

Book 28: Hosea  
Israel's Unfaithfulness and God's Faithful Love

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- The Book of Hosea brings us to the Minor Prophets.
- They are called “minor”, because they are generally shorter, not because they are less important than other books.
- In the Hebrew Bible these books are known collectively as “The Twelve”.
  
- Hosea prophesied in the northern kingdom about the same time as Amos.
- Isaiah and Micah would have spoken to the southern kingdom of Judah about this time.
- Hosea lived to see the fall of Israel, much as Jeremiah lived to see the fall of Judah.
  
- The name “Hosea” means “salvation” and is the same name that Joshua had before Moses changed it for him (See Numbers 13:16).
- The lessons of Hosea come as much from his life as from his writing; his life perfectly mirrored his message.
  
- The book begins by recording God’s instructions to the prophet, that he should marry a prostitute named Gomer.
- After a time, and several children, she left him to return to a life of harlotry, and eventually sold herself into slavery.
  
- At that point God called Hosea to buy her back, to forgive her and love her despite her unfaithfulness.
- This provided a graphic illustration of God’s love for Israel, His nation, who had left Him to serve idols – the Baals and the golden calves.
  
- Hosea was very qualified to preach a message against unfaithful Israel, because he knew better than anyone how God felt.
- In the end, however, God gave him a beautiful promise of revival and restoration for His people.
  
- The lesson of Hosea also speaks to us.
- Our rejection of God parallels Gomer’s rejection of Hosea.
- Then, when we were in bondage to sin, God sent Jesus, our “salvation” to buy us out of our slavery.
- We don’t deserve His faithful love, but Jesus calls us, the church, His “bride”.

## Hosea: A Few Facts

- Hosea is the first of two writing prophets to come from the northern kingdom. The other is Jonah.
- The words “harlot” and “harlotry” appear some 21 times in this relatively short book.
- Based on Hosea 1:1, his ministry must have lasted 30 years or longer.
- Hosea makes about 150 statements against the sins of Israel, and more than half of them deal with Israel’s idolatry.
- One commentator explained the book like this:
  - *“What we see in Hosea are the last few swirls as the kingdom of Israel goes down the drain.”*

## Various and Conflicting Views on Hosea’s Marriage

- Some believe the story is an allegory and Hosea’s marriage never actually took place.
  - **This is view we should reject.**
- There are, however, several valid views, each believed by some competent teachers and commentators:
- Gomer may have become a prostitute only after her marriage to Hosea.
- She may have already been a prostitute, but Hosea didn’t realize it until God spoke to Him.
- Finally, Hosea may have married her fully conscious of her immorality, simply to obey God’s command.

## Hosea: Key Chapters

- **Chapter 1:** an explanation of Hosea’s life and ministry.
- **Chapter 3:** Hosea buys his wife out of slavery,
- **Chapter 4:** A sample of Hosea’s preaching.
- **Chapter 14:** A promise of the future repentance and restoration of Israel.