

Timeline

Hosea lived approximately 200 years after the dividing of Israel (**1 Kings 12**) in the Northern Kingdom (referenced as Ephraim or Jacob). He was called to speak for God during the reign of Jeroboam II (**1:1**, 786 to 744 B.C.). Israel had enjoyed a long period of prosperity under Jeroboam II, but they were far away from God. Hosea preached up to the decimation and exile of Israel by Assyria in 722 (**2 Kings 14-17**), which he had prophesied was coming. The book covers approximately 25 years of Hosea's preaching and writing. Most of the book is in poetry.

Hosea's Marriage to Gomer (1-3)

This Section Introduces Hosea's Main Themes

1. Israel has rebelled and God will bring severe consequences
2. God's love and mercy are more powerful than Israel's sin

"take to yourself a wife of whoredom"

Hosea 1:2 (ESV)

² When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, **take to yourself a wife of whoredom** and **have children of whoredom**, for the *land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.*"

Hosea marries Gomer (adulteress / prostitute), daughter of Diblaim. "They" have three children:

1. **Jezreel** (son)
 - "I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel" (**1:4-5; 2 Kgs 9-10**)
2. **Lo-ruhamah** (lit. "not loved" or "no mercy" / daughter)
 - "I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel" (**1:6-7**)
3. **Lo-ammi** (lit. "not my people" / son)
 - "you are not my people, and I am not your God" (**1:8-9; Ex 6:7; Jer 30:22**)

Even though Gomer is adulterous, Hosea pays off her lovers and re-commits to her (**3:1-4**).

Prophetic symbol of God's relationship with Israel

God has been a faithful husband to Israel. He brought Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. He gave them the abundance of the land, yet they took this abundance and dedicated it to the worship of the Canaanite God Baal (**2:8** / Idolatry = Spiritual Adultery).

How does God respond to this adultery?

End the covenant and divorce Israel - "she is not my wife, and I am not her husband" (**2:2**)
Pursue Israel and renew the covenant - because of His love, mercy, and faithfulness (**2:19-20**)

The consequences of Israel's actions will be imminent defeat by other nations and exile. (**3:4**)

Hope for future restoration - Israel will repent and come back to worship their God. God will place over them a new Messianic King from the line of David who will bring God's blessing (**3:5**)

Accusations and Warnings for Israel (4-11)

Causes and Effects of Israel's Unfaithfulness (4-10)

There is no knowledge of God in the land - Hebrew: *דָּאֵ־אֵל* (*dā·'āṭ*). This type of knowledge implies a relationship (i.e. knowing **about** someone vs. actually knowing someone – **4:1, 4:1, 6; 5:4; 6:3; 8:2**). God wants His people to know Him and experience His love. He wants this knowledge to transform their lives so that they love Him in return (**6:6, 10:12**)

Hosea exposes the hypocrisy of Israel's worship – They break the law (**4:6, 6:7, 8:1**) and worship other gods (**4:10-4:18; 8:4**) while still offering sacrifices to God (**8:13, 9:4**). God uses the phrase “play the whore” or “whoring” nine times to describe their worship of other gods (**3:3, 4:10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 5:3, 9:1**)

Political alliances - Israel trusts in political alliances with Egypt and Assyria (**5:13, 7:11, 8:9**) instead of trusting in God. They want to become like these nations and rely solely on military power. Assyria will turn on them and come to ravage their lands.

Hope for the Future (11)

God is a loving father who raised His son Israel (**11:1-4**) and shared everything with him. The son grew up and rebelled against the Father, taking advantage of His generosity, God is emotionally torn apart. He is angry and heartbroken (**11:7**), but He is moved by His mercy and compassion to forgive the son that He loves (**11:8-9**).

More Accusations and Warnings for Israel (12-14)

Ancient Israelite History Lesson (12-13)

Hosea reminded the nation of her need to repent (**12:5–6**). In doing so he drew a lesson from the life of Jacob. Jacob's birth gave a hint of the kind of person he would be. His grasping Esau's **heel** (cf. **Gen. 25:26**) foreshadowed his deception of his brother in stealing his birthright and blessing (cf. **Gen. 27:35–36**). When he faced the prospect of death at Esau's hand on his return to the land of Canaan he wrestled **with God**, refusing to let go till he received a blessing (**Gen. 32:22–32**). Later **at Bethel**, the site of his dream years before (cf. **Gen. 28:10–22**), God appeared to Jacob again. God changed his name to Israel, blessed him, and renewed His covenant promise (cf. **Gen. 35:1–14**).

Hope for the Future (14)

Newly healed Israel is described as a lush tree that will grow deep roots, broad branches, and offer shade and fruit to all of the nations. This is an image of God's promise to Abraham to bless all the nations (**Gen 12:3**). It will require an act of God's grace and healing power to repair the deep brokenness and sinful selfishness of the human heart so that God's people can receive His love and love Him in return. This is what God promises to do.

Teacher's Notes

Handout notes are adapted from The Bible Project

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE6SZ1ogOVU>

Timeline

Hosea 1:1 (ESV)

¹ The word of the LORD that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

Hosea's Marriage to Gomer (1-3)

Hosea 1:2 (ESV)

² When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, **take to yourself a wife of whoredom** and **have children of whoredom**, for the *land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.*"

Hosea 1:4–5 (ESV)

⁴ And the LORD said to him, "Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. ⁵ And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

Hosea 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son.

Exodus 6:7 (ESV)

⁷ I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Jeremiah 30:22 (ESV)

²² And you shall be my people,
and I will be your God."

Hosea 3:1–4 (ESV)

¹ And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins." ² So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. ³ And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you." ⁴ For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods.

Jezeel

1:4 Jezeel A symbolic name referring to the valley where Jehu overthrew the Omride dynasty (2 Kgs 9–10) and founded the current dynasty ruled by Jeroboam II. See note on Hos 1:1.

the house of Jehu The current dynasty of Israelite kings. King Jeroboam II was the fourth king of the dynasty.

the blood of Jezeel The Israelite general Jehu seized power in a bloody coup in 841 BC, which began when the prophet Elisha, following Yahweh’s command, anointed Jehu as king (2 Kgs 9:1–13). Jehu then killed Israel’s reigning king, Joram, on the plain of Jezeel (see 2 Kgs 9:14–26). Jehu also was responsible for the death of Ahaziah, king of Judah (2 Kgs 9:27–28)—something Yahweh had not commanded. In this case, God may be punishing the house of Jehu because Jehu had murdered the Davidic king of Judah (compare 1 Sam 24:6 and note).

I will put an end to the kingdom of In 722 BC, Assyria conquered the kingdom of Israel. Since this occurred approximately 25 years after the fall of the house of Jehu, the punishment and reference to Jehu here may refer to the northern kingdom in general, not Jehu’s dynasty specifically.¹

Prophetic symbol of God’s relationship with Israel

Hosea 2:2 (ESV)

² “Plead with your mother, plead—
for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband—
that she put away her whoring from her face,
and her adultery from between her breasts;

Hosea 2:8 (ESV)

⁸ And she did not know
that it was I who gave her
the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and who lavished on her silver and gold,
which they used for Baal.

Hosea 2:19–20 (ESV)

¹⁹ And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰ I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.

¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Ho 1:4). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

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**Adapted from The Bible Project (www.thebibleproject.com) - Handout can be downloaded from: (www.teamagee.com/class)*

Hosea 3:4–5 (ESV)

⁴ For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. ⁵ Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

Accusations and Warnings for Israel (4-11)

Causes and Effects of Israel's Unfaithfulness (4-10)

There is no knowledge of God in the land

Hosea 4:1 (ESV)

¹ Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel,
for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.
There is no faithfulness or steadfast love,
and no knowledge of God in the land;

Hosea 4:6 (ESV)

⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;
because you have rejected knowledge,
I reject you from being a priest to me.
And since you have forgotten the law of your God,
I also will forget your children.

Hosea 5:4 (ESV)

⁴ Their deeds do not permit them
to return to their God.
For the spirit of whoredom is within them,
and they know not the LORD.

Hosea 6:3 (ESV)

³ Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD;
his going out is sure as the dawn;
he will come to us as the showers,
as the spring rains that water the earth.”

Hosea 6:6 (ESV)

⁶ For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

Hosea 8:2 (ESV)

² To me they cry,
“My God, we—Israel—know you.”

Hosea 10:12 (ESV)

¹² Sow for yourselves righteousness;
reap steadfast love;
break up your fallow ground,
for it is the time to seek the LORD,
that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

1981 I. תַּעַר (dā·'āṭ): n.fem. and masc. [oth qal inf.cs. of 3359]; ≡ Str 1847; TWOT 848c—**1.** LN 28.1–28.16 **understanding**, wisdom, i.e., a knowledge with focus on moral qualities and its application (Ge 2:9; Pr 2:5), see also domain LN 32.24–32.41; **2.** LN 28.1–28.16 **skillful**, i.e., knowledge applied to a craft (Ex 31:3); **3.** LN 34.1–34.21 **knowledge**, i.e., information of a person, with a strong implication of relationship to that person (Pr 2:5; 9:10; Hos 4:1), note: in Pr 29:7+ for another interp, see 1982; in Isa 53:11+ for another interp, see 1983; **4.** LN 30.56–30.74 unit: תַּעַר לִי בְּלִי (b- b^elī dā·'āṭ)1 unintentionally, formally, without knowledge, i.e., to act. in a manner that has no forethought (Dt 4:42); **5.** LN 32.42–32.61 unit: תַּעַר רִיחַ (dā·'āṭ rū^aḥ) foolish notion, vain thought, formally, knowledge of wind (Job 15:2); **6.** LN 25.33–25.58 **concern**, i.e., a caring about the lot or situation of someone, as a kind of compassion (Pr 29:7)²

Hosea exposes the hypocrisy of Israel's worship

Hosea 4:6 (ESV)

⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;
because you have rejected knowledge,
I reject you from being a priest to me.
And since you have forgotten the law of your God,
I also will forget your children.

Hosea 4:10–18 (ESV)

¹⁰ They shall eat, but not be satisfied;
they shall play the whore, but not multiply,
because they have forsaken the LORD
to cherish ¹¹ whoredom, wine, and new wine,
which take away the understanding.
¹² My people inquire of a piece of wood,
and their walking staff gives them oracles.
For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray,
and they have left their God to play the whore.
¹³ They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains
and burn offerings on the hills,
under oak, poplar, and terebinth,
because their shade is good.

² Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Therefore your daughters play the whore,
and your brides commit adultery.

¹⁴ I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore,
nor your brides when they commit adultery;
for the men themselves go aside with prostitutes
and sacrifice with cult prostitutes,
and a people without understanding shall come to ruin.

¹⁵ Though you play the whore, O Israel,
let not Judah become guilty.
Enter not into Gilgal,
nor go up to Beth-aven,
and swear not, "As the LORD lives."

¹⁶ Like a stubborn heifer,
Israel is stubborn;
can the LORD now feed them
like a lamb in a broad pasture?

¹⁷ Ephraim is joined to idols;
leave him alone.

¹⁸ When their drink is gone, they give themselves to whoring;
their rulers dearly love shame.

Hosea 6:7 (ESV)

⁷ But like Adam they transgressed the covenant;
there they dealt faithlessly with me.

Hosea 8:1 (ESV)

¹ Set the trumpet to your lips!
One like a vulture is over the house of the LORD,
because they have transgressed my covenant
and rebelled against my law.

Hosea 8:4 (ESV)

⁴ They made kings, but not through me.
They set up princes, but I knew it not.
With their silver and gold they made idols
for their own destruction.

Hosea 8:13 (ESV)

¹³ As for my sacrificial offerings,
they sacrifice meat and eat it,
but the LORD does not accept them.
Now he will remember their iniquity
and punish their sins;
they shall return to Egypt.

Hosea 9:4 (ESV)

⁴ They shall not pour drink offerings of wine to the LORD,
and their sacrifices shall not please him.
It shall be like mourners' bread to them;
all who eat of it shall be defiled;
for their bread shall be for their hunger only;
it shall not come to the house of the LORD.

Play the Whore

Hosea 3:3 (ESV)

³ And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you."

Hosea 4:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ They shall eat, but not be satisfied;
they shall play the whore, but not multiply,
because they have forsaken the LORD
to cherish

Hosea 4:12 (ESV)

¹² My people inquire of a piece of wood,
and their walking staff gives them oracles.
For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray,
and they have left their God to play the whore.

Hosea 4:13 (ESV)

¹³ They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains
and burn offerings on the hills,
under oak, poplar, and terebinth,
because their shade is good.
Therefore your daughters play the whore,
and your brides commit adultery.

Hosea 4:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore,
nor your brides when they commit adultery;
for the men themselves go aside with prostitutes
and sacrifice with cult prostitutes,
and a people without understanding shall come to ruin.

Hosea 4:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ Though you play the whore, O Israel,
let not Judah become guilty.
Enter not into Gilgal,
nor go up to Beth-aven,
and swear not, "As the LORD lives."

Hosea 4:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ When their drink is gone, they give themselves to whoring;
their rulers dearly love shame.

Hosea 5:3 (ESV)

³ I know Ephraim,
and Israel is not hidden from me;
for now, O Ephraim, you have played the whore;
Israel is defiled.

Hosea 9:1 (ESV)

¹ Rejoice not, O Israel!
Exult not like the peoples;
for you have played the whore, forsaking your God.
You have loved a prostitute's wages
on all threshing floors.

Political alliances

Hosea 5:13 (ESV)

¹³ When Ephraim saw his sickness,
and Judah his wound,
then Ephraim went to Assyria,
and sent to the great king.
But he is not able to cure you
or heal your wound.

Hosea 7:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Ephraim is like a dove,
silly and without sense,
calling to Egypt, going to Assyria.

Hosea 8:9 (ESV)

⁹ For they have gone up to Assyria,
a wild donkey wandering alone;
Ephraim has hired lovers.

Hope for the Future (11)

Hosea 11:1–4 (ESV)

¹ When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.

² The more they were called,
the more they went away;
they kept sacrificing to the Baals
and burning offerings to idols.

³ Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk;
I took them up by their arms,
but they did not know that I healed them.

⁴ I led them with cords of kindness,
with the bands of love,
and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws,
and I bent down to them and fed them.

Hosea 11:7–9 (ESV)

⁷ My people are bent on turning away from me,
and though they call out to the Most High,
he shall not raise them up at all.

⁸ How can I give you up, O Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, O Israel?
How can I make you like Admah?
How can I treat you like Zeboiim?
My heart recoils within me;
my compassion grows warm and tender.

⁹ I will not execute my burning anger;
I will not again destroy Ephraim;
for I am God and not a man,
the Holy One in your midst,
and I will not come in wrath.

More Accusations and Warnings for Israel (12-14)

Ancient Israelite History Lesson (12-13)

Hosea 12:3–6 (ESV)

³ In the womb he took his brother by the heel,
and in his manhood he strove with God.

⁴ He strove with the angel and prevailed;
he wept and sought his favor.

He met God at Bethel,
and there God spoke with us—

⁵ the LORD, the God of hosts,
the LORD is his memorial name:

⁶ “So you, by the help of your God, return,
hold fast to love and justice,
and wait continually for your God.”

Genesis 25:26 (ESV)

²⁶ Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau’s heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

Genesis 27:35–36 (ESV)

³⁵ But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing.” ³⁶ Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.” Then he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?”

Genesis 28:10–22 (ESV)

¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹ And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. ¹² And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! ¹³ And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, “I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. ¹⁴ Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵ Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” ¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” ¹⁷ And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

¹⁸ So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. ¹⁹ He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first. ²⁰ Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, ²¹ so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, ²² and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you.”

Genesis 32:22–32 (ESV)

²² The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³ He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. ²⁴ And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. ²⁵ When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶ Then he said, “Let me go, for the day has broken.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” ²⁷ And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” ²⁸ Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” ²⁹ Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. ³⁰ So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.” ³¹ The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip. ³² Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip on the sinew of the thigh.

Genesis 35:1–14 (ESV)

¹ God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.” ² So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments.” ³ Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.” ⁴ So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

⁵ And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. ⁶ And Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him, ⁷ and there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother. ⁸ And Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried under an oak below Bethel. So he called its name Allon-bacuth.

⁹ God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. ¹⁰ And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.” So he called his name Israel. ¹¹ And God said to him, “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. ¹² The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I

will give the land to your offspring after you.”¹³ Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him.¹⁴ And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it.

Hope for the Future (14)

Hosea 14:4–7 (ESV)

⁴ I will heal their apostasy;
I will love them freely,
for my anger has turned from them.
⁵ I will be like the dew to Israel;
he shall blossom like the lily;
he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon;
⁶ his shoots shall spread out;
his beauty shall be like the olive,
and his fragrance like Lebanon.
⁷ They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow;
they shall flourish like the grain;
they shall blossom like the vine;
their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

Genesis 12:3 (ESV)

³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”