



THE PROPHETS

Date: 6.30.24 | Title: Hosea | Scripture: Hosea

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

Middle School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.

God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

God wants us to live for His glory.

God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.

Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.

High School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.

God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

God wants us to live for His glory.

God is a righteous judge.

God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.

Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.

Jesus gave His life for us on the cross and He is the only way for salvation.



MEMORY VERSE

**“Long ago, at many times and in many ways,
God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in
these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.”**

Hebrews 1:1-2a



THE PROPHETS

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

The book of Hosea is the first of the Minor Prophets. The title “Minor Prophets” refers to the length of the book, not the importance of the message being given. The messages of the Minor Prophets correlate to the messages of Major Prophets.

The book of Hosea includes two stories: the main story and the story that illustrates (or points to) the main story. The main story is the same story we have learned in the Old Testament. God has called Israel to be His people and live in covenant community with Him. In Hosea, God compares this relationship to a husband and wife. The secondary story in the book is an illustration. Hosea the prophet is married to a prostitute. Both stories include unfaithfulness in the marriage relationship, the consequences that follow, and the precious gift of forgiveness.

Israel was guilty of forsaking the Lord (1:2; 2:4-5; 3:3; 4:10-15; 5:3-4; 6:10; 9:1). Israel did not “return” to Yahweh (7:10) but instead they “strayed from him (7:13). Instead of crying to Yahweh from their hearts, they rebelled against him (7:14) and “forgot their Maker” (8:14; 13:6). God accuses Israel of being unfaithful to Him. He said there was a lack of “faithfulness” and “steadfast love” and there was “no knowledge of God in the land” (4:1). The sin of Israel was pervasive. Priests (4:4, 6, 9, 5:1, 6:9; 10:5), prophets (4:5; 9:7-8), kings (5:1; 7:3; 5, 7, 8:4, 10; 10:7, 15; 13:10-11) and other rulers have transgressed (4:18; 5:10; 7:3, 5, 16; 8:4, 10, 15; 13:10). Hosea says that Israel’s punishment defeat at the hands of its enemies (5:8-9; 8:7) and will be exiled to Assyria (9:3, 7, 17; 10:6-7; 11:5-6).

In the time of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, God called Hosea to prophesy, specifically in the form of taking a wife, Gomer, who would be unfaithful to him, just as God’s chosen people had been unfaithful to Him (Hosea 1:2). Their marriage later came to symbolize God’s relationship with Israel and provides a tangible illustration of how God loves people. God invited Hosea to share in His pain by partaking in the suffering of infidelity. When Gomer turned her back on her marriage and to other men, Hosea experienced what God felt every time Israel turned their back on Him to worship other gods. God commanded the couple to name each of their children by names that symbolize what God would do to Israel (Hosea 1:3-11).

Hosea foretold Assyria’s conquest of the northern kingdoms, saying God would “bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel” (v. 3), showing no mercy and rejecting His people, but that He would, for the time being, preserve the southern kingdom: “Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, will save them by the Lord their God” (v. 7). This is just what God did – He delivered Judah and Jerusalem from Assyria’s onslaught, answering the king’s prayer and sending an angel to wipe out the enemy troops (Isaiah 37). Israel would fall in 722 BC, but Judah would stand until God allowed Babylon to breach its walls in 586 BC.

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

In His holiness, God must judge sin, but in His love, He promises mercy and restoration. To those who trust in Him, He withholds deserved punishment (mercy) and then gives undeserved blessings (grace). The overarching theme of Hosea is redemption, in terms of relationship and Hosea's life demonstrates this.

Hosea 3 is only five verses long, but God describes and portrays the essence of redemption. God stepped out of heaven into humanity in order to buy us back from sin's clutches. "Redeem" means for the original owner to ransom, to buy back from the marketplace. Like Hosea's wife, Gomer, we have sold ourselves back to the world, to its desires and priorities, and God through Jesus Christ bought us back for Himself. Hosea's marriage reflected the stages of mankind's relationship with God: engagement, marriage, adultery, estrangement, and restoration.

Gomer was a slave and Hosea purchased her to marry her and give her a better life. Her sense of gratitude was a lot like the Hebrews' when God brought them out of slavery in Egypt - she almost immediately went after other lovers even though she and Hosea had children and a life together. Hosea's heart, like God's, was broken (Hosea 3:1-2). God told Hosea to take her back, to forgive and love her. Hosea told her to stay true, and that he would do the same (3:3). God's commitment to Israel was the same including the consequences for their failure to stay faithful to Him and His promise to be there when they returned to Him (3:4).

In Hosea 4-10, the prophet gives charge after charge against Israel: spiritual apathy, uncertainty, and idolatry toward God, and a lack of social justice, morals, and broken leadership in their relationships with one another. Their sin would cost them, and Hosea's voice was one of many prophets sent to warn God's people of their sin and the consequences. Israel stopped hungering after God therefore, they stopped growing spiritually (4:1,6). When they rejected God's law and knowing Him through His Word, the people of Israel destabilized themselves as a nation. It affected them individually and collectively. The people deliberately chose not to trust God: instead, they formed political alliances with pagan nations, thinking that military might make them stronger than staying under God's good right hand. This left them hollow, but they tried to compensate without seeking God, making even more mistakes. Trying to do life with only a half-hearted view of God was their undoing. His holiness demanded their total commitment, and His love guaranteed their protection. Also, the Israelites were involved in idolatry. The priests had failed in their duty to connect the people with their God and had instead blended false gods into their worship and they would be held accountable (5:1). God would let them have what they wanted- worshipping idols – but this came with a promise of sever consequences. God appointed a day of destruction for Israel (Hosea 8:1).

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

The last few chapters of Hosea showcase God's faithfulness to His people as the metaphor shifts from husband and wife to father and child. Hosea made it clear that Israel had sinned, but that God's heart was to forgive and restore them. God's desire is to show His people how far from Him they had moved and then welcome them back to His open arms. Hosea depicted Israel as a runaway child (Hosea 11:1-2). Israel ran from God despite His gentle fatherly care for them. The more God lovingly pursued His children, the more they ran in the opposite direction. God's children took things into their own hands instead of trusting Him.

Hosea didn't hesitate to call sin what it was, to tell Israel how they had fallen. He didn't enjoy doing it, but by not shying away from the harsh reality of sin, he drew an effective contrast with God's offer of forgiveness and restoration. Hosea advocated confession.

Hosea was called to prophesy to the Northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of King Jeroboam and during the reigns of 4 kings in Judah. His message was clear: God's people had rejected Him, so they would be sent into exile and become wanderers in other nations. Hosea was in a torn and tattered marriage, but he continued to speak on behalf of the Lord, telling the people of Israel about God's plan to win them back.

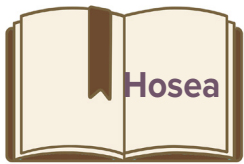
Jeroboam's rule was one of political and economic prosperity, but the underlying spiritual decay in the nation eventually became manifested during the reign of his successors. These kings brought with them political unrest and spiritual chaos, culminating in the Assyrian captivity of Israel in 722 BC. Many Jews turned to the idolatry and other practices of the Assyrian religion, further rebelling against the Lord.

Hosea ministered and prophesied to the people around the same time as the prophets Amos and Jonah. This was around 250 years after the time of David and Solomon and about 650 years after the 12 tribes of Israel first entered the Promised Land.

Hosea, through his own personal pain, leveled a heavy message on Israel, but the result would be repentance and restoration. We don't know if Hosea's marriage worked out, but he faithfully delivered God's message, trusting that God can change the heart fully turned over to Him.

THE PROPHETS

LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY



Tell your group that today we will be learning about the minor prophet, Hosea. God told Hosea to marry a woman named Gomer. This marriage was not the type of marriage you would want to be in. Hosea was to marry a woman who would be unfaithful to him. When a husband and wife marry each other, they are promising to commit to each other and only each other forever. God knew Gomer would not keep this promise. Gomer would hurt Hosea by abandoning him and turning to other men, much like Israel hurt God by breaking His covenant and turning to other gods.

TELL
THE
STORY



Tell the story: Use the Background Info for Leaders and The Biggest Story Storybook Bible- A Marriage Made in Heaven: The Story of Hosea and Gomer as you teach today's lesson.

Attributes of God: Use the attributes of God list and determine the characteristics of God that we see in today's story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true, change the way we live in Christ?

Read directly from
Scripture, use the
message, or the
summary provided
in the lesson

Share the GOSPEL:

The message of Hosea is the message of the gospel: God has gone to the utmost lengths to offer us life in exchange for pain, suffering, and death. Just as Hosea was to be forgiving and willing to receive his adulterous and wandering wife, God will forgive and restore those who have drifted from Him. Sin is the root cause of suffering in the world, and Jesus came so that we "may have life, and that we may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Jesus died so that He could give us something we could never attain on our own: eternal life - life to the fullest! The gospel offers an overflowing life of love and grace here on earth, and eternal life with God in heaven. The book of Hosea shows all the ugliness of a people abandoned to the consequences of their selfish desires, but their situation was only temporary. Hosea's marriage was a model of redemption, revealing God's justice and kindness, His holiness, faithfulness, and deep, abiding love.



Our relationships with God center on His faithfulness, not our own. He guides and disciplines as a father does a child, but He loves sacrificially the way a husband should His wife. The only appropriate response to such a loving and caring God is to fear Him - having a healthy respect and awe for Him - and to love Him by doing what He says (John 14:15).

Put the events
in order, draw a
comic strip, build
it with blocks or
playdough, act it
out, etc...

Sin is sin is sin. Hosea didn't hesitate to call sin what it was, calling out Israel for its disobedience and rebellion. Because he first proclaimed this hard truth, his words of encouragement resonated even more later on, "I will heal their backsliding," God said of the people of Israel, "I will love them freely" (Hosea 14:4). When we confess and repent of our sins, turning our hearts back to God, then He can begin to heal and bless us.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.

QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

“Storying” Questions: As you ask these questions, have your students support their answers with scripture.

- 1. What are the names of Hosea’s children and what do their names mean? (1:3-9)**
- 2. What do these names mean for the nation of Israel?**
- 3. What was Israel’s great sin? (2:7-8)**
- 4. What will their punishment be? (2:9-13; 5:5-7; 8:14)**
- 5. Even though God will send Israel into exile, what is the good promise He makes? (3:5)**
- 6. When Israel prospered, did they give God the credit? (4:7)**
- 7. In 6:1-3, Israel seems to repent. Does God believe them? (6:4; 7:14-16)**
- 8. Is Israel’s punishment brief or will it last a long time? (9:11-12)**
- 9. What are God’s true feelings for Israel? (11:8-9)**
- 10. How does God’s show that love? (14:1-9)**



THE PROPHETS

PRAYER PROMPTS

God thank you for constantly pursuing your people! We do not deserve Your relentless love! You are merciful and gracious and never give up on us! Help us to follow You and love You with our thoughts, desires, and actions.

IF TIME ALLOWS:

Help the students in your group practice memorizing the books of the Bible:

- Torah: Genesis-Deuteronomy
- History: Joshua-Esther
- Poetry: Job-Song of Solomon
- Major Prophets: Isaiah-Daniel
- Minor Prophets: Hosea-Malachi
- Gospels: Matthew-John
- Paul's Letters: Romans-Philemon
- General Letters: Hebrews-Revelation

MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

The book of Hosea illustrates that no one is beyond the offer of our forgiveness because no one sits outside God's offer of forgiveness.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Work on memorizing this weeks verse with the students in your group. You can use the first letter of each word in the verse to help with this. For example, the unit verse would look like this:

LAAMTAIMWGSTOFBTPBITLDHHSTUBHS - Hebrews 1:1-2a



Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?



Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?