

Hosea Chapter 1

Verses 1-9: "Hosea" prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel from approximately (753 to 715 B.C.), during or shortly after the prophet Amos. With the birth of each of Hosea and Gomer's children, God's warnings to His people grew more pronounced:

- (1) the Lord would withdraw His protection and Israel would suffer military defeat, symbolized by the name "Jezreel";
- (2) The Lord would show the people no pity, symbolized by the name "Lo-Ruhamah";
- (3) The Lord would temporarily reject His covenant people, symbolized by the name "Lo-Ammi."

Hosea 1:1 "The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, [and] Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel."

"The word of the LORD" (compare 6:5). This kind of introduction, expressing the prophet's divine authority and message source, appears also (in Joel 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zeph. 1:1; Mal. 1:1). Similar statements appear (in Amos 1:3; Obadiah 1; Jonah 1:1; Haggai 1:2).

The kingdom has split at this time. Hosea is a prophet to the ten tribes, spoken of as Israel. The other two tribes were spoken of as Judah. It was hard for the people to hear his warnings, because there were good times in the land. This is Jeroboam the second, spoken of here. He raised Israel to great splendor, but was very evil. His father, Joash was evil, also.

One tremendous difference in Judah and Israel is that more of Judah's kings followed after God, than did Israel's evil kings. All of Israel's kings were evil. Hosea prophesied during the reign of all four of the kings of Judah, above mentioned. He prophesied in Israel and not in Judah. It is believed by some that he prophesied for about 70 years.

Verses 2-3: In all probability "Gomer" was morally pure prior to her marriage to Hosea, but subsequently became discontented and went into harlotry, from which Hosea by his love reclaimed her.

Hosea 1:2 "The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, [departing] from the LORD."

"Children of whoredoms": This point to the future unfaithfulness of their mother. The children were possibly not fathered by Hosea. That Hosea's marriage to Gomer was to depict God's marriage to Israel is clearly set forth and becomes the key to the theme of the book.

This seems like such a ridiculous thing for Hosea to do. We must remember, that the prophet experiences in the flesh, what is going on with the people in their relationship to God in the spirit. Israel was the harlot wife of God in the spirit, so Hosea the prophet must experience this relationship in the natural. God plainly gives the reason for this (for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD).

Hosea 1:3 "So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son."

In the course of prophesying he made mention of this person, who was a notorious common strumpet; and suggested hereby that they were just like her; or these were fictitious names he used to represent their case by Gomer signifies both "consummation" and "consumption".

The meanings of the people's names are very important in this. The name "Gomer" means completion. This means then, that God has sent them final warning. They have gone too far, with their unfaithfulness to God. "Diblaim" means two cakes. If we put the names together, we would see that the woman was a pleasure, but not a true wife as she was full of sin. Thank goodness the son here is Hosea's son.

Hosea 1:4 "And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little [while], and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel."

"Jezreel" means "God will scatter" or "God Sows." He is to be a reminder that God will judge the house of Jehu for the bloodshed in Jezreel, when the kingdom was wrested from Ahab and Jezebel and God's judgment was poured out against them (2 Kings Chapter 9).

"I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu". It was at the city of Jezreel where Jehu slaughtered the house of Ahab (2 Kings 9:7 – 10:28).

"Cause to cease": Looks forward to the exile of Israel to Assyria in 722 B.C., from which she never returned.

"Israel" means prince with God, or he will rule as God. "Jehu" means Jehovah is He. The blood of Jezreel that was to be avenged probably had to do with Ahab and Jezebel, who were severely punished for their evil deeds. This is saying that God will remove the house of Israel from their kingdom.

In Isaiah, God named Isaiah's children for what was going on in the country at the time. This is true here as well. God named these children to reveal an extra message to the people.

Hosea 1:5 "And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

"Break the bow": The bow was a common euphemism denoting military strength, the principal instrument of warfare in Israel. Fulfillment came in 722 B.C. when Assyria invaded.

The "Valley of Jezreel" Jezreel, called Esdraelon, extends 10 miles in breadth from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea, near Carmel; it was the great battlefield (see Rev. 16:14-16), adjoining the Valley of Megiddo, which will become an avenue of blessing (verse 11), when Christ returns in triumph.

The bloodshed of Jezreel would "reoccur" in the house of Jehu, and his dynasty would come to a violent end, just as Ahab's did. This happened (in 752 B.C.; 2 Kings 15:10).

This valley of Jezreel has been the location of many battles. This is the very same place, where Gideon defeated the Midianites. We see in this Scripture above, that this is to be the location of Israel's defeat as well. "The breaking of the bow" shows their helplessness in battle.

Verses 6-7: "Lo-ruhamah" means "No Mercy" or "Not Pitied." Her significance is twofold: God's compassion has come to an end for Israel, and her judgment is imminent (verse 6b).

Hosea 1:6 "And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And [God] said unto him, Call her name Lo-ruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away."

"Lo-ruhamah": Literally "not pitied," this daughter is named to symbolize God bringing judgment on Israel, no longer extending His favor towards them.

The "she", in the verse above, is speaking of Hosea's wife. Perhaps the reason this child is a female, is to show that not only the males in Israel are guilty of spiritual adultery and deserve to be punished, but the females as well. The name "Lo-ruhamah" means not pitied. This name tells us that God will not pity these evil people, (Israel). He will let them go into captivity to punish them for their spiritual adultery (worship of false gods).

Hosea 1:7 "But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen."

"I will have mercy upon ... Judah": God chose to intervene on behalf of Hezekiah when Jerusalem was besieged at the hands of the Assyrians (in 701 B.C.; 2 Kings Chapter 19; Isaiah Chapter 37).

This is just saying that Judah will not be overrun by Assyria. They will be spared from this, because they have not been as unfaithful to God as Israel (10 tribes), has been. They would be taken captive, but not by Assyria, and not until over 100 years later. They had a few godly leaders, and Israel did not. They will not be saved in battle; they will be saved from battle.

Judah will not have to depend on weapons to save them. God will save them. Perhaps this refers to the battle where Sennacherib, king of Assyria, lost 185,000 men in one night (2 Kings 19:35).

The angel of the Lord killed them. God won the battle for Judah. This was during the reign of Hezekiah. This is the very same army that had overrun Israel (10 tribes), and defeated them.

Hosea 1:8 "Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son."

That is, when Gomer had weaned her daughter (Hosea 1:6).

“She conceived and bare a son”: According to Kimchi, as the weaning of Lo-ruhamah points at the times of weakness, from Zachariah the son of Jeroboam to the times of Pekahiah, when the reigns were short and troublesome. So this son she conceived and bore represents the state of the nation in the times of Pekah; who reigned twenty years, and was too powerful for the kingdom of Judah, slew multitudes of them, and carried others captive, and assisted Rezin king of Syria against Ahaz king of Judah.

This period of time represented by the time she was weaning this baby is showing God waited for the punishment, to see if they would repent. Mothers generally nurse their babies about two years, so this was an interval of about two years. God did not want to punish His people, but He could not let them continue worshipping false gods.

Hosea 1:9 "Then said [God], Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye [are] not my people, and I will not be your [God]."

“Lo-ammi” means “Not My People”, indicating to the Israel of his day that they were not the Lord’s people, and that the Lord was not their God. This should in no sense be understood as an annulment of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1-3), an unconditional covenant depending solely upon God for its fulfillment.

“I will not be your God”: Literally “I am no longer ‘I Am’ to you.” The phrase gives the breaking of the covenant, a kind of divorce formula, in contrast to the covenant or marriage formula “I AM WHO I AM” given in Exodus 3:14.

In this, God had divorced them. He no longer wanted them as His wife. They were unfaithful. The name "Lo-ammi" means not my people. Because of their unfaithfulness to be His, He will no longer be their God. He will not overrule their will and be their God. There is a lesson in this for us. We must, of our own free will, invite God to be our God.

Verses 1:10 – 2:1: The promise that Israel would someday be “as the sand” on the seashore recalls God’s promise to Abraham (Gen. 22:17), the basis for His continuing faithfulness to Israel. Just as the names of Gomer’s children changed, God would change Israel’s fate, from destruction and abandonment to restoration and acceptance. Paul applied this principle to Jewish and Gentile believers (in Romans Chapters 9-11).

In spite of the waywardness of Israel, God preserved a remnant for Himself from both Israel and Judah. Speaking of millennial blessings, God promised national increase (Isa. 54:1), national

conversion and reunion (Ezek. 37:15-23), national leadership (3:5), and national restoration (2:23).

Hosea 1:10 "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, [that] in the place where it was said unto them, Ye [are] not my people, [there] it shall be said unto them, [Ye are] the sons of the living God."

“Number”: A reaffirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant, not to be fulfilled in this generation but in the future (Gen. 22:17).

“Ye are not my people” (quoted by Paul in Romans 9:26).

This speaks of a time, when God will forgive them, and take them back as His wife. God is faithful to keep every promise He ever made. He had promised Abraham that his seed would be as the sand of the sea, and He will do it. The punishment that Israel suffers is to make them repent and return to God. In Jesus Christ, God makes a way of restoration for His people. To become sons of God, we must receive Jesus Christ as our Savior.

John 1:12 "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name:"

Romans 8:14 "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Hosea 1:11 "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great [shall be] the day of Jezreel."

“One head” (refers to messiah; compare 3:5).

“The day of Jezreel”: Here used positively in the sense of divine blessing (compare 2:22).

This is looking far into the future, until the time when Jesus is the head of both. The mention of Jezreel here, is speaking of the same place we call the valley of Armageddon. This will be the time when Jesus will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. This is also, the same thing spoken of as the two sticks that come together in Ezekiel chapter 37. The following Scriptures explain it very well.

Romans 11:25-27 "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:" "For this [is] my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

Hosea Chapter 1 Questions

1. What has happened to the 12 tribes at this writing?
2. How were they split?
3. Why did Israel not believe Hosea's warning?
4. Which Jeroboam is spoken of here?
5. Approximately how long did Hosea prophesy?
6. Who did Hosea prophesy to?
7. What did God tell Hosea to do, that seems ridiculous in the natural?
8. Why did God tell him to do this?
9. What does "Gomer" mean?
10. What does "Diblaim" mean?
11. If the two names are put together, what message is in them?
12. What does the name "Jezreel" mean?
13. What does "Jehu" mean?
14. The blood of Jezreel to be revenged in verse 4, is possibly speaking of whom?
15. The names of Isaiah's children showed what?
16. What does "the breaking of the bow" show?
17. What famous battle was fought at Jezreel?
18. Why was the second child a female?
19. How many years after Assyria attacked Israel, did Babylon attack Judah?
20. The angel of the Lord killed how many of Judah's enemy one night?
21. Who won the battle for Judah?
22. Why was there, approximately, 2 years between the second and third child?
23. What is verse 9 speaking of?
24. What lesson must we learn from verse 9?
25. What is verse 10 speaking of?

26. In _____, God makes a way of restoration for His people.
27. What time is verse 11 speaking of?
28. Jezreel and _____ are the same.
29. What is spoken of in Ezekiel chapter 37 that is the same as this?
30. What did you learn from this lesson?