

Hosea

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Welcome & Introduction

1. An Overview

Q: What's the theme of the book of Hosea?

“In the message of Hosea we see the passion of God. We see the jealousy of God, the commitment of God, the heartbreak of God, the enthusiasm of God, the love of God. People often talk about what they feel about God. Hosea tells us what God feels about us.” Tim Chester, *Hosea: The Passion of God* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2014), page 9.

1:1

1:2-8, then chapter 3

2. The Narrative

Chapter 1

1:2 - *Go, take you a wife of whoring and children of whoring for the land has surely whored away from Yahweh.*

“Hosea’s experience with the promiscuous Gomer has legitimated his call to be Yahweh’s prophet... What many would consider disqualification for the office – a prophet whose own wife was morally out of control – serves in this case as his credentials.” DA Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, New American Commentary vol, 19a (Holman, 1997), page 36.

1:3 *And he went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.*

Jezreel.

Not-Pitied.

Not-My-People.

1:10-2:1 - far more positive: brief signs of hope.

Chapter 3

3:1

3:2

Q: Pause for a moment, at this broadest view. What does the story teach us? How might we think about being God's New Testament people in the light of this story?

3. A Microcosm?

Chapter 2

(2:2 – whoring face)

2:2ff Israel's failure.

(Promiscuous body, barren wilderness)

2:5 (because she ran after what her 'lovers' could give her essential - luxury)

2:6-7 Consequence
(she can't see clearly)

2:8 The Truth

2:9 The Judgement

2:10 Consequence
(all will see her clearly)

2:11ff Israel's destruction

(2:13 – whoring face)

Dominant image: unfaithful wife...

...but also the definition of unfaithfulness.

Q: How does this kind of exploration enrich your understanding of Hosea – what new insights strike you?

Interaction between story episodes and prophecy

First episode:

2:16-17 – *It shall be on that day, said Yahweh, she shall call Me ‘My Husband’ and no longer call Me ‘my Baal’. And I will take away the names of the Baalim from your mouth and they shall no more be recalled by their name.*

2:19-20 – *I will betroth you... I will betroth you... I will betroth you...*

2.23 – in Jezreel God will scatter, this time sowing his seed – so restoring Jezreel not judging Jezreel. *And I will have pity on Not-Pitied and I will say to Not-My-People, ‘You are my people’ AND he shall say ‘You are my God.’*

Second episode:

3:3 – purpose?

3:4 *For many days shall the Israelites dwell without king and without commander and without sacrifice and without sacred pillar and without ephod and without teraphim*

Image of ‘exile’: no political/military leadership, no priestly cult, no divination/knowledge of God.

The consequences of choosing for or against being faithful to Yahweh.

4. Hosea: the Book

Forms of the book

– *about* Israel, rather than *to* Israel.

2.2-13 – addressed to the children

Ch 9-11 – historical review

Promises - not addressed to 'you'. (1:9-2:1, 16-17, 23-25; 11:10-11; 14:5-8).

Creative Communication

*Proverbs (4:9, 11, 15; 8:7; 10:12)

*Battle warnings (5:8; 8:1)

*Calls to repent or return:

Hollow (6:1-3)

True (10:12; 12:7; 14:2-3).

5. Hosea: the Message

Divine Complaint... Language of Courtroom (4:1)... But Family Court.

Israel as...	Yahweh as... (in judgement)	Yahweh as... (in salvation and mercy)
*unfaithful harlot *stubborn cow *snare and net *heated oven ('on heat') *silly dove *half-baked bread *treacherous bow *useless vessel *crooked merchant *stupid baby *mist *dew *chaff *smoke	*pus, infection *lion, panther, bear *trapper *vulture	*loving husband *parent *lover *fruitful tree

2/3 references in Hosea to God use the personal name Yahweh, and even when it's simply 'God', it's usually 'your God, our God, Yahweh your God' or some such phrase.

Yahweh's sovereignty over history, over fertility, over domestic politics, over international affairs, over national life in Israel.

But his lordship is always personal. He is the husband (or sometimes parent) to this wayward spouse (or child).

hesed – steadfast love.

emet – reliable truth and faithfulness.

raham – compassionate, motherly mercy.

Da`at – intimate, loyal knowledge of and faithfulness

... there's only one God.

Tunnel Vision or Wandering Eyes?

“The depth of what God feels, as Hosea understands those feelings, can never be separated from the height of who he is. The sharpness of the pain that registers in the divine complaint... is directly related to the majesty of the Person who is suffering. And that language of suffering takes on its pathos from the familial relationship which controls Hosea's prophecy. No shepherd could feel that pain over his sheep, no judge over his defendant, no king over his subjects. Spouses and parents know special kinds of pain. Not until Jesus weeps over Jerusalem, endures the betrayal of a disciple, and complains against the withdrawal of the Father, do we see a clearer picture of wounded majesty.” (Hubbard, Tyndale OT Commentary, pp48-49.)