

Welcome to the Prophet Hosea!

We have chosen 14:4 as a key verse reflecting the theme of God's love and Israel's apostasy. A harlot is defined as one who commits adultery. But the Hebrew word is broader in that it includes one who commits idolatry. As you study this book consider the opportunities you have in your life to engage in adultery through idolatry. God's love remains consistent. He remains faithful in His decision to love His own!

HOSEA

Love/Apostasy

Prophet's Marriage

1:2-9

1-3

Prophet's Message

The nation is:

REJECTED

4:7-10; 9:7-9

4-13

RESTORED

14:4,9

14

"I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely." 14:4

Also read the passages listed within the overview chart above. How does each passage relate to the corresponding section title? What do you learn about the relationship between the prophet's marriage and his message?

It is hard to understand how a holy God could command one of His prophets to commit a seemingly unholy act. How would you have responded if you were in Hosea's situation? Why did God command the marriage?

Open your heart as you read!

Do you appreciate God's loving faithfulness? Look for principles of His long-suffering love as you study Hosea. Do you see apostasy in your own life? Be honest as you study.

KEY FACTS ABOUT THE BOOK OF HOSEA

Hosea has been described as the prophet of the broken heart, for his family life becomes a tragic personal illustration of the relationship between Israel and God. Gomer is married to Hosea, Israel is betrothed to God. Both relationships begin in purity; both degenerated through impurity. Gomer runs after other men; Israel runs after other gods. Gomer commits physical adultery; Israel commits spiritual adultery. Hosea represents the love of God; Gomer the apostasy or abandonment of Israel from God.

AUTHOR AND AUDIENCE

The prophet Hosea was from Israel prophesying to his native land. The people had sunk to all-time lows of idolatry and moral decline. Apostasy is a turning away from the truth once it has been revealed to you. Israel had turned aside from her husband (the Lord) and sought out other lovers to satisfy her needs. Hosea probably witnessed the fulfillment of his prophecies within several years. The message was probably penned in 750 B.C., just 25 years before the Assyrian captivity.

WHY STUDY THE BOOK OF HOSEA?

In days when true religion is hard to discern and harlotry among God's people continues to new depths, it is crucial that we focus in upon God's hatred for flagrant sin in our lives. We need to "consider our ways" continually to identify and cut away idols wherever they appear.

We must also renew our vision of what it means to be married to our Lord. Just as in our own marriages we can grow distant and learn to lie to ourselves, we may also stray in our commitment to Christ as the years wear on. Soon the truth becomes difficult to discern and our hardness of heart can become concrete, sinking us into the waters of sin.

Hosea did not fear the consequences of all that he was instructed to do, at least not enough to keep him from complete obedience. We also have a responsibility to speak out against apostasy, first through dealing with the log in our own eye, and then tackling the speck in our brother's eye! Don't shrink back from honestly identifying and speaking out against apostasy in your own life or in the lives of others!



Hosea Chapter Chart

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Questions	Chapter	Title	Verse
Read 1 Kings 15-20 for the historical background on Hosea. What was God's purpose for the marriage? How can a holy God expect such a thing? What lesson did the name of each child teach?	1		
What was to be the response of each child to their mother? What was to be Hosea's continuing response to his wandering wife? Circle all of the "I Will's" in chapter 2.	2		
What was Hosea commanded to do with his wife?	3		
Circle the specific sins of the people. How would you describe the people's idolatry?	4		
Where did Israel (Ephraim) turn in the midst of her troubles? What would they need to do to be delivered from their affliction?	5		
What does the promise of 6:3 teach a believer today? Follow this verse's theme throughout these passages (Hosea 6:4-6; 1 Samuel 15:22,23; Jeremiah 7:22,23; Matthew 12:7; Mark 12:33) What do you learn?	6		
What was the fatal flaw in Israel's choice for help?	7		
Why was God so angry that Israel had turned to strangers? Which actions were especially angering to God?	8		
How can a God who loves and forgives be a God who also punishes? Why was it necessary for Israel to be punished?	9		
What is "fallow ground"? Israel was a vine that certainly showed foliage! How does God feel about her fruit?	10		
What does this chapter reveal about God's feelings toward His son Ephraim?	11		
A number of references are made here to previous events mentioned in Genesis.	12		

What about today?

The final two verses of the book give us the best possible appeal for application.

1. Verse 8 makes it clear that God is our Provider. To turn to others for the role of provider is a dangerous and hurtful thing, as is evident in the history of Israel.
2. The choice is clear. Walk or stumble. Do you believe that the ways of the Lord are right? Walk or Stumble!

APOSTATE STATE

The word "apostasy" literally means to fly away or depart from. The New Testament Greek counterpart to this word contains the little preposition apo, which means away from, and histemi, meaning to stand. From this breakdown of the word, it can be concluded that an apostate at one time professes something (takes a stand) and another time denies that which was once professed (moves away from). Webster says that apostasy is the "abandonment of what one has voluntarily professed; total desertion of the principles of faith". For the purpose of continuity of thought we will define apostasy then as abandonment of that which was voluntarily professed.

Hosea has been described in your study as the prophet of the "broken heart". The reason he is so described can be found in the tragedy of his marriage to Gomer who ABANDONED her husband for others. Gomer, who once PROFESSED a vow of life-long commitment to Hosea abandons that profession by acts of physical adultery. One could say she committed "apostasy" in her marriage to Hosea. This couple is a perfect picture of God's relationship to Israel. Hosea represents the love of God, Gomer the apostasy or abandonment of Israel from God. Israel had committed acts of spiritual adultery...the nation in its relationship to God had become an apostate state (Hosea 5: 15).

A STUDY OF APOSTASY:

Listed below are passages which are intended to help clarify your understanding of this theme of apostasy. As you study, record insights you gain into the subject of apostasy to the right of each reference.

Genesis 4:5-16 with Jude 11 _____

Genesis 19:12-26 with Luke 17:32 _____

Numbers 16:1-3, 10, 28-35 with Jude 11 _____

Numbers 31:15-16 with Jude 11 _____

Hosea 14:4 _____

Luke 8:13 _____

John 8:44 _____

Acts 20:29-31 _____

2 Thessalonians 2:3 _____

1 Timothy 4:1-2 _____

Titus 1:16 _____

Hebrews 3:12-19; 4:1-2 _____

Hebrews 6:4-6 _____

Jude 6 _____

For further consideration.....

1. Is it possible for a believer to commit apostasy? Use the passages listed above as well as others to support your answer.
2. It has been said that familiarity with the truth can cause neglect. How does this statement apply to what you've learned about apostasy? How does the statement apply to your life as a student of God's Word?

(CONTINUED)

3. Jude 20-23 lists seven things you as a believer can do about apostasy. List those seven things and try to cite one example from the life and marriage of Hosea to Gomer which would serve to illustrate that principle.

What about apostasy today?

The book of Hosea pictures God as a responsive husband who is willing to go to any lengths to cause His people to return to Him. God speaking through Hosea says..."I would redeem..." "I would heal..." but Israel refused (7:1, 13). Blinded by sin, the people rejected God's gracious offers, and the heart of God was broken. Instead of compassion, God was forced to extend a hand of chastening-punishment instead of pardon, exile rather than encouragement.

Where are you grieving Christ by your stubborn refusal to respond to His grace? Pinpoint one area: a habit, an unchecked passion, a persistent sin. Then remember the choice is yours. You can either yield to His love, or feel His hand of discipline. Which will it be?



The Hebrew word describing God's love appears 250 times in the Old Testament and six times in Hosea. Normally translated "lovingkindness", it has the meaning "loyal love" and speaks of God's unconditional covenant relationship with His people. Hosea 11:3,4 reveals what this love is really like..."I taught Ephraim to walk, I took them in My arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of a man, with bonds of love, and I became to them as one who lifts the yoke from their jaws, and I bent down and fed them". We find loving, teaching to walk, nursing, feeding, and healing here--the role of a father and mother. In the last half of the quotation, we see the role of a husband tenderly drawing his wife to him with bonds of love. (The prophet Hosea knew first hand what was meant.) In spite of God's loyal love to Israel, the nation still turned its back and rebelled. But something was holding God back from judgment and whatever it was, it was something that won out, for we hear three times repeated by God in 11:9, "I will not... I will not... I will not." Israel was bent on apostasy, but God said, "How can I give you up?" (11:8) "I will not... I will not... I will not."

Was there something in Israel that made God say, "How can I give you up?" When any person looks at Israel's behavior, the answer to that question must unanimously be, "NO!" It was not something inherent within Israel but something that was God. That something is revealed in 11:8b..."My heart is turned over within me. All my compassions are kindled." God says that His heart is moved to its depths. "How, being Who I am", says God, "can I give you up?" (11:9) God's loyal love led Him to the decision, "I will not".

For your consideration and meditation...

It is significant that Paul wrote both of the God of love and the love of God (2 Corinthians 13:11,14).. What distinction is Paul writing about in these two different phrases? From God's other known attributes, we may learn much about His love. Write what you can learn about His love beside each of the following attributes. The first two are given as examples:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Because God is..... | His Love..... |
| Self Existent | His love had no beginning |
| Infinite | His love has no boundaries |
| Holy | |
| Immense | |
| All-Knowing | |
| Just | |
| True | |
| Free | |
| All Powerful | |
| Unchanging | |
| Everywhere always | |
| Sovereign | |