



Unconditional Love

# HOSEA'S MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

Hosea 1-4

Teaching Notes

## INTRO

Today, we're starting a new segment on the 12 books known as the Minor Prophets. The main difference between the major and minor prophets is the length of their prophecies. The Major Prophets include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, as well as the book of Lamentations, since it was written by Jeremiah. Today, we'll focus on the book of Hosea. Hosea's name means "salvation." His name foreshadows both Joshua and Jesus, whose names also imply "salvation." As we explore these minor prophets, we'll feel like we're back in captivity under the Assyrians and Babylonians.

Hosea was written in the language of the Northern Kingdom, ten of the tribes of Israel. The Southern Kingdom included the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the city of Jerusalem. We know the author is Hosea, but we don't know much about him or his father, Beeri (Hosea 1:1). John MacArthur said, "Hosea was probably a native of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, since he shows familiarity with the history, circumstances, and topography of the north. . . Although he addressed both Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and Judah, (the Southern Kingdom), he identified the king of Israel as 'our king' (7:5)."<sup>1</sup> Hosea's ministry was long—from 760 B.C. to 715 B.C. During this time, the kings of the Southern Kingdom included Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. At the same time, he ministered during the reigns of the last six kings of Israel from Zechariah to Hoshea.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea followed Amos' preaching in the Northern Kingdom. He ministered during the same time frame as Isaiah and Micah. To put this in perspective, Isaiah wrote about the Babylonian captivity, but never experienced it. While 586 B.C. is an important date because it's when the Southern Kingdom fell into Babylonian captivity, the date we will see more often in the minor prophets is 722 B.C., when the Northern Kingdom fell to the Assyrians. Another important thing to remember about the northern and southern kingdoms is they were not spiritually great. The only king who might have offered any hope was Hezekiah. Hosea spoke truth in a hard environment.

According to MacArthur, Hosea has been called the "St. John" of the Old Testament because John was known as the apostle of love.<sup>3</sup> Hosea uses the phrase "*Unconditional Love*" in his writings. Hosea 11:1 describes how much God loves His people. Hosea shows God's love for His covenant people in spite of their idolatry. Really, Hosea was a foreshadow of what Christ did for us. Throughout the book, there's a theme of "sin, judgment, and forgiving love."<sup>4</sup> This theme points us to Romans 5:8, "But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!" Regardless of our spiritual adultery, Christ died for us and loves us unconditionally regardless of what we have done.

## TEACHING

Hosea 1:1-2: God told Hosea to marry a promiscuous wife. Tom Constable described several possible interpretations for this verse: Maybe, "God gave Hosea a vision, or that He told him an allegory, in which his wife was or would become a harlot."<sup>5</sup> Maybe she was a spiritual harlot because she worshipped a false God. Maybe she was sexually promiscuous before Hosea married her. Or maybe she became unfaithful after they got married.<sup>6</sup> Regardless of the specifics of her unfaithfulness, God wanted Hosea to stay faithful to his spouse.

Hosea 1:3-5: As we read this, we have to picture Hosea in the place of God, and Gomer in the place of the Israelites. Hosea's first son was named Jezreel. Remember, names are super-important in Scripture. Jezreel means "God will scatter." Prophetically, this makes us think of the fact that when the Assyrians conquered Israel, they were scattered among the nations. This was a prophetic word about the Assyrian conquest "on that day" in 722 B.C.

Hosea 1:6-7: Gomer then bore a daughter who was named Lo-ruhamah, which means "no compassion." God warned that He would have no compassion on Israel. The girl's name also meant "unpitied," so He would have no pity for Israel. In contrast, God said He would have compassion on the house of Judah (v. 7). In 701 B.C., God showed this compassion to Judah when

<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), pp. 970.

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, p. 970.

<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, p. 971.

<sup>4</sup> MacArthur, p. 971.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Constable, *Dr. Constable's Bible Expository Notes on Hosea*, p. 20; available online at <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/hosea.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Constable, p. 21.



Unconditional Love

# HOSEA'S MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

Hosea 1-4

Teaching Notes

185,000 Assyrians were killed (2 Kings 19). Yes, God still loved His people, but He wanted them to know He was not pleased with them.

Hosea 1:8-10: When the daughter was weaned (no longer dependent on her mother's milk), Gomer conceived and bore another son. He was named, Lo-ammi, which means "Not My People." Although it sounds like God is breaking covenant with His people, He is actually just allowing them to suffer the consequences for their unfaithfulness to Him. Because of God's *Unconditional Love* for Israel, even as He said, "You are not My people," He also said, "they will be called: Sons of the living God" (v. 10). Even in their unfaithfulness, God raised up a remnant who would be faithful to Him. When is this going to happen? This sure sounds like the millennial blessing. Hosea was not talking about the First Coming, because clearly Israel did not embrace Christ. Hosea had to be talking about the Second Coming that comes after the seven years of tribulation. This is when Israel will begin to understand that they are the sons of the living God. Romans 8:14 says, "All those led by God's Spirit are God's sons." At some point, the Jewish people will embrace this. When they believe in Yeshua, they will receive the Spirit of God and will identify themselves as sons and daughters of God.

Hosea 1:11: This is how we know Hosea was talking about the millennial blessing. At some point, all of the 12 tribes of Israel and Judah will gather together and appoint for themselves a single ruler. They are referencing the coming Messiah—not the first time Jesus came—but the second coming of Christ.

Love this picture: God is going to scatter them, but now they are all coming together again. They will have a king—a single ruler—who will show *Unconditional Love* for all of them.

Hosea 2:1—4:19: J. Vernon McGee gives an overview of these chapters. Gomer proves faithless. Israel proves faithless. And yet God proves faithful.<sup>7</sup> In Hosea 3, when Gomer did bad things, God told Hosea to show love to his wife regardless. According to Levitical law, Gomer should have been stoned. But this *Unconditional Love* overcame all of these sins. In Hosea 4, Gomer turning away from Hosea is a picture of Israel turning away from God. Hosea, embracing his wife regardless, is a picture of God embracing Israel regardless. In Hosea 4, Israel continues to play the harlot. They are guilty of lawlessness and immorality. They are ignorant of God's Word and they don't care.<sup>8</sup> There is no truth, no faithful love, and no knowledge of God in the land (Hosea 4:1). Israel is clearly backslidden and obstinate as a stubborn cow (Hosea 4:16). Despite God loving Israel, Israel doesn't care.

## CLOSING

Despite Hosea loving Gomer she didn't care, just as God loves Israel, Israel at that time didn't seem to care. Hosea is a picture of unification, despite circumstances, through *Unconditional Love*. This is the backdrop for the book of Hosea. We will continue tomorrow, studying Hosea 5-7.

<sup>7</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary Series: Hosea and Joel* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1975, 1991), np.

<sup>8</sup> McGee, np.