

Note: Some translations of verse 14 are written positively, saying “I will ransom them, I will redeem them.” But this interpretation conflicts with the next line that says “compassion is hidden from my eyes.” If God were to ransom or redeem them then compassion would NOT be hidden from Him. The translation that makes more sense asks a rhetorical question, “Shall I...” and the answer is no because compassion is hidden from my eyes.

In verses 15-16 because God’s compassion is removed, judgment is in store. Samaria will be judged because they rebelled against God; they will fall by the sword, including women and children.

Hosea 14

In verses 1-3 Hosea implores Israel to return to the Lord, to ask God for forgiveness for their sins and His mercy, to reject Assyria, and to stop their worship of idols.

In verses 4-7 the Lord promises to heal Israel and love them freely. He will bless them (be like morning dew, roots spread out). They will return to God and rest in His shade. They will flourish and blossom and their reputation restored.

In verse 8 God asks Ephraim a rhetorical question; what does He have to do with idols? God’s answer is, I am the one who looks out for you and from Me comes your blessings (fruit).

In verse 9 Hosea ends with an admonition: 1) he who is wise will understand these things, 2) whoever is discerning will know them, and 3) the righteous will walk in the way of the Lord but the rebellious will stumble (be destroyed).