

The Scriptures Summarized / Book 28 – Hosea

The only clues about this man and his prophetic ministry are contained within this book itself. Hosea is a form of the Hebrew word for salvation. He ministered primarily to the northern tribes just prior to their defeat and exile by the Assyrians. Yet, the book only mentions one of their kings by name – Jereboam II. This could be due to the turbulent times of these last 6 kings to rule from Samaria (the Capital). Most had short reigns, and all but 1 was murdered. The book however, does mention 4 different kings of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Thus, Hosea's ministry was between 34 - 70 years long.

The prophet Amos preceded Hosea in the Northern Kingdom and was probably just ending his ministry as Hosea began. Amos was forceful and preached about breaking God's Laws, while his successor Hosea was tender and preached about betraying God's love. In the South, Micah and Isaiah were his contemporaries as well.

During this era of religious apostasy and idolatry, adultery was sanctioned as a religious act of worship in the pagan temples. The false notion was taught that reproducing sexually would please the idol and cause the earth to be fruitful and produce agriculturally. Thus, ritual prostitution was commonplace. Shockingly, God instructs Hosea to marry one of these prostitutes.

Hosea 1:2 When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD."

This strange assignment was an allegory of God's patient love for his own unfaithful people. The meaning of the book is observed in the naming of their children. Hosea was to reconcile and repurchase his own wife, after she ran away with another lover.

Hosea 3:1 The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes." 2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley...

The analogy was clear. Idolatry is religious unfaithfulness which breaks God's heart also. Yet, despite the immediate consequences of sin, the book promises the eventual restoration of a unified nation with the regained distinction as people who belong to God.

Hosea 1:10 "Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'children of the living God.' 11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

I. Sexual Adultery Ruined Hosea's Home Life. (1-3)

A. Marriage Instructions

B. Mandated Identities

1. Jezreel indicating a lace of defeat as Divine punishment
2. Lo-Ruhamah indicating one who is shown no mercy and is currently unloved
3. Lo-Ammi indicating someone who is no kin of mine; not my people

C. Merciful Illustration

II. Spiritual Apostasy Ruined Hosea's Home Land. (4-14)

A. The Divine Charges against God's people.

B. The Divine Consequences for God's people.

C. The Divine Challenge to God's people.