



Lesson 174

Hosea's Troubled Marriage

Story Elements

- **Text:** Hosea 1:1-3:5
- **Setting:** circa 755-710 B.C. in Northern Israel
- **Main Characters:** God, Hosea, his wife Gomer, and their children Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah, Lo-ammi
- **Plot:** Hosea's marriage to an unfaithful woman serves as a symbol of the relationship between Israel and God.
- **Key word(s):** " _____ " is a phrase that appears in 1:2, 1:6, 2:2, 4. Hosea uses this term four times in the first three chapters because it reflects the heinousness of Israel's sin, and conveys the idea that

Israel's spiritual adultery is not just a minor transgression but a shameful betrayal of their covenant relationship with God. The term is used throughout the book and is the major theme of Hosea's preaching.

- **Climax: Hosea 2:10** *And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, And none shall deliver her out of mine hand.* This verse marks the climax of the story because in it God declares his definite judgment right before he announces his gracious mercy in 2:14ff.

Background

1. Like Amos, Hosea preached to the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of _____.
 - a. We know little about Hosea, but most Bible scholars believe that he was likely a native to the northern kingdom of Israel (he refers to the northern king as "our king" in 7:5).
 - b. The purpose of Hosea's book is to decry the spiritual adultery of northern Israel and to hold out hope in the coming Messiah who would sit on David's throne (cf. 3:5)

"Go, Take unto Thee a Wife..."

2. (1:1-3) God commanded Hosea to marry a woman (called Gomer in 1:3) that was "a wife of whoredoms." Many have wondered why God would command a preacher to marry such a woman, or whether she was unchaste before the marriage.
 - a. Probably, Gomer's unfaithfulness took place after she was married to the prophet. We should understand the phrase *a wife of whoredoms* "proleptically, i.e., looking to the _____."¹
 - b. Hosea's marriage to such a woman served as an object lesson of God's covenant relationship with Israel. "An immoral woman could not serve as a picture of Israel coming out of Egypt (2:15; 9:10) who then later wandered from God (11:1)."

APPLICATION → How great is the mercy of God! Hosea, not knowing the pain he would feel and the betrayal he would endure, married a woman with as much an expectation of a happy marriage as any other man - yet *God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet _____, Christ died for us. Rom. 5:8*

3. With the marriage came children, but their legitimacy is doubted because of Gomer's unfaithfulness. These "children of whoredoms" are given names that serve as prophetic warnings and lessons to sinful Israel:
 - a. (1:4-5) The first born is a son who is named *Jezreel* – a reference to the city where Jehu slaughtered the descendants of Ahab (cf. 2 Kin. 9:7-10:28) and a reminder that, as Ahab's house suffered for the sins of Ahab, so Jehu's house will suffer for Jehu's sins. Also, *Jezreel* means _____ – foreshadowing the judgment of God which scattered Israel out of the Promised Land.
 - b. (1:6-7) The next child born to Gomer was a daughter named *Lo-Ruhamah*, which means *not* _____. Her name signifies God's mercy being withdrawn from idolatrous Israel – and yet Judah will be spared.

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005) 971.

- c. (1:8-10) The third child was a son named *Lo-Ammi*, which means *not my people*. This name invokes covenant terminology, *And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, Exodus 6:7*. Because of spiritual adultery, Israel is being _____ from her covenantal relationship with God.
4. (1:10-11) After such terrible pronouncements of judgment, promises of gospel blessing are given – even though Israel may be scattered among the gentile nations, the God of mercy holds out his free _____. The Apostle Peter referenced this passage when he wrote, *ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 1 Pet. 2:9-10*
5. (2:1-5) As a broken-hearted husband implores the children to plead with their unfaithful mother, so God implores the godly in Israel to plead with their countrymen to return to their covenantal vows.
- a. (2:6-13) God promises to bring affliction to unfaithful Israel and to put a _____ around her that will frustrate her path of sin.
- b. (2:14-23) As in chapter 1, beautiful gospel promises are given after terrible judgments are declared. One beautiful play on words is in verse 23, where the word *Jezeel*, which means *scattered*, is used to mean _____ (as in scattering seed).

“Go Again, Love a Woman...”

6. (3:1-5) The very brief chapter 3 is a powerful portrayal of God’s gracious mercy.
- a. (3:1) The language indicates that Gomer had left Hosea, had become a prostitute, and had gotten herself into such trouble that she had become the _____ of her paramour.²
- b. (3:2) Hosea redeemed Gomer for _____ pieces of silver and some barley. The going price for a slave was thirty pieces of silver (cf. Exo. 21:32) – such terms of purchase speaks of Israel’s vile condition.

APPLICATION → The story of Hosea’s troubled marriage begins with, “Go, take a wife” and ends with “Go again, love a woman”³ – the hope that was crushed by sin was reborn with forgiving and relentless love.

- c. Chapter 3 closes with the promise of a coming Messiah, *Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and _____ their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days. Hosea 3:5*

APPLICATION → When Hosea wrote, David had been dead for many years. Hosea is prophetically referring to Jesus, the Son of David, who would be sit on his father’s throne (Luke 1:32) and fill his kingdom with forgiven sinners.

Answer Key: Key word(s): whoredoms • 1. Jeroboam II • 2. a. future; → sinners • a. scattered; b. beloved; c. divorced • 4. grace • 5. a. hedge; b. planted • 6. a. slave; b, 15; c. David

² Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 652.
³ The *yet* in the KJV can be translated as *again*.