

Snapshot of Hosea

The Prophet:

The name Hosea means “salvation” or “deliverance.”

Hosea was from the Northern Kingdom and prophesied to his own people. He thus has the distinction of being the only writing prophet of the Northern Kingdom.

The Date:

Hosea prophesied during the eight century B.C. His ministry began during the reign of Uzziah (790-739 B.C.) and extended into that of Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.). His work was contemporary with that of Amos, Isaiah, and Micah.

The Message:

Hosea was sent among the wicked people of Israel to cry for their return to God. Using the unfaithfulness of the prophet’s wife, Gomer as an illustration of the enormity of Israel’s sin, the unfaithfulness of that nation to its God was stressed. Spiritual adultery was declared to be the source of Israel’s woes.

Some of the key concepts in Hosea are the knowledge of God (4:1-2,6; 6:3,6; 13:4; cf. Genesis 4:1), the mercy of God (2:19; 4:1; 6:6; 10:12; 12:6), and the spiritual adultery of the people (4:15-18; 5:4; 9:1).

Israel’s Sins According to Hosea:

1. Lack of knowledge (4:6,11)
2. Pride (5:5)
3. Instability (6:4,6)
4. Worldliness (7:8)
5. Corruption (9:9-10)
6. Backsliding (11:6-8)
7. Idolatry (13:2)

The Book:

Chapters 1-3 relate the personal experience of Hosea with Gomer. These experiences paralleled God’s experiences with Israel.

Chapters 4-14 constitute a direct application of the Word of God to Israel. God brings a powerful indictment against the people in chapters 4-7.

Chapters 8-10 spell out the degree of punishment.

Chapters 11-14 reassure Israel of the love of God and His willingness to forgive, heal, and bless her upon the condition of her true repentance.

Outline of Hosea

I. Hosea's Marriage (1:1-3:5)

A. His first marriage to adulterous Gomer (1:1-2:9)

1. Hosea's wife, a symbol of faithless Israel (1:2-3)
2. The names of his children symbolic of God's judgments (1:4-9)

B. God's compassion on wicked Israel (1:10-2:1)

C. Punishment and reacceptance of unfaithful Israel (2:2-23)

1. Punishment of Israel (2:2-13)
2. God's acceptance of Israel (2:14-23)
3. God's reacceptance of Israel symbolized by Hosea's reacceptance of his unfaithful but penitent wife (3:1-5)

II. The Lord's Charges Against His Covenant People (4:1-13:16)

A. The Lord's Summons (4:1)

B. The Lord's first charge: Lack of knowledge (4:2-6:3)

C. The Lord's second charge: Lack of love (6:4-11:11)

D. The Lord's third charge: Lack of loyalty (11:12-13:16)

III. Promise of Life and Salvation to Repentant Israel (14:1-9)

Lessons for Today

1. The penalty of condoning vice (4:13-19)
2. "Like people, like priest" (4:9)
3. The folly of neglecting God's law (4:6; 8:1,12)
4. God's fatherly desire to show mercy (2:19; 4:1; 6:4,6; 10:12; 12:6)