

The Book of Hosea Survey

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The book of Hosea is certainly a book that demonstrates both the wrath of God on a people who simply did not want a relationship with their creator, as well as the reconciliation of God for the people he redeemed.

Hosea is the First book of the Minor Prophets, the minor prophets number 12. Hosea is both the oldest of all the prophets with books to their name, his is also the largest of the minor prophets extending to 14 chapters.

Of the structure of the Minor Prophets, nine are Pre-exilic (Judah in the land and not in exile), matching our nine historical books from Joshua to 2 Chronicles also written not only prior to the exile but when the nation was in the land. Three of the minor prophets are post Exilic, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, that is; after the people were taken into captivity, again matching our last three historical books of the Old Testament, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.

So yet again we see this beautiful structure within the layout of the Bible.

INTRODUCTION

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.

Here we have both the author of the book and the date.

There is a threefold assembly of Hosea located at 1:1-3:5, 4:1-11:11, 11:12-14:8.

Hosea, along with Amos, is the prophet to the northern ten tribes of Israel; similarities to Jeremiah to the south. Just as Jeremiah lived to see the long life of his prophetic words actually realised in the taking away of Judah by the Babylonians, so too do we find the long life of the Prophecies of Hosea to the Northern kingdom of Israel come to be realised in his life time in the taking away of Israel by the Assyrian empire.

In Summary;

Hosea is the 1st Minor Prophet

- 50 to 90 yrs a prophet
 - Uzziah (792bc) to Hezekiah (715-607 bc)
 - To the Fall of Northern Kingdom (722 BC)
 - Hosea notes his timeframe during the reigns of the kings of Judah exclusively, while Amos notes his prophecy as during the reign of both a king of Judah (Uzziah) and a king of Israel (Jeroboam son of Joash a contemporary of Uzziah)
 - 8 kings of Israel (3 in one year, Zecharia, Shallem and Menahem). Four Kings of Judah.
 - Contemporary, though older, also with Isaiah to the south.

If we were to compare the nature of the prophetic revelation of Hosea to his contemporary in Israel, Amos, we might look to Hosea as a type of John the apostle in the New Testament, while Amos could be likened to John the Baptist. Both in the style of writing and its nature.

Further, Hosea's entire life symbolised God's relationship to Israel as his adulterous wife.

He preached at a time when the people fell into the hands of God's actual judgments before they were fallen into the hands of men.

- A time of the Earthquake during the reign of Uzziah (See Zech 14:5, Amos 1:1).
- A time of Locusts and Famine in the land (See Joel 1:2-4, Amos 7:1, Hos 4:3)

Yet in Israel there were also times of prosperity during his prophetic ministry.

His early ministry had Jeroboam II, which reigned in over Samaria (Northern Kingdom of Israel) during the years of King Uzziah Judah, and God delivered them and restored to them their lands and they prospered [2 Kings 14:25-27](#)

The setting of the book surrounds the literalness of the call of Hosea to take to himself a wife of whoredoms and to nourish her as God does Israel.

The Theme of the Book could be summarised as God's love in spite of spiritual infidelity. ([3:1-5](#))

A SYMBOL OF COMMITMENT

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.

The Lord had commanded Hosea to endure his life in the likeness of God enduring his people. We have seen symbolic acts in the lives of other prophets of God who portrayed to the people of God in a very real manner that which God desires to communicate to them. Most times it is to do with that which shall come to pass upon them.

Consider Ezekiel 12:2-6

² Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house. ³ Therefore, thou son of man, **prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house.**

⁴ **Then shalt thou bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight, as stuff for removing: and thou shalt go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into captivity.** ⁵ Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby. ⁶ In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulders, and carry it forth in the twilight: thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground: for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel. (Ez 12:2-6)

Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem: ² And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about. (Ez 4:1-2)

⁴ **Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to**

the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. ⁵ For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, **three hundred and ninety days**: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.

⁶ And when thou hast accomplished them, **lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days**: *I have appointed thee each day for a year.* ⁷ (Ez 4:4-8)

In verse 11-13 God was demonstrating through Ezekiel the dietary state of the people during the siege.

¹¹ Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink. ¹² And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight. ¹³ And the Lord said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them. (Ez 4:11-13)

But that is not all, we have seen Isaiah walking about barefoot and butt naked to resemble people being taken into captivity. (Isa 20:2-4)

Jeremiah was commanded to take stones and place them in a brick kiln at the entry of Pharaoh's house to show to the people who rebelled against the Lord that this is exactly where God will cause the king of Babylon to set his royal pavilion and even his throne. (Jer 43:8-10)

Pictures of both the wrath of God together with his desire for reconciliation is symbolized in the lives of those men who were charged to bring the word of God to his people. Hosea SET the course for all the prophets who followed him. And in setting that course, Hosea LIVED HIS ENTIRE LIFE AS A SYMBOL OF GODS love, patience, wrath, endurance and reconciliation for his people.

It is no accident therefore that Hosea was the longest living prophet in the Old testament with the most common belief that he prophesied for over 70 years. Beginning in Uzziah who reigned over 50 years and ending in Hezekiah who reigned twenty-nine years, with the reigns of Kings Jotham and Ahaz reigning 27 years between them.

God yet again demonstrating his own endurance for his children through the long prophetic life of Hosea.

This is not new to us, before the judgment of God came upon the entire world through a global flood God demonstrated his endurance and patience having Methuselah named prophetically, his name means 'who's death shall bring'.

Methuselah is the oldest living man in the Bible, the very year of his death was the year the flood came upon all the Earth. God demonstrating his long suffering for evil and sin with a desire for repentance through the long life of Methuselah.

3 Then said the Lord unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. (Hos 3:1)

This is the symbol of commitment the Lord had for his people. **God is WED to Israel even though she played the adulterous wife against him, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.** Even though she deserved his wrath, his desire was only always reconciliation. He demonstrates the endurance and characteristics of a marriage covenant.

Brethren this picture of Marriage is the true picture of marriage ordained by God. God enacted his right to divorce Israel for her adultery, yet he endured her treachery against him until he had finally written that bill of divorcement against her.

Turn to Jeremiah 3:6-8.

There is a teaching circulating in these days that seeks to say that which the Bible does not say concerning marriage today. In short it holds that there is NEVER ANY CAUSE for the marriage union to separate. But scripture clearly gives one cause, and it is that concerning adultery.

Jesus made clear that it was only for the sake of fornication and not for any cause as it is today, this was during Jesus ministry (Matt 19:9). But we don't have examples in Scripture of any such unilateral command Post Fall. Yet certainly there can no scriptures be found for the true error of 'no fault divorce' that we find today. This law that seem to have come upon all the world in the 1970's has effected misery in every western nation that has adopted it, both for the spouses and the children. There is ALWAYS a cost when we turn away from the plainness of the scriptures, to one degree or another.

⁶The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. ⁷And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. ⁸And I saw, when for all the causes whereby **backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce;** yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. (Jer 3:6-8)

Clear are three items presented;

1. God endures faithlessness for a long time.
2. God's patience does have an end.
3. God restores that which he separates. (We will identify this as we move on)

A CHARGE OF INIQUITY

³So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son. ⁴And 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. ⁵And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

God has Hosea name his children prophetically. Now we don't need to go through all the Bible to demonstrate how often this occurs, but it can be safe to say and recognize that every name in the Bible has a meaning including that of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our **Anointed Saviour**.

Here God has commanded he name his first child Jezreel and made clear that God intends to stop the kingdom of the House of Israel.

We recall that in the life of the son of Solomon, Rehoboam, there came a separation of the people into two kingdoms. 10 Tribes followed Jeroboam into the Northern part of the country, while two tribes, Judah and Benjamin remained in the south, in the area of Jerusalem, with the house of David. Therefore from the 13th Chapter of 1 Kings we have separated identities, the Northern Kingdom known as Israel (Become Samaria) and the Southern Kingdom known as Judah.

Be sure to take care however when coming to the Prophetic Books as the Name Israel can still come to refer to the United Kingdom.

Chapter 4 of Hosea summarizes the charges of Israel's iniquities well

- 4**Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel:
For the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land,
Because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.
- 2** By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out,
And blood toucheth blood.
- 3** Therefore shall the land mourn,
And every one that dwelleth therein shall languish,
With the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven;
Yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

We recall that of all the nineteen kings of Israel **not one was found to be righteous**, all were wicked kings and all caused the people to sin. All the kings that followed the first king were compared historically with the sin of the first King of Israel. We read time and again this phrase.

“For he walked in the way of Jeroboam the Son of Nebat”

This is that first king whom God had given ten of the twelve tribes. If he had followed the commandments of the Lord, God would have established his kingdom forever. But Jeroboam became a cause of trespass to the children of Israel.

Friends when **there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land**, it will not be unusual to see the people enter further and further into depravity and we see commonplace **swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery**, these things will **break out** and our land shall mourn.

HOS 4:8-10

- 8** They eat up the sin of my people,
And they set their heart on their iniquity.
- 9** And there shall be, like people, like priest:
And I will punish them for their ways,
And reward them their doings.
- 10** For they shall eat, and not have enough:
They shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase:
Because they have left off to take heed to the Lord.

We begin to see sin permeate ALL the people of the land who's heart is set on their iniquity. Like the people like the priest. Is it unusual therefore to see these things even today?

I have witnessed more and more pastors today resemble the world. Not Holy, not righteous, not resembling the nature of Christ but more and more a picture of that which surrounds them. And brethren that is not difficult to happen to any of us. But it is tragic to remain that way without repentance.

So difficult it is to live a life separated to the Lord in these days. Not only is there little witness of righteous people in our day to day lives that might inspire us to live “Godly in Christ Jesus”, but we influence ourselves to be like the world the more we permit the world into our everyday lives.

YOU WILL BECOME MORE AND MORE LIKE THE WORLD THE MORE YOU PERMIT
THE WORLD TO WITNESS TO YOU!!!!

If you think that you can watch ANY program on ANY media platform and not be influenced by it then you are already at risk of backsliding.

If you think you can read ANY book or listen to ANY program on ANY media platform today and not be influenced by it, then KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM is already beginning to leave you. O how I pray that I could even heed to this truth in my own personal life.

Each of us have influence on all people we are in contact with, and they have influence on us. So too with all that we watch, read and listen to. These things may not be perfectly bad and evil, certainly true that we choose our programs, media and reading materials, but a wedge has a very thin edge and without discernment we can easily have the cracks in our lives opened up more and more.

SO, get in control of what you watch, read and listen to. Begin every day with the Bible and Prayer, these two things will be your daily barometer for that which is good and bad. There is no special sequence or course to undertake, it has always been as simple as daily prayer and the reading of the word that transforms us into the likeness of Christ, that we may know that which is good and that which is bad.

Israel were first inspired by their rulers toward evil. SO it was not long before it became **like people, like priest:**

HOS 4:16-19

- ¹⁶ For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer:
Now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place.
¹⁷ Ephraim is joined to idols:
Let him alone.
¹⁸ Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually:
Her rulers with shame do love, Give ye.
¹⁹ The wind hath bound her up in her wings,
And they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

We can see that Hosea brings the charge against them back toward the judgement that will come upon them, and Hosea himself, just like Jeremiah to the southern kingdom, will witness their end.

A JUSTIFIED JUDGEMENT

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.** 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.

We have an end predicted against Israel for their sin.

Turn to Hos 9:15-17

All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them:

For the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house,
I will love them no more:
All their princes are revolvers.
¹⁶ Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit:
Yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.
¹⁷ My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him:
And they shall be wanderers among the nations.

It's difficult to hear the anger of God so clearly manifested.

We love to see and hear of the Love and the care and the nurturing characteristics of The Lord. Like a parent that we look up to. When mum or dad display their love to us we so much enjoy it. It's wonderful to feel loved and to feel cared for. **But when we behave badly against them**, when we despise their love and their care, when we actively pursue a course of life that is almost deliberately in contradiction to all they have desired for us and against the commandment they have given, to see their anger and their wrath, particularly the anger and wrath of a father, can be quite upsetting.

We don't want to ever hear that for the wickedness of my doings **my father hates me**. You don't want to be **driven out of his house** because you are a rebellious child, deliberately wicked. And what child would be pleased to know their father or mother could **love them no more?** These words of Hosea are the very words of God against Israel his beloved.

He has had enough and he will cast them away because they did not hearken to him. And they certainly did become, and even still are to this very day, "**Wanderers among the nations**".

But just like rebellious children, they feel they are unjustly punished. Children today who openly rebel against their parents, suffer the consequences of their actions but rarely stop to consider truly what they have done to deserve it. Psychiatrists are flourishing and their continued prosperity hangs on them giving their patients an answer that they are happy to hear.

Sadly, the answer that MOST children want to hear is 'ITS NOT YOUR FAULT'. Because dealing with something that is your fault requires HUMILITY and SORROW.

BUT CONSIDER, if ITS NOT YOUR FAULT, who's fault is it? The parents fault. To this day people the world over blame God for the trouble they are in. Some of the trouble they had brought upon themselves even years earlier, some are illnesses, some natural disasters. Consideration of the fall of man and their own sin is rarely thought of, but God is clearly evil for dealing with them so unjustly in their minds. As such, they use this very argument to disbelieve knowing instinctively if God exists, he cannot be so unjust. Rather than think the fault may be the sin of man, they impugn the righteousness of God.

But so sadly it is God who has been dealt the hardest blow. How incredibly sad it is to see God do that which he never ever wanted to do, **chastise those he loves so much**. *And yet be blamed for the very cause of chastisement!!!!*.

SOME WILL SAY, "WELCOME TO PARANTHOOD".

The last thing parents want to do is chastise their children, the FIRST THING parents want to do is BLESS THEIR CHILDREN.

The family, through the marriage union, is the perfect picture of God and his children.

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.

Well what do we say to this verse? Is that favoritism between the siblings for no apparent reason?

Again, welcome to parenthood.

Reasons about respecting why Judah has mercy shown them, even though scripture tells that Israel can be justified more than her treacherous sister Judah at times. It is the Lord who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy and on whom he will, he hardens. It's not arbitrary and it is not without purpose, there is a MERCIFUL BENEVOLENCE that we in this time may be ignorant to, but will one day be revealed.

A MERCIFUL BENEVOLENCE

⁸ Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. ⁹ Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. 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.

All throughout the Bible God demonstrates his willingness to forgive and restore. **Never do we see the Lord hold back mercy from those who seek it**, never do we see the Lord unwilling to forgive those who repent.

No, in fact **repentance is everything the Lord desires** for his people, for the world, for you. There is nothing **more important to God than to have a loving relationship** with mankind. It was for mankind that the universe was created and it was for union with God that man was given life.

But rebellion against God by man **removes the very reason and purpose for which man was created** and **nothing fills God with greater wrath and anger than an unwillingness in man to FULLFILL THAT FOR WHICH HE WAS CREATED.**

What is incredible to realise is that only in fulfilling that for which we were created, brings us FULLFILLMENT! Incredibly, what we really want and desire, is what God wants for us. But he knows better than us the way to obtain it. Fulfillment in our lives is attained ONLY in a right relationship with our creator who created us FOR a relationship with him! One day we all will meet him.

One of the most famous passages in the Bible is found in Amos chapter 4 saying “**Prepare to meet thy God O Israel**”. ALL PEOPLE WILL MEET GOD, ALL PEOPLE, ALL. Are you prepared to meet God?

Israel were **loved no more** of God, **hated** by God, he **cast them away** so that they would be **wanderers throughout the nations**.

This is the picture of the world today, lost as wanderers without the Lord. YET here we have a picture of the MERCIFUL BENEVOLENCE OF GOD, a willingness for Israel to turn and to repent and be recognized still as The Sons of God.

Turn to Hosea 14

O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God;
For thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.
² Take with you words, and turn to the Lord:
Say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously:
So will we render the calves of our lips.
³ Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses:
Neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods:
For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

It is MERCY that those who see their sin should seek after, *not justification* in their sin. MERCY is the just desire, for their sins have separated them from God and he is perfectly JUST in dealing with them according to their wickedness. His willingness to refrain from dealing with man according to his sin is called MERCY, this is what we all should desire from the Lord.

Romans 2:5-6

⁵ But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; ⁶ Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

Wrath is what the sinner treasures up each and every day, it's like depositing sin into bank only to receive the return of that which has been deposited WITH INTEREST!!! It's what you and I stored away every day before we believed what Jesus did for us. It's what Israel had done until they come to see that it is in God they find mercy and reconciliation.

Continue reading this portion in Chapter 14

Verse 4

⁴ I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely:
For mine anger is turned away from him.
⁵ I will be as the dew unto Israel:
He shall grow as the lily,
And cast forth his roots as Lebanon.
⁶ His branches shall spread,
And his beauty shall be as the olive tree,
And his smell as Lebanon.
⁷ They that dwell under his shadow shall return;
They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine:
The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

Brethren the book of Hosea demonstrates to Israel of Gods enduring Love in spite of their infidelity. Edward Hindson, one of the authors of the KJV Bible commentary writes "[Hosea warns Israel that Gods love for them includes his wrath](#)".

If you belong to the Lord and are yet in rebellion loving more this present life, then know and remember that God will show you love, but it may be demonstrated in anger.

Heb 12:5-6

“My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: ⁶For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

A WEDDED PROVIDENCE

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.

Here we have a prophetic understanding of how it all concludes for Israel in WEDDED PROVIDENCE, In union under one head.

Hosea reaches deep into the future history of the people and shows with clarity that they will be gathered together with Judah.

This is the great regathering that we read about in Ezekiel’s account of the valley of dry bones (Ez 37), this is the account that we read about in Isaiah 66:8 as an entire Nation is formed in one day.

And this is what Jesus spoke of when he promised that his return will not precede their call and their repentance, saying in Luke 13:35

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Turn to Hosea 3:5

⁵ Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness **in the latter days**.

Not only is Hosea a wonderful presentation of the rebellion of a nation and longsuffering of God and the patience, love and wrath and desired reconciliation of a faithful spouse toward an adulterous wife, but it is also an incredible picture of the Gospel of God for all people who would turn to him in faith and repent of their rebellion against him.

For as long as our life endures we have opportunity to repent and turn to the Lord for his mercy, for as long as the flamed candle of life glows within there is hope. But God’s patience has an end, he has given us our entire lives, but none of us know when that life will come to a close, be reconciled now, to what benefit will you wait? What can you possibly gain by remaining in rebellion against the one who created you for the specific benefit of relationship with him who is the God of love, joy, peace and life.

In Christ is life, without him there is no life.