


# Note

## Hosea – Part 1 of 1

Era	Characters	Chapters
In the beginning	God created the world.	Genesis 1
Before 4000 BC	Adam & Eve	Gen 1~5
Before 3000 BC	Cain Abel Seth	Gen 4~5
Before 2500 BC	Noah	Gen 5~10
Before 2100 BC	Job Elihu	Job
About 2000 BC <b>Era of Patriarchs</b>	Abraham Isaac & Ishmael Jacob & Esau Joseph	Gen 11~50
About 1500 BC~ 1000 BC <b>Era of prophets</b>	Moses Aaron Joshua	Exo Lev Num Deu
	Joshua	Joshua
	Judges(Othniel Ehud Shamgar Deborah Gideon Tola Jair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson) Abimelech	Judges
	Ruth Boaz Naomi	Ruth
	Eli Samuel Saul David	1 Samuel
About 1000 BC <b>Era of princes</b>	Saul Jonathan David Absalom Solomon	1 Samuel 2 Samuel
	Solomon Jeroboam Rehoboam Ahab Elijah Elisha Jehu	1 kings
	Ahab Hezekiah Manasseh Josiah Elisha Jehu Elijah	2 kings
	Saul David Solomon	1 Chronicles
	Solomon Rehoboam Asa Jehoshaphat Jehoram Joash Hezekiah Josiah	2 Chronicles
About 500 BC <b>Era of priests</b>	Zerubbabel Ezra Nehemiah Haggai Zechariah	Ezra Nehemiah
	Esther Mordecai Haman Ahasuerus	Esther
	Isaiah Ahaz Hezekiah	Isaiah
	Jeremiah Baruch Zedekiah	Jeremiah
	Jeremiah	Lamentation
	Ezekiel	Ezekiel
	Daniel Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar	Daniel
Hosea	Hosea 	

# Summary

## **Hosea - Part 1 of 1 .....3**

The first of the minor (lesser-known) prophets. The last prophet warning Israel to repent.

Unlike Amos (the second-to-last prophet to Israel, who focused on judgement), Hosea focused on God's mercy and loving-kindness. The apostate northern kingdom of Israel mirrors contemporary nominal Christianity.

The book is predominantly Hebrew poetry, the theme being fiercely loyal, steadfast, love (chesed in Hebrew). God commands Hosea to marry a promiscuous prostitute, and three children are born, as prophetic symbolism to Israel. God will fully restore his wife Israel in these last days.

# Transcript

## Hosea – Part 1 of 1

Today we come to the book of Hosea.

This is the beginning of the 12 books called the Minor Prophets. I don't think in God's eyes they were minor, but they wrote shorter books. And also they are less well known than the major prophets. Today, we study the book of Hosea.

Hosea was the last prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel. He gave them their last warnings. The two last prophets to the northern kingdom of Israel are Amos and Hosea. Amos actually came before Hosea, but the book of Amos is placed after Hosea, so you see the Minor Prophets are not placed in chronological order. This is a beautiful book because there are other reasons why God places books in the right place. He somehow let men put them in the right place. It's not simply chronological....no, there is a spiritual reason. Everything is in its perfect place.

Now, Amos had actually prophesied about 10 years before Hosea. He was the tough accuser warning them and it didn't work. So, God sends 10 years later, a prophet called Hosea and his style was very different- tender, wooing, pleading. Amos focused more on judgments, Hosea focused more on compassion, mercy-understand that God is doing all this because He loves you. So this is the book of Hosea. The time during which Hosea was preaching, prophesying was during the reign of King Jeroboam the second. There are two Jeroboams, don't be confused. The first one was the one that broke away and formed the northern kingdom. This is the second King Jeroboam (this is 200 years after the breakaway). Before that they all went to the temple to worship God. They understood that God was not some idol, the worship of God was holy but after they broke away 200 years before Hosea, king Jeroboam the first decided that to prevent his people from being tempted to go to the other kingdom, the southern kingdom to worship God in the tabernacle with the right kind of priests, Jeroboam made two golden calves. He placed one at the southern end of his Kingdom and one in the northern end so that it will be convenient for his people, the Northern

10 tribes, to go and worship; either the one in the north nearer them, or if they're nearer the one in the south, go to the golden calf in the south. And Jeroboam said this is the same thing, right? Instead of having to go so far to Jerusalem, and worship in the tabernacle, I'll make you a golden calf. So he seduced them to worship the two calves by saying to them that they are actually worshiping Jehovah God, but these two golden calves make it more convenient and easier for them to worship. At the beginning the people still saw themselves as loyal to Jehovah, but for convenience they went to the golden calves to worship. Jeroboam also appointed priests who were not of the line of Aaron, and did not know anything about worshiping God. So at the beginning, there was a semblance of them worshiping Jehovah God, but bowing to the golden calves, but after 200 years they actually forgot about God. The laws of God were totally forgotten. The priests had no clue what the covenant with God was that was given at Mount Sinai, and started to add to the worship of the golden calves, the worship of Baal, which I've said many times is basically, a fertility God. And they worshiped Baal by having sex in the temple, because they believe that while having sex, it produces fertility in their fields, and it will make them rich and prosperous. And so at this time, by the time of Hosea, the people of Israel were in name Israelites worshiping Jehovah God, but in reality, they had no idea who this God was. The priests and the people had no clue. They still said they were Israelites but they worshipped a golden idol, basically a fertility god, a god of health and wealth.

Does that sound somewhat familiar to you? 10 tribes now calling themselves Israelites worshipping, not God, but another god and claiming they were worshiping Jehovah God. Now this is what today, I would call nominal Christians. And nominal Christians are the majority of Christians. They call themselves Christians. It could be in Europe, America, South America, the Philippines, wherever, and they say they worship Jehovah God, the God of the Bible, but they have never opened a page of the Bible. They have no understanding of the Bible. Actually they worship a god of Prosperity-give me wealth, give me health, take care of me. That's the kind of scene we have today. The minority are true worshipers of God, the vast majority are nominal Christians. So when people say 33% of the world today are Christians and Missiologists say that one third of the world has heard the gospel, they are just dreaming because the vast majority have no clue what the gospel is. Just like the priests in Israel were saying We worship Jehovah God a different way. It's not a different way, it's a different god, a god of their own imagination.

At this time, Israel was very prosperous. God allowed that. But very soon they would go into Assyrian captivity. Nominal Christian countries today are very prosperous, but in time God will do what He needs to do. God's timeframe is not exactly like ours. Israel at that time was very wealthy, with the rich taking advantage of the poor. They were very corrupt. Everybody could be bought with a price—the judges, the priests, the prophets. There was violence because there was a lot of alcohol. You hear them having orgies in the temple. And so there was sex, there was alcoholism, and of course with alcoholism, there was violence. Does that sound a lot like the world we live in today, including, and especially in the so-called Christian world. Sad to say, the non-Christian world is not so power mad, so money crazy and sex obsessed as the so-called Christian world. And yet God allowed that to go on for a while. I hope you get the scenario. So, Hosea was sent at this time to warn the 'Christians' who believed that they were worshipping God.

Now the book is very difficult for you and me to read because it's just a collection of 25 years of Hosea's prophecies, and 99% I think of all the prophecies are in poetry. And for someone like me, and I think a lot of you hearers, Hebrew poetry is not something we digest easily. It's kind of strange to us. I'm not a poetic person, I struggle with even English poetry or any other poetry. I'm a Greek scholar, in the sense I'm more intellectual than emotional. That's the way we were educated. We were told don't get too emotional. We're always told that the supreme thing is our intellect, whether you are Chinese, or a western educated guy. The heart is always put down. Poetry is more about feelings, expressions, and so we struggle. Honestly, I struggle to read the book of Hosea. Before I taught this, I listened about four times. I would suggest you listen to the audio version of Hosea in The Message. The Message is not a literal translation, it is a paraphrase. It gets the mood and the feel, then if you want to switch, go to ESV or whatever version you like. But get the feel first. Otherwise, if you jump straight to reading Hebrew poetry, you might get pretty discouraged. I know many of you are very resistant to listening to the Word of God because you've been indoctrinated that studying must only be with the eyes only. The heart must be put aside and only the head comes into play. Right now I'm afraid that doesn't help us with the Bible, because so much of the Bible is in poetry. Every time God expresses feelings, he uses poetry. But when God wants to teach facts, He uses prose or narration. Please don't think I'm trying to make you anti-intellectual. I believe that there is a place for using the head, there's a place for using the heart.

Now the name of Hosea simply means salvation. He was there to salvage Israel. In this book, Israel is commonly called Ephraim or Jacob. I think God didn't want us to think Israel is His people, so he uses the word Ephraim, one of the tribes, or Jacob. When you think of Israel, you think, God's people. Ephraim, you think maybe the offshoot of God's people. When you see Ephraim and Jacob, it basically means the northern tribes. He was there to warn them in a very gentle way-God will give you many problems, especially food shortages. Now their god was the fertility god Baal, the golden calf. And so he said you really thought those gods give you fertility? God will take away the food, send famines, that's number one. And then of course you want health, wealth and security. They thought this god gave security and so God said, I'll send you into exile. And then they also tried to make alliances with Egypt or Assyria whenever they were in trouble, they never turned to Jehovah God. So basically this is the scenario.

What is the theme of this book? The theme of this book is a Hebrew word. We pronounce it as Chesed but it's spelled c h e s e d. Chesed can mean love. But when you say the word love, our idea of love is lust. We lust after something but after a while the lust is gone and you lust after something else. So maybe the better word for Chesed is love plus loyalty-a love that is loyal. Now, in the King James Bible, the word commonly used is lovingkindness. In other Bibles, the word is steadfast love. Love that is steady, lasting, loyal. So actually the theme of this book is God's love which is not emotion for the moment, but it is steadfast love. Even when He punishes, the love is still there. And He will never abandon, never. You see, Israel, Jacob or Ephraim should have been divorced by God long ago. They just rejected God. They just used His name. Imagine a woman carrying your name, married to you, but not loyal to you. Can you imagine how you would feel? It's the most terrible feeling.

\*Hosea 2:19-20 ESV English Standard Version

And I will betroth you to me forever. (That's a very strange word nowadays, we don't use that word. We use the word marry. But the problem with marry is that you can divorce.)

I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord.

[\* Hosea, not Hebrews]

Hosea 2:19-20 - note the words steadfast love, to betroth. I hope you see the theme of this book is steadfast love, righteousness, justice. Not just

pure feelings but it's a righteous love. There is more than just the feeling of love. Today, when we use the word love, it's purely a feeling. There is no loyalty, there's no righteousness, there's no justice in it. It's just a feeling. Now, I hope you understand the marriage bond is a symbol of this. That's why when I conduct a marriage, or any pastor who conducts a marriage, I would usually say something to this effect as part of the vows-Do you take such and such to be your lawful wedded wife or lawful wedded husband, to love, to obey, to cherish, in sickness or in health, in poverty or in riches, for better or for worse, till death do us part. What God has put together, let no man put asunder. That's almost a standard vow for me, but nowadays people modify this vow. But that's the picture of a steadfast love-for better, for worse, in sickness or in health, in poverty or in riches till death do us part.

So, you see here God looks at Israel as his wife. And he looks at the church as his wife. Let's look at Israel first, since we're still at the Old Testament. He rescued his bride from Egypt with blood ( the passover), parts the Red Sea, brings them to Mount Sinai. At Mount Sinai there is a covenant between God and Israel. That's a marriage ceremony. You see the word \*after Exodus chapter 20 - I will, I will, I will, at Mount Sinai - I will be your God, you will be my people, I will be your husband, you will be my wife. I hope you see that. As part of the marriage ceremony, the pastor says, Do you take such and such to be your lawful wedded wife, and the man says, I will. You take your such and such to be your lawful wedded husband, the woman says, I will. That's it - I will, and you make a covenant to be loyal and steadfast. So we see here, Israel now has a marriage covenant with God at Mount Sinai and then God brings them to the promised land. It's like the marriage home. And God gives His bride Israel everything she needs. It's a land of milk and honey. As long as she obeys him and be a good wife, she's going to be blessed in the land, that's God's promise, but when she disobeys and becomes disloyal, then she's going to get a lot of problems because it's not just love. It's love and righteousness and justice. It's only right - you made a vow to me, how can you run to other gods, but Israel began to worship the golden calf Baal. And that is what we call spiritual adultery. The spiritual husband is God, they covenanted to be loyal to God, but then they quietly sneak off to the golden calf and say, I'm still your wife. They worship in Baal temples and then they still want the blessing of God, their husband. So God says, No, I'm not going to do that. And so he punishes his wife, Israel with famine, with invasions of the neighbouring countries, and finally, he punishes them by sending them into exile. Not divorce, but separation, because God cannot divorce. A picture of marriage

for better, for worse. What God has put together let no man put asunder. Not possible to divorce. Israel rejected God. Israel turned away from God. God never turned away from Israel right to the end. In fact, in the book of Hosea and all the prophecy books, you'll see God say Return, return and one day you will be my people, I will give you a new heart, and you will be my people forever. So I hope you see the whole picture - a marriage scene. [\* Not in Exodus Chapt 20, but after Exodus Chapt 20]

Now the book of Hosea starts in a very strange way. In chapter 1 God tells his prophet, the one that's going to represent him-go marry a prostitute. Can you imagine that? My goodness if you were to teach that and say the word prostitute, even in the pulpit today, I will get all kinds of text messages saying Pastor, you shouldn't use the pulpit for such words. I'm sorry, the Bible uses quite horrible words. God does call things as they are but the pulpit has been so sanitized, so scholarly, so neat and tidy. He tells Hosea, I want you to marry a prostitute. This prostitute is going to be a terrible woman. And so Hosea marries this prostitute and has three kids by this prostitute. Now I know the first two are his actual kids but the third may be a kid of adultery, very likely. The first kid's name is Jezreel. He is a rebellious kid, a picture of Israel rebelling. The second one, the daughter's name in Hebrew means No mercy, not pitied. God says if you want to rebel, I'm not going to pity you, I'm going to send famine and neighbors to come in and attack you mercilessly. The third kid was called Not mine, not my people-this was exile. You are no more mine, go! You don't want me, go! So he was told to name his three kids, showing the stages of Israel firstly rebelling against God, God showing no mercy by sending problems to them, and thirdly sending them into exile-Not my people. Can you imagine that? The prophets have to go through what we call prophetic symbolisms in their life. Jeremiah was not allowed to marry at all. It's very strange to the people. Why? because God wanted Jeremiah to feel what it's like to have no wife. God loved Israel. But Israel did not love Him. He was like without a wife. When people begin to see Hosea, the man of God with a terrible wife, they begin to think Are we like that to God, terrible like this woman. You mean we are adulterous? We are prostitutes by instinct? Always running after others. You know it begins to strike home when you see this in real life. You feel it.. Imagine a man marrying a prostitute and he knows his wife is always trying to run away to other lovers. Now when you hear and think-that's God and us; you and me, my friend, us - we're always turning away from God.



Chapter 2, after the three kids, she leaves for her lovers. Because the lovers can maybe pamper her with nice things and she can have more fun than being at home with all her chores and responsibilities. A lot of Christians feel that way. With God, I cannot do this, I cannot do that, I can't be like my friends partying and going crazy. And you say, well if she doesn't want you, let her go.

But chapter 3 God says to Hosea, Go and get her back. Now she had been abandoned by her lovers. She had partied with them and she probably got older and uglier and nobody wants her anymore. And God tells Hosea, go and buy her back. She probably sold herself to a brothel . He had to pay 15 shekels of silver to buy her back like buying a slave that is sold to someone. She abandoned you, she abandoned the kids, she just left you, embarrassed you, shamed you, your name, but go get her back. And he did that. The prophet took her back. What kind of man is that? Unbelievable. How can you love a woman like that?

You know, people were actually seeing the love of God in Hosea. I hope when you listen to this story, you see the love of God in Hosea, and not listening to a story about Hosea. The whole Bible is not about people. It's about God. I'm emphasizing this point over.... because I feel that we need to understand this. Hosea's whole life was to demonstrate who God is.

Chapter 4 to chapter 11 is all about warnings. And then chapter 12 to chapter 14 is also about warnings. Please don't do this, please don't this. Imagine his wife comes back and he keeps telling her please don't run away again. I know you struggle to understand God's feelings but I think you can understand a man's feelings - a man whose wife always wants to run away from him. Now why is Ephraim or Jacob always wanting to run away? One of the reasons and possibly the main reason is found in Hosea chapter 4 and verse 1. And then later we'll see Hosea chapter four gives us the main reason. You see in chapter three, he woos her back.

Hosea 4:1 ESV Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land.

The word knowledge, I want you to understand the word knowledge, of course in our thinking, knowledge is always intellectual. And that's why most Bible studies are purely intellectual because we say Bible knowledge.

We come to Bible class to get Bible knowledge. And the moment I use the word knowledge, your brain opens up.

But to the Hebrews their idea of knowledge is not just intellectual, but it is experiential. I not only know this in my head, but I know it in my experience. For many people, the knowledge of God is memory verses, but God says if you really want to know me, you must experience me. In other words, you must see how real I am. One of the reasons why I go into the mission field and spend lots of time there is because in the mission field, I experience God far more than I can in the comfort of my home church or my home environment . But when I go into the mission field, I'm a nobody, I'm exposed to whatever dangers and strangers. And so in every situation in the mission field, I need God for my protection, for my credibility, for my provisions, because I'm helpless, especially if I go to a new place and it's not a very friendly place. And then all of a sudden I really experience God. He is so real. So the word they have no knowledge of God is more than intellectual. The priests had forgotten about God so they had no knowledge intellectually. But the people not only had no intellectual knowledge, they didn't even know who the real God was. They had never seen, they had never felt God because there were so prosperous. When they went to exile they needed God, then they actually experienced the mercy of God. So one reason why many Christians today run away to other gods, is that they have no knowledge of God. They say, what do you mean I have no knowledge of God? Do you know how many Bible studies I've been to? I studied religious knowledge in school, and memorized many verses, you dare tell me I have no knowledge of God. You know, they stare at me, and I say the Hebrew word for knowledge is Yada. Yada means experience of God, not intellectual knowledge.

Hosea 4:6 ESV My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, because you have rejected knowledge”.

Isn't it interesting? Not because you don't know so you rejected it. What knowledge is this you say? The moment you use the word knowledge, they stare back at you and I know they've never experienced God, he's just verses to quote and show off. Have they really seen that verse in reality in their life? Answer is No. That's the main reason why they turn away from God. He's just verses, he's good for Sunday. For the rest of my time, I need other things to help me, like scheming in the office, my shares, my health food, whatever to make me satisfied and happy. It's not from God. God is for Bible study. God is for Sunday and God is for heaven, but on this earth, I need other things. Please don't be fanatical. You mean God can provide

everything? Yes, I've seen it on a mission field. He provided everything I needed, everything.

\*Hosea 11:8-9 ESV How can I give you up O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath. [\* Hosea, not Hebrews ]

Hosea 14:4 ESV I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them.

It's a hint that God will give them a new heart. No, that's not the main theme, the main theme is God's loyalty.

Hosea 14:8 ESV O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress, from me comes your fruit.

Don't turn to anyone else, from me you get everything. There's no need to turn to cow gods, Baal gods whatever gods. I am your everything. Work hard but trust it's God that blesses your work. Do whatever you need to do, but behind every pill, behind every success, behind every study you do, it's God that blesses you.

And then the last verse seems added by the editor -

Hosea 14:9 ESV "Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning let him know them; for the ways of the Lord are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.

So whoever is wise let him understand these things, what things? Understand the loving steadfast love of God, that God never gives up. That marriage is a covenant- what God put together let no man put asunder. Israel and God is a covenant that will never stop. In the last days you will see Israel back again. In the book of Revelation, you will see amazing things. We have already seen in 1948 Israel came back as a nation after 2000 years. Anyone who studies politics says that's impossible. A whole language came up, a whole nation came up out of the ashes 2000 years ago. God never turns from us. Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. The compassion, the steadfast love of God is forever. So I hope here you will see the word Chesed, the steadfast love of God in the life of Hosea. See the suffering of God as we turn and turn away.

And that faithful God who will still love us. What a God! Poor Hosea had to live that life to help us grasp this and you know what? the vast majority of Christians never read this book and never understood and do not know that they're worshipping a golden calf. They call themselves Christians, but they're not believers, they're like Israel. I hope today you will grasp what this book is about, but most of all see the love of God that says "How can I give you up? Not possible. That's God's love for you and me. So please listen to the book and get the mood. The Message will give you the mood. After listening to it once and you want to read it in a different version, please go ahead. But I suggest you get the feel of how God feels about you and me every time we turn to other gods. May God bless you with a deep understanding of the heart of your God.

God bless you.