

Hosea

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Introduction

1. The name Hosea means “salvation” or “deliverance.”
2. Hosea proclaims salvation to the people of God. They had forsaken God and needed to return (4:1, 12).
3. Hosea ministered for the Lord over 30 years, possibly 40 addressing primarily the northern kingdom of Israel (5:1, 3, 5; 11, 13).

Chronological Order of the Prophets

Prophets	Time	Spoke To
Jonah→ Amos→ Hosea	Pre-exilic	Israel
Obadiah→ Isaiah→ Micah→ Nahum→ Habakkuk→ Zephaniah→ Jeremiah	Pre-exilic	Judah
Ezekiel→ Daniel	Exilic	Judah/ nation
Haggai→ Zechariah→ Joel→ Malachi	Post-exilic	Judah

1. Hosea not only spoke during Jeroboam’s reign but also during the reigns of the last six kings of Israel, from Zechariah (735-752 B.C.) to Hoshea (732-722 B.C.).
2. Isaiah was his contemporary who primarily spoke to Judah during this time.
3. Hosea is the story of an Old Testament prophet who ended up sharing his name and house with a prostitute.

Outline

1. Hosea’s marriage to Gomer as a symbol of God’s marriage to Israel (1-3).
 - a. Gomer’s *sin* of unfaithfulness.
 - b. Gomer’s *punishment* of being deserted and sold into slavery.
 - c. Gomer’s *restoration*, bought by her husband (3:2).
2. Israel’s *sin* (4-8).
3. Israel’s coming *punishment* (9-11).
4. Israel’s repentance and *restoration* (12-14).

Major Purpose of the Book of Hosea

To denounce Israel's sin against a holy God; to announce that judgment was to come as a result of their past sin; and to call them to repentance and to announce that God's purposes for his people would nevertheless be accomplished. Through the love and grace of God, there is a future for the people of God in spite of our sin.

Major Themes/Messages

1. ***The message against sin:*** The majority of the book is taken up with the message that Israel continues to break its covenant with God by its sin. The sin and grounds for divorce are immediately introduced in the book (1:2) as being that of desertion and sexual unfaithfulness.
2. ***The warning of judgment:*** If we continually break the stipulations of God's covenant agreement, God's judgment is certain. We would be like a people who "sow the wind and reap the whirlwind" (8:7) and from whom "judgment sprouts like poisonous weeds in the field" (10:4). Our God is an angry God severe in righteous judgment (9:16,17; 10:14,15; 13:16).
3. ***The call of repentance:*** There is mercy and hope for those who turn from their sin back to the Lord. God's call is seen in 6:1-3 and 12:5-6.
4. ***The message of God's love and mercy:*** Our God loves us even after we have flagrantly forsaken him (1:2). Our God is a god of tender mercy (11:1-4). His love is a love that truly "bears all things" (1 Cor. 13:7). Hosea buys Gomer back, and Christ would redeem the true Israel by his tender love and mercy (3:1-5; 4:1-6; 6:1-3,6).
5. ***The message of future glory:*** God wants us to know that our future blessing and restoration is the result of his faithful love and mercy through the covenant he has made with us in Christ. Chapter 2:14-23 and chapter 9 reveal this theme of the husband restoring the unfaithful wife.

Applications

1. If covenant unfaithfulness is harlotry, in what ways is the present-day church guilty of the spirit of harlotry?
2. How great is God's love! So undeserved! We should be humbled to worship.
3. Why have we throughout the centuries been infatuated with a system of salvation by good works?
4. God's anger is fueled by covenant unfaithfulness (8:1). How does 14:9 supply insight into how God would define covenant fidelity?
5. In what ways might a good understanding of 6:6 be used to strengthen our relationship with our God and with our other covenant partners (i.e., spouse)?
6. Recognize that God's mercy is not infinite. When the limits are exceeded, perhaps it is even to the destruction of children (13:16; 9:16).
7. God loved his church even while we were dead in our sins!