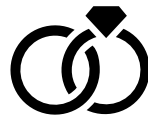


Week 1

Call His Name, "Not My People"

Hosea 1:1-3:5



The Bible is the ultimate love story. Not only does it begin and end with a wedding, every marriage since Adam and Eve's points to the ultimate wedding at the end of history between the last Adam, Jesus Christ, and his bride, the church. Indeed, "*Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb*" (Rev 19:9)! It's no coincidence then that Hosea¹ is situated as the first book of the Minor Prophets.² Hosea was married to a whore! Both Hosea's marriage and his message were divinely arranged by God to awaken Israel to an undeniable fact—she had been an unfaithful spouse to Yahweh, her faithful, loving husband. The question Hosea, chapters 1-3, answers for us is this: How can such a marriage hope to survive?

Hope for Whores (1:1-11)

1. Condemnation and compassion. These are the twin messages of Hosea in that order. Chapters 1-3 present Hosea's marriage to Gomer, the prostitute. Their marriage is symbolic of God's relationship to adulterous Israel. Chapters 4-14 are excerpts of Hosea's preaching leading up to 722BC when the northern kingdom of Israel is destroyed by the Assyrians. In verses 2-8 of chapter 1, why does God command Hosea to marry "a wife of whoredom"? What is the significance of their children's names? (See: 1 Kings 21; Exod 34:6-7; Lev 26:12)
2. In verses 9-11, how does the story take a surprising turn? What is the significance of Yahweh's promise that "the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea"? (See: Gen 22:17)

¹Visit www.bibleproject.com/explore/hosea for an illustrated summary of Hosea.

²The Twelve are often called the Minor Prophets for their length, not their message. These covenant representatives functioned in the Old Testament much like the twelve apostles in the new—as emissaries and ambassadors of God's truth and as a foundation for God's house. Together, these books provide a theological commentary on Israel's checkered history (Genesis-Kings) and point ahead to a brighter day. In the Hebrew Bible Jesus studied, *The Twelve* were collected into one scroll to ensure they sang together. To appreciate their message, we need the full choir!

Unfaithful Israel, Faithful God (2:1-23)

A wedding ring is a symbol of the singular commitment a husband and wife have made to each other. In Ezekiel 16, the Lord describes his relationship to his people, Israel, in marital terms. He made a covenant with her, clothed and blessed her, and her fame spread far and wide. But then, the Lord says, “You trusted in your beauty and played the whore ...” (Ezek 16:15). Does your life relate in any way to this Israel? God’s Word transforms. What is the Lord asking you to change?

3. Read 2:1-13. Sin is not just the violation of a law. It is the desecration of a relationship—the *ultimate relationship*. The whoredom of Hosea’s wife Gomer points to Israel’s adulterous turning away from the Lord to worship idols. How does Yahweh describe the whoredom of Israel in these verses?
4. Israel’s failure to know the Lord is a key idea in Hosea. According to verse 6, what had Israel forgotten? Give an example of a time in your life when you took the Lord for granted. If the Lord is convicting you that the time is now, then do what the tax collector did in Luke 18:9-14.
5. Read 2:14-23. Three times in chapter 2 (vv. 6, 9, 14) the word “Therefore” indicates Hosea/Yahweh’s response to Gomer/Israel’s whoredom. Like Israel, Gomer has forsaken her husband and gone after other lovers.³ List as many examples as you can find in these verses of how the Lord intends to reverse and restore his wayward bride to himself.

Hosea Redeems His Wife (3:1-5)

6. In chapter 3, what does the Lord tell Hosea to do? How does the gospel principle of Romans 2:4 shine New Testament light on an Old Testament story?
7. How does verse 5 point us forward to good news of Jesus?

³Israel’s sin of adding other gods to its religion, such as the Canaanite fertility God, Baal, was not only idolatry but adultery. The word “baal” simply means “lord” or “owner,” but in the ancient world, if there was one god above all the ancient gods of this time period, it was Baal who was the half-bull, half-man god of fertility. Baal is the pagan god most often referred to in the Bible.