

Week 2

He Will Not Give Her Up

Hosea 4-14



Hosea is called by God to prophesy during Israel's last hours, just as Jeremiah would be called years later to prophesy to the crumbling kingdom of Judah. Hosea's personal tragedy becomes an intense illustration of Israel's national tragedy. It is a story of on-sided love and faithfulness—between a prophet and his faithless wife (Hosea and Gomer) and Jehovah and his faithless people. Just as Gomer is married to Hosea, Israel is betrothed to God. In both cases the bride plays the harlot and runs after other lovers. But unconditional love keeps seeking even when it is spurned. In Hosea's case, that means buying back his wife from the slave market; for Israel it means purifying punishment followed by restoration to the land of Promise.

Israel Doesn't Know God (4:1-6:6)

1. Chapter 4 is the key chapter of Hosea. In verses 1-19, God charges Israel with neither knowing him nor acknowledging him. Verses 1-3 are courtroom language. According to Hosea 4:6, what is the number one problem that has led to the disintegration of Israel's relationship with God? According to verse 8, how have Israel's priests failed them? According to verses 10-14, how would you characterize Israel's worship?
2. According to Hosea 2:16, the nation's worship of Baal (the pagan god of fertility) and Yahweh had become so confused that some thought these were just two different names for the same God. So, they would call Israel's God "my Baal". In 5:1-14, Israel's failure to acknowledge God will be punished by war.¹ Read Hosea 6:1-6. What is God offering? How does Israel respond? What does Israel's response teach you about repentance?

¹Hosea 5:8-11 refers either to the Syro-Ephraimite War or the Assyrian attack on Israel that would send the northern kingdom into exile in 722BC. One of Israel's many mistakes was in looking to foreign nations for protection rather than Yahweh. There is no evidence that Israel accepted Hosea's message and repented.

Israel Doesn't Keep Her Promises (6:7-11:11)

3. Israel has fallen into the dregs of sin and is hardened against God's gracious, last appeal to return. The people have flagrantly violated all of God's commandments, and they are indicted by the holy God for their crimes. Read Hosea 7:4-16. List the four similes Hosea compares unfaithful Israel with. What do they say about Israel's sinful ways?
4. Hosea 8:7 says, "For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." Chapters 4-7 described what Israel had sown in their sin. Now in chapters 8-10, because Israel has spurned repentance, the judgment of God can no longer be delayed. How do these chapters relate to Galatians 6:7-8?

God Keeps his Promises (11:12-14:9)

5. In chapters 4-7 we learn that God is holy. In chapters 8-10 we learn that God is just. In chapters 11-14 we learn that God is also gracious and loving. Read Hosea 11:1-9. List three reasons Israel deserves God's judgement. List three ways God shows her his love.
6. The conclusion of Hosea is a beautiful picture of reconciliation between God and his people. Read Hosea 14:1-9. What is the Lord calling Israel to do? What is he promising to do for them? What is the Lord calling you to do? What do you need to turn away from? How might his promises to those who repent invite you to return to him?