

Hosea 1:1 - 2:8

Background; Hosea's Call

Day 1

Read Hosea 1:1

Historical background on the nation of Israel and its Kings

1. After dealing with mankind on an individual basis for about 2000 years, why did God call out Abram to become the father of the nation of Israel?
 - Genesis 12:1-3

 - Genesis 17:5-8

2. When the nation of Israel had entered the promised land of Canaan (Israel today) and conquered it under Joshua's leadership, how well did they follow the Lord? Joshua 24:31
 - After Moses and Joshua died, what happened to the nation of Israel? Judges 2:8-13

3. How did God deal with the nation's apostasy? Judges 2:14-16
 - What cyclical pattern did the nation get into? Judges 2:17-19

4. During the time of the judges, how were the people governed? Judges 21:25

5. Why did the people ask for a king to lead them? (*Samuel was the last judge*) 1 Samuel 8:4-5
 - What did God say they were really doing? 1 Samuel 8:7-9

 - What would be the result of having a king? 1 Samuel 8:11-18

6. Who was the first king? 1 Samuel 9:15-17 Why was he eventually rejected as king? 1 Samuel 13:13-14

7. Who became the next king and how was he selected? 1 Samuel 16:7-13

8. Underline the phrases that describes David's walk with the Lord.

- Acts 13:22 After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'
- 1 Samuel 18:14 In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him. NIV

9. What happened to the kingdom of Israel after David's son, King Solomon, reigned? 1 Kings 11:31-33

Optional Digging Deeper

What special promise was given to King David? 2 Sam 7:12-16

How was that promise ultimately fulfilled? Acts 13:22-23

For Your Information: "When [Solomon] was succeeded by his son Rehoboam, the ten northern tribes led by Jeroboam, a former head of the forced labor units, met with him and sought relief from the burdens of work and taxation. Rehoboam followed bad advice and refused. The northern tribes declared independence and formed a separate kingdom with Jeroboam as head. They named their kingdom 'Israel' (this sometimes causes confusion because the name is also used for the remnant of the Covenant People at a later time). The southern section of the divided kingdom was known as Judah."
- Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

10. What phrase describes the behavior of the final kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (referred to as "*Israel*" - capital, Samaria)? 2 Kings 15:18,24,28; 17:2,21

11. What eventually happened to the Northern Kingdom of Israel? 2 Kings 17:5-6, 22-24

Optional Digging Deeper

For the fate of the Southern Kingdom of Israel (referred to as "*Judah*" - capital, Jerusalem) about 135 years after the captivity of the Northern Kingdom, see 2 Chronicles 36:11-20.

Applying the Word: *Is there any area of your life more like the practices of your neighbors than following what God desires? How so?*

Day 2

Background on Prophets

For Your Information: "Hosea's ministry spanned the years 760 to 720 B.C. during the days of the *divided monarchy*. This was after days of David and Solomon, when the people of God divided in a civil war, creating two nations: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. This is some 250 years after the time of King David, and some 650 years after Israel came into the Promised Land."
– David Guzik

"Hosea, son of Beeri, was the only one of the writing prophets to come from the northern kingdom of Israel. We don't know much about him, other than what he revealed in his book because he is mentioned nowhere else in Scripture. Sometimes known as the prophet of 'Israel's zero hours,' Hosea urged the northern kingdom to repent in its tragic final days before it fell to Assyria, much like Jeremiah's ministry to the crumbling kingdom of Judah more than a century later. ...Hosea was a contemporary of Jonah, whom God sent to the Assyrian capital of Nineveh; of Amos, who prophesied to the northern kingdom; and of Isaiah and Micah, who ministered to the southern kingdom. Hosea's ministry last around forty years, from about 755 to 715 B.C. His references to Judah...suggest that he may have fled to Jerusalem after the destruction of the northern kingdom."
– Charles Swindoll (4,5)

12. How did Hosea receive his instructions? 1:1a (Compare 2 Peter 1:21)

13. *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways"* (Hebrews 1:1) Underline ways that the Lord spoke to and appointed prophets.

- Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." NIV
- Exodus 3:1-4 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up." 4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." NIV
- Numbers 12:5-8 Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, 6 he said, "Listen to my words: "When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. 7 But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. 8 With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" NIV
- Judges 6:11-12 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. 12 When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." NIV
- 1 Kings 3:5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." NIV
- Isaiah 6:1-8 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple...8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" "And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" NIV

- Jeremiah 1:4-9 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." 6 "Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." 7 But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD. 9 Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. NIV

For Your Information: "PROPHET: Except for God's call, prophets had no special qualifications. They appeared from all walks of life and classes of society. They included sheep breeders and farmers like Amos (Amos 7:14) and Elisha (1 Kings 19:19) but also princes like Abraham (Gen 23:6) and priests like Ezekiel (Ezek 1:3). Even women and children became prophets (1 Sam 3:19-20; 2 Kings 22:14).
 ...Some prophets were called for a lifetime. But sometimes prophets spoke briefly and no more (Num. 11:25-26). In either case, a prophet spoke with the authority of the Holy Spirit (Num. 11:29; 24:4).
 ...Many scholars deny that prophecy includes the prediction of future events, but fulfillment was, in fact, the test of a prophet's genuineness (Deut. 18:20-22). Whether a prophet's words were fulfilled within his lifetime or centuries later, they were fulfilled to the letter (1 Kings 13:3; 2 Kings 23:15-16)." - Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

14. How could people judge between a true and a false prophet? Deuteronomy 18:21-22; 13:1-5

Background on Hosea's time

15. Underline the phrases that describe how "*Jeroboam son of Jehoash*" (Hosea 1:1b) (also known as Jeroboam II) ruled.
- 2 Kings 14:23-24 In the fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah, *Jeroboam son of Jehoash* king of Israel became king in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years. 24 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD and did not turn away from any of the sins of *Jeroboam son of Nebat*, which he had caused Israel to commit. NIV
16. Underline the description of the *sins of "Jeroboam son of Nebat"* (Jeroboam I) - the sins that Jeroboam II and subsequent kings "did not turn away from."
- 1 Kings 12:28-31 After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." 29 One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin; the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there. 31 Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. NIV
 - 1 Kings 14:7-9 Go, tell Jeroboam that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I raised you up from among the people and made you a leader over my people Israel. 8 I tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you, but you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commands and followed me with all his heart, doing only what was right in my eyes. 9 You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal; you have provoked me to anger and thrust me behind your back. NIV

For Your Information: "Hosea began his ministry in the days of Jeroboam II. From a political and economic standpoint Jeroboam II was a successful and good king (2 Kings 14:23-29). Israel prospered politically and materially under his reign, but it was a time of significant spiritual and moral decay.
 ...The seeds of idolatry, spiritual failure, and moral corruption sown in days of Jeroboam II produced a tragic harvest in the following years." - David Guzik

17. From 2 Kings 17:7-18, what do you learn about the behavior of the nation during Hosea's day? (See also Hosea 11:12)
18. How did the Lord treat Judah (the Southern Kingdom) differently when Assyria threatened them? 1:7 (See Isaiah 37:33-37)
- Why did the Lord save Judah? Isaiah 37:14-20

Optional Digging Deeper

What picture does Amos (who prophesied during the time of Hosea) give of the people living in the Northern Kingdom of Israel? Amos 2:6-8; 5:7,11-13

Applying the Word: What do you think would attract people in your community to hear God's words to them? What drew you to listen to God for the first time?

Day 3**Read Hosea 1:1-9****God Calls Hosea**

19. What did God ask Hosea to do and why? 1:2 (What do you think the phrase "the Lord spoke through Hosea" means?)
- How had "the land" committed harlotry/prostitution/adultery? 1:2b; 4:12 (See also Judges 2:17; Jeremiah 5:7) *Mark the word "harlotry/adultery/prostitution" throughout Hosea.*

IT'S GREEK TO ME: "*is guilty of the vilest adultery/ commits flagrant harlotry*" *zanah* Strong's OT:2181; to commit adultery; figuratively, (the Jewish people being regarded as the spouse of Jehovah) – Strong's Concordance

"The term harlot, or prostitute, is used figuratively for idolatress (Isaiah 1:21; Jeremiah 2:20; 3:2; Ezekiel 16:13-63; Revelation 17:1,5,15; 19:2)." – The New Unger's Bible Dictionary

"**Hosea.** Hosea (meaning "salvation," essentially the same name as that of Joshua, or Jesus) is, in his prophetic actions, to be made essentially a living type of Christ, especially in His nature as Jehovah, the spiritual "husband" of Israel. Hosea's prophecy was directed especially toward unfaithful Israel, the ten-tribe northern kingdom...

In his real-life portrayal of the relation of Jehovah to Israel, Hosea was led by God to love and marry Gomer.... Gomer thus typifies the spiritual harlotry of Israel, serving other gods instead of the true God. As always, spiritual adultery first countenances, then promotes, physical immorality. God's chosen people had descended into the same moral morass as the pagan nations whose gods they had begun to follow."
– Henry Morris

20. Record what the names of the children of Hosea represented:

Name	Meaning	Reason for their name (underline the "I will" phrases) (For background on Jehu and the valley of Jezreel see 2 Kings 10)
Jezreel (1:4,5)	Strong's #3157 <i>Yizre' e'</i> ; God will sow; God scatters	
Lo-Ruhamah (1:6)	Strong's #3819 <i>Lo' Ruchamah</i> ; not pitied	
Lo-Ammi (1:9)	Strong's #3818 <i>Lo' `Ammiy</i> ; not my people	

Food for Thought: "It needs to be said...that oracles like these are shouts of warning, nor irrevocable sentences. The classic illustrations of this fact are found in Jonah and Jeremiah. Jonah's oracle, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown;' was as doom-laden as even he could wish; yet he knew that it was given to avert the very judgment it foretold. (See Jer. 18:7f.)"
- Derik Kidner (23)

"The omission of [bore him] in vv.6,9 may indicate that Hosea was not the father of Gomer's next two children."
- The NIV Study Bible (1323)

21. Why do you think the Lord asked Hosea enter into marriage with an unfaithful woman? How might Hosea have felt about these 3 children?

Food for Thought: "How does God feel when His people are unfaithful? Hosea knew. His writings, perhaps more than any other author's, give us God's gut-level reaction to the disloyalty of the Israelites. Hosea was well-acquainted with God's heartbreak, not just because he preached and wrote about Israel's rejection of God, but because he lived it out on a personal level."
- Charles Swindoll (1)

"Through His command to Hosea, God brings to life a consistent picture used throughout the Old Testament. In this picture, the LORD is the husband of Israel, and their passionate, chronic attraction for idols was like the lust of an adulterer. His people were as unfaithful as a prostitute was."
- David Guzik

- Compare the difficulty of Ezekiel's calling: Ezekiel 2:1-7

22. What are some unusual things that prophets were asked to do?

- Isaiah 20:2-4
- Ezekiel 4:1-8
- Jeremiah 13:1-11

23. Why do you think God asked some prophets to act things out?
24. What unusual things was Jesus appointed to do (e.g. lowly birth/poor; friend to sinners...)? How were these visual aids to show people what God was really like?

Applying the Word: *“Like the prophets of old there are times when we have opportunities to show people what God is all about, the way we live picturing truth about God. We do this when we walk in obedience in the midst of trial, suffering, and need.” - Kay Arthur*
Who has been a powerful picture of God’s love to you? How did they display that love?

Day 4

Read Hosea 1:7-2:8

God’s promise for the future

25. How would the Lord’s actions toward Judah differ? 1:7 What does this indicate about the spiritual state of Judah compared to Israel?

For Your Information: “They [Judah] were saved from Assyria by the Lord in 722-721 B.C. and again in 701.”
 (see 2 Kings 19:14-19; 32-36).”
 - The Nelson Study Bible (1323)

26. In 1:7-2:1 list all the words, and images of mercy, love and forgiveness that describe what God was going to do for Israel. (Compare the promise made to Abraham - Genesis 22:17.)

For Your Information: 1:11 “God’s original promise to Abraham (Genesis 22:17) must still be fulfilled, and both the ‘children of Judah and the children of Israel’ will be gathered together in the last days (Hosea 1:11)...God will call their brothers and sisters Ammi and Ruhammah (‘My people have been pitied’ and ‘belong to me once more’).” - Henry Morris
 “The giving of new names by an act of pure grace (like that of the Christian gospel) exactly cancels the existing alienation; and the warmth of 1:10b has already gone still further, exchanging terms of covenant for those of the family: ‘Sons of the living God.’”
 - Derek Kidner

27. Why do you think Hosea mingled images of punishment and allurements in these verses? What does that reveal about God’s heart?

Israel's unfaithfulness

28. How badly had the marriage/nation deteriorated and why? 2:2 (What does 2:4 suggest about the children?)

For Your Information: Contend with your mother [symbolized by Gomer] "That is, the nation collectively. The address is to 'her children,' that is, to the individual citizens of the state (compare Isa 50:1)."

- Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

"The fact that the husband thinks it's worth his while to issue a rebuke suggests that there may yet be room for hope."

- The Africa Bible Commentary (1016)

29. How harshly would God deal with Israel's idolatry? 2:3,4 (Compare Jeremiah 13:26,27)
(Underline the "I will" phrases in 2:1-6)

For Your Information: "[Israel] would be made as she was at birth--a naked, helpless child. The time of infancy was Israel's experience in the wilderness after the Exodus. It was a barren, desert area. God protected Israel at that time, but she herself would be like that parched and desolate land unless she returned to him." – The Expositor's Bible Commentary

"If Israel as a whole is represented as an unfaithful wife, then her children represent the individual people of Israel. If they do not turn back to the LORD, they will personally experience His judgment." – David Guzik

30. What motivated Gomer/Israel to commit adultery? 2:5 (See also 2:12)

For Your Information: "As [Gomer] was running after 'lovers' who would give gifts to her, so Israel was running after the false gods of the surrounding nations." – The Expositor's Bible Commentary

"The gods of Canaan were largely patrons of fertility. To get the best results of farming one would be tempted to enlist their help...More than that, these gods were Baals, meaning lords or husbands, and while some of their rituals were a re-enacting of their wars and victories...other rituals were sexual acts with cultic prostitutes [which they thought] would magically induce fertility in the flocks and herds and farm-produce.

These beliefs and half-beliefs are not as foreign or remote from our age as they may seem... Whether [God's] place is taken by...'nature' or by the fantasies of astrology or by recourse to the occult and the demonic, it amounts to a modern dethroning of God which is hardly different from His displacement by the Baals. And this is not the only similarity between our age and theirs. If sex was deified in polytheistic thought, it receives almost equal adulation in our own."

- Derek Kidner (29,30)

Applying the Word: *It's been said that God's hatred of sin is so great because He loves us so much. Has God ever blocked your path, or walled you in? What did you feel at the time? What understanding do you have now as you look back on that time?*