

# Intro to HOSEA

**Author:** Hosea is the author of this unique prophecy, which is the first in the series of the last 12 books of the Old Testament, known as the Minor Prophets. Little is known about Hosea, however, we know from scripture that he was the son of Beerai and was a prophet in the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the 8th century B.C. The name, "Hosea," comes from the same Hebrew derivative that means "Salvation" (Hoshea, Joshua, Yeshua, Jesus).

**Background of Hosea:** Hosea lived in the final days of the Northern Kingdom. He tells us in verse one of his book that this word of the Lord came to him while Jeroboam and then Jehoash were kings of Israel. To put it in historical perspective, as far as the division of the southern tribe of Judah was concerned, he lists the kings who reigned then: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. In those final days of the Northern Kingdom, six kings reigned after Jeroboam II, spanning a period of 25 years. Four of them—Zechariah, Shallum, Pekahiah, and Pekah—were murdered by their successors while in office. One, Hoshea, was captured in battle, and only one, Menahem, was succeeded on the throne by his son. Assyria was expanding westward, and in 722 B.C., they captured the city of Samaria and exiled its people, bringing the Northern Kingdom to its end.

## Synopsis of the Book (chapter by chapter)

**Chapter 1 (It's all in the Names...):** Chapter 1 sets the stage for the actual story that will take place between Hosea and his bride, and the unfolding metaphor the marriage represents, which is, the unfaithfulness between Israel and their Father-God. Important to the story are the significance of the names. God instructs Hosea, whose name means "salvation," to marry a prostitute named Gomer, whose name means "dark harlotry." Hosea and Gomer marry and they have a son. His name was Jezreel, which means "scattered." God, through this act, was prophesying that the nation of Israel would soon be scattered by the conquering Assyrian army. Gomer conceived again and had a daughter named Lo-Ruhamah, which means "no mercy." As a word of prophecy that came to pass, the nation of Israel was spared no mercy when it was taken over by the Assyrian army. Gomer conceived again and had a son named "Lo-Ammi," which means "not my people." The children of Israel, because of their rejection of God, made it their choice not to be His people. God chose these people to make a distinct point, which he lays out in Hosea 1:2. "Go take yourself a wife of harlotry, and children of harlotry, for the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the Lord."

**Chapter 2:** Chapter 2 communicates the unfaithfulness in more detail and color. The unfaithfulness of Gomer is unveiled and the separation from her husband is likened to the separation between God the Father and his children, Israel, because of their harlotry and unfaithfulness.

**Chapter 3:** In this 5 verse chapter, the Lord instructs Hosea to take Gomer back as his wife, even though she has been unfaithful to him. The Lord likens this to what Israel will eventually do after living in exile "without king or prince." Afterwards, God says, they will return and seek the Lord their God.

**Chapter 4:** Through the pen of Hosea, God takes opportunity to list the charges that he has against his people. "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgement of God in the land," he says in verse 1. The root of their sin was idolatry, and even though they had a semblance of worship (verses 7, 13), they had left God completely out of the equation.

**Chapter 5:** God's judgment will be carried out against Israel. The ten tribes will be wicked and sin. Judah will imitate Ephraim and will suffer for it. Ephraim will seek to buy its way into heaven. God foretells the ruin that will come to Ephraim and Judah, and that, in their misery, they will earnestly seek Him.

**Chapter 6,7:** The plight of Israel and Judah's lack of repentance continues. Verse 6 of chapter 6 describes what God requires of them. "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," which rings of what Samuel, himself wrote when he said, "To obey is better than sacrifice." Chapter 7 continues the list of willful and blatant disobedience engaged in by both houses of Israel.

**Chapter 8:** Judgment is pronounced over Israel by the display of the eagle over the house of the Lord. The charge is that Israel has broken covenant with Father God. They have forgotten God and have rejected what is good. Their worship of foreign gods is symbolized once again with another golden calf in verse 6. "Israel has forgotten his Maker," Hosea writes in verse 14.

**Chapter 9 and 10:** Details of the punishment that awaits Israel is described in chapters 9 and 10. Verse 7 of chapter 9 says that "days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand." Verse 9 says, "they have sunk deep into corruption...God will remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins." Chapter 10 gives a prescription for Israel's repentance that will be expounded upon in chapter 14. Verse 12 of chapter 10 says, "Sow for yourselves righteousness. Reap the fruit of unfailing love. Break up the fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord."

**Chapter 11:** The book of Hosea changes tone here in the 11th chapter, with the theme of this chapter being the infinite love of the Father. These timeless truths include that the Father has loved us since the beginning of time, that the Father has saved us from the bondage of sin, and that the Father has been faithful to us.

**Chapter 12:** God continues to plead His case with Israel and makes the declaration in verse 9: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt. I will make you live in tents again, as in the days..." He continues that plea in **Chapter 13** and reminds him of His anger toward them for their disobedience and stubbornness.

**Chapter 13:** In this closing chapter of the book of Hosea, God, in His endearing and loving way, gives his people the full prescription for repentance and reciprocates with some timeless promises that reflect the truth of his character. The recipe in chapter 13 consists of three components:

- 1) To turn, or repent
- 2) to come to him
- 3) to confess to him

He even gave us clear instruction on what to say:

- 1) Forgive us of our unrighteousness
- 2) Forgive us of our self-righteousness
- 3) Receive us graciously

In return, He gave us some great and precious promises:

- 1) God will love us with a Father's love
- 2) God will heal our sick heart
- 3) God will love us freely
- 4) God will refresh us
- 5) God will grow us
- 6) God will bless us