

# Hosea

## An Amazing Love Story

Hosea 11:1-4

April 18, 2020

### Today

**Author:** Hosea "*Yahweh has Saved*" {His name may be a shortened form of Hoshea or Joshua. The Greek form of his name is Jesus}. He was the son of Beerī.

The book is made up of **1 Parable {1-3}** and **2 Sermons {4-11; 12-14}**. Both sermons are scathing indictments against the wickedness of Israel/Judah, but both end with words of hope.

**Date:** Open but definitely between 782 BC and 722 BC {after Jeroboam II began his solo reign and before the destruction of Israel}

**Audience:** Primarily the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Hosea mentions 4 kings of **Judah**: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, but only one king of **Israel**: Jeroboam II even though 6 other kings ruled Israel during his ministry.

Hosea was a contemporary of: Isaiah {Judah} --- Amos {Israel} --- Jonah {Nineveh} --- Micah {Judah}

**Theme:** God's unchanging love and His anguish over the unfaithfulness and rejection of Israel.

**Internal Situation:** Under Jeroboam II, the Northern Kingdom was prosperous and successful, more than any time since the united monarchy. However, after Jeroboam died in 753 BC, the nation sank into near anarchy, going through 6 kings in about 30 years: Zechariah {**assassinated**}, Shallum {**assassinated**}, Menahem, Pekahiah {**assassinated**}, Pekah {**assassinated**} and Hoshea.

**External Situation:** Syria and Egypt were both threats and once Assyria regained power, Israel was doomed.

**Spiritual Situation:** The people had broken the Covenant and were spiritually and morally bankrupt. They were self-satisfied and proud. All forms of idolatrous worship flourished. They turned to human agencies to solve their problems instead of to God. Dishonesty, mutual distrust and deception prevailed. Injustice, violence, bloodshed and the oppression of the defenseless were common in all levels of society – No command of God was kept. The priests were wholly devoted to idolatry and joined the people in their sinfulness.

Against this flood of iniquity, Hosea was called to condemn sin and reveal God's love for His people.

### Parable:

The Lord said, "*Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD.*" {1:2}

So, Hosea married Gomer, daughter of Diblaim, and she bore him a son:

- He was named **Jezreel**, "*Because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel.*" {1:4}

Then a daughter:

- She was named **Lo-Ruhamah**, "*Because I will no longer show love for the House of Israel or forgive them. But I will show love for Judah and I will save them -- not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God.*" {1:7}

Then another son:

- He was named **Lo-Ammi**, "*Because you are not My people and I am not your God. Even so, the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore – beyond counting. In the place where I have said to them, 'you are not My people', they will be called the 'sons of the Living God'. They will be reunited with Judah and one Leader will be appointed to them*" {1:9-11}

Say to your children, ***“Rebuke your mother!! She is not my wife and I am not her husband!”*** .... **Because:**

- She said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me food and water, wool and linen, oil and drink.’
- She does not acknowledge that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her silver and gold – which they used for Baal.

**Therefore:**

- I will take away my grain and new wine. I will take back my wool and linen that was intended to cover her nakedness.
- I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands.
- I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed feasts.
- I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers;
- I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but she forgot Me,”

**Yet:**

- I will win her back once again. I will lead her out into the desert and speak tenderly to her.
- In that day you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master.'
- I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked.
- I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love, compassion and faithfulness, and you will acknowledge Me.
- I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show love to the one I called 'not my loved one' and will say to those called 'not my people', 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God'.

The Lord said to me, ***“Go and get your wife. Bring her back to you and love her, even though she loves adultery. Because I still love Israel even though the people have turned to other gods and offered them choice gifts.”*** {3:1}

I went and bought her for 15 shekels of silver and 5 bushels of barley. Then I said to her, ***“You are going to live with me and you are not going to commit adultery with any man or belong to any man except me and I will behave the same way toward you.”*** {3:2-3}

## **Sermon #1 {Ch. 4 -11}**

The LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land:

- There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God. There is only cursing, lying, murder, stealing and adultery; you stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you.
- **My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge,**
- The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful. They feed on the sins of my people and relish their wickedness.... As the priests go, so go the people. **{see Romans 1}**
- I will punish them for their ways --- Because they have deserted the LORD to give themselves to prostitution, to old wine and new, which take away their understanding. They consult a wooden idol and are answered by a stick of wood. A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to Me. They offer sacrifices on mountaintops and burn incense on the hills. Your daughters have become prostitutes and new brides commit adultery.

***The Israelites are stubborn, like a stubborn heifer. How then can the LORD pasture them like lambs in a meadow? <sup>17</sup> Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone! <sup>18</sup> Even when their drinks are gone, they continue their prostitution; their rulers dearly love shameful ways. <sup>19</sup> A whirlwind will sweep them away, and their sacrifices will bring them shame. {4:16-19}***

Listen, O house of Israel because these judgments apply to you!

- What you do is not hidden from me!
- Your deeds prevent you from returning to me because a spirit of promiscuity is in you and you don't want me.
- You are full of pride and Judah is following you! They are going to try and find me, but they won't, because I have left them!
- You have betrayed me!

**Sound the alarm!! Ephraim is oppressed and trampled in judgment, but is intent on pursuing idols! {5:11}**

When you saw that you were sick and that Judah was wounded, you didn't come to me!! You went to Assyria for help, but he cannot heal you... I am going to go away and return to my place until you recognize your guilt and seek my face. Your affliction will cause you to seek my face and you'll say:

- *"Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."* {6:1-3}

But God knows they don't really mean it. It's just words... their hearts / actions haven't changed ... and God cries despairingly:

- *What am I going to do with the both of you? Your love is like the morning mist that disappears when it gets hot. Therefore, I am going to tear you to pieces through my prophets and kill you with the words of my mouth. My judgments will flash like lightning upon you. I desire mercy NOT sacrifice and an acknowledgment of Me NOT burnt offerings!* {6:4-6 --- see Hebrews 4:12}

You never consider the fact that I know all about your wickedness because you do it right in front of my face!

- *Your arrogance testifies against you, but despite everything, you do not return to the Lord or even search for Him! You are like a silly, senseless dove --- first calling on Egypt and then turning to Assyria. Woe to You! Destruction is coming because you have rebelled against me. I long to heal you but you speak lies against Me. You don't cry to me from your hearts, you just lay on your beds and cry. You go to the pagan festivals and turn away from Me. It was I who trained and strengthened you, but you plot evil against Me and don't turn to the Most High.* {7:10-13}

You say, "We know you!!", but you reject what is good. You set up kings that I didn't choose...

How long will you be incapable of innocence? You sow the wind but you will reap the whirlwind!! You will be swallowed up because you go to Assyria for help.

Israel, you were a spreading vine and as your fruit increased, you built more altars and as your land increased, you made the sacred stones more beautiful. Your heart is deceitful and now you must carry your guilt – I am going to destroy your altars and sacred stones!

- *Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you. <sup>13</sup> But you have planted wickedness, you have reaped evil, you have eaten the fruit of deception. Because you have depended on your own strength and on your many warriors, <sup>14</sup> the roar of battle will rise against your people, so that all your fortresses will be devastated --* {10:12-14}

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. <sup>2</sup> But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. <sup>3</sup> It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. <sup>4</sup> I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them. <sup>5</sup> "Will they not return to Egypt and will not Assyria rule over them because they refuse to repent? .... <sup>8</sup> "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. <sup>9</sup> I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I turn and devastate Ephraim. For I am God, and not man-- the Holy One among you. I will not come in wrath .... {Hosea 11:1-9}

## Sermon #2 {Ch. 12-14}

The Lord has a dispute with you Judah and I will punish Jacob according to his ways. Return to me, observe kindness and justice and put your hope in Me.

Ephraim said, *"I have become rich and have found wealth all by my self. There is nothing I have done that I can be punished for!"* But I have been your God since I brought you from the Land of Egypt and I will make you live in tents again. I have spoken through the prophets and given many visions and parables through them. Ephraim's bloodguilt will remain on him!

Ephraim, you were great... once, but now you sin more and more. You make molten images of silver and you encourage the people to worship the calves!! Therefore:

- You will be like mist – like dew that soon disappears. Like chaff that is blown away. Like smoke from a chimney.
- I have been your God since Egypt. You were not to know any god except Me because there is no savior besides Me.
- I cared for you in the wilderness, but when you came into the Land, you became satisfied and then your heart became proud and you forgot all about Me. Now your iniquity has been stored up.
- Shall I ransom you from the power of the grave? Shall I redeem you from death? Death, where are your thorns? O grave, where is your sting? {see 1 Corinthians 15:54-55}

Israel is guilty. She has rebelled against God and YET He still wants her. He still loves her. He still pleads with her to come back to Him. In a remarkable turn of events He even gives her the words to say:

- *Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips. Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount war-horses. We will never again say 'Our gods' to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion.* {14:2-3}

And IF they had returned to Him?

- *I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a Cedar of Lebanon, he will send down his roots; his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. Men will dwell again in his shade. He will flourish like the grain. He will blossom like a vine, and his fame will be like the wine from Lebanon. O Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? I will answer him and care for him. I am like a green pine tree; your fruitfulness comes from me. {14:4-8}*

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. {Hosea 14:9}

## Take Aways

The most extraordinary feature of Hosea is the honest way in which God reveals His heart in a desperate attempt to get His people to choose life:

- MY people are being destroyed through lack of knowledge. {4:6}
- What am I going to do with you, Israel and Judah... {6:4}
- When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. {11:1}
- It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. {11:3}
- I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them. {11:4}
- How can I give you up, Ephraim... how can I hand you over, Israel... my heart is changed within me and all my compassion is aroused... I will not come in wrath. {11:8}

Hosea's own experience with heartbreak because of his wife's unfaithfulness gave him a glimpse of the depths of God's love for Israel and the unspeakable anguish He felt because of their unfaithfulness:

- Hosea loved Gomer – knowing what she was and what she'd do. She abused his love for her and took advantage of his forgiveness. When she ended up a slave, he redeemed her.
- God loved Israel – knowing what she was and what she'd do. She abused His love and took advantage of His mercy and forgiveness. When she ended up a slave, He promised to redeem her.

Hosea in no way excuses the people for their conduct, however, through all his writing he depicts the yearning love of God for His wayward people.

Hosea bore God's last message to the Northern Kingdom, but his appeals went unheeded. Unrepentant and unchanged the people held to their rebellious course of action and were carried into Assyrian bondage in 722 BC.