

Hosea – The Prophet Who Redeemed His Bride

I. The Man and His Times

- Hosea had much to say to the Northern Kingdom and is often considered a Northern Kingdom prophet, but to designate him as such is far too restrictive.
 - References to Judah: Hosea 1:7; 5:5, 12-14; 6:4, 11-12; 12:2
 - References to Israel as the whole people: Hosea 11:1; 3:4-5
 - Strongest: 1:11
- Prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II in Israel and multiple Judean kings.
- Ministered for several decades, as seen by references to multiple kings of Judah, from Uzziah to Hezekiah. He stood as a long-term witness in a nation already in covenant violation.
- One of the first of the writing prophets. Same time-period as Amos.
- Served during a period of political prosperity and spiritual decay.

II. The Man Who Became a Sign

- Commanded to marry a “wife of whoredoms.” (Hosea 1:2)
 - Whether literal immorality (likely - see 3:1) or symbolic idolatry, the marriage represents covenant unfaithfulness.
 - Hosea represents the LORD.
 - Gomer represents Israel.
- His home became a prophetic platform.
 - The message was not merely spoken — it was lived.
- The children as living declarations:
 - Jezreel (1:4-5)
 - * Judgment on the house of Jehu.
 - * End of the northern kingdom.
 - Lo-ruhamah (“No mercy”) (1:6-7)
 - * Withdrawal of covenant compassion.
 - Lo-ammi (“Not my people”) (1:8-9)
 - * Suspension of covenant relationship.
 - * There was a good-news message - the “not my people” would become “the sons of the living God” (v. 10)
- Hosea lived daily with visible reminders of judgment.

III. The Man Who Preached Judgment Without Compromise

- Transition from symbolism (chs. 1-3) to direct accusation (chs. 4-10).
- Declared a divine lawsuit against Israel (4:1):
 - No truth (4:1).
 - No mercy (4:1).
 - No knowledge of God (4:1, 6).
- Condemned:
 - Corrupt priesthood (4:6-9).
 - Idolatrous kings (8:4; 13:1-2).
 - Politically engineered false worship (8:5-6; 10:5).

- Exposed foreign alliances as theological betrayal (5:13; 7:11; 8:9; 12:1).
- Established the principle: Covenant ignorance leads to destruction (4:6).
- Prophesied both:
 - Immediate Assyrian judgment (9:3; 10:6; 11:5; 13:16).
 - Patterns that anticipate the Day of the LORD (5:14-15; 6:1-3; 13:14).

IV. The Man Who Refused to Let Judgment Be Final

- After “Not my people” comes promise of restoration (1:9-10).
- Proclaimed:
 - Israel will be regathered (1:11; 3:5).
 - They will be under one head (Messiah) (1:11; 3:5).
 - The covenant relationship will be restored (2:19-20; 14:4).
- Judgment is disciplinary, not annihilative (11:8-9; 13:14).
- The covenant is suspended — not revoked (3:4-5; 14:1-7).

V. The Man Who Bought Back His Bride

- Commanded to love her again (3:1).
- Redeemed her at a cost (3:2).
- Required a period of waiting and separation (3:3).
- Parallel with Israel:
 - Many days without king (3:4).
 - Without sacrifice (3:4).
 - Without national sovereignty (3:4).
- The delay does not cancel covenant (3:5; 2:19-20).
- The latter days include:
 - Return (3:5).
 - Seeking “David their king” (3:5).
 - National restoration (2:14-23; 14:4-7).

VI. The Man Who Understood the Heart of God

- Hosea 11 reveals divine anguish (11:1-8).
 - God loved Israel as a son called out of Egypt (11:1).
 - Israel rejected repeated expressions of covenant love (11:2-7).
- God’s justice and compassion operate together (11:8).
- Declared:
 - He will not execute the fierceness of His anger to destroy utterly (11:9).
- Judgment is measured (11:9-10).
- Covenant fidelity governs divine action (11:10-11; 14:4).

VII. Summary: What Kind of Man Was Hosea?

- A long-suffering prophet in a collapsing nation.
- A husband whose marriage embodied theology.
- A father whose children were prophetic signs.
- A preacher who declared judgment without dilution.
- A theologian of covenant continuity.
- A prophet who was certain of Israel’s future restoration.