

Faithless wife – faithful Husband**Read Hosea, chapters 1-3****INTRODUCTION**

1. What I want to do in these next four lessons is for us to at least read through Hosea together. I will divide the 14 chapters into lesson sections, trying to keep the subject matter and trains of thought relatively intact. There will inevitably be some ‘to be continued’ from one lesson to the other. Then, we’ll further sub-divide the lesson blocks into the messages, transitions, connections, and flow of thought within the selected lesson block.
2. Our lessons will deal with roughly these divisions of the 14 chapters: **Lesson 1, chs 1.1-3.5; Lesson 2, chs 4.1-7.16; Lesson 3, chs 8.1-12.1; Lesson 4, chs 12.2-14.9.** I’m trying to keep the length of the four divisions as equal as I can. It will still be a challenge to even try to cover that much material in one lesson session.
3. The over-arching theme and title of these lessons will be: **“O Love that will not let me go”** from Yahweh’s pleading heart in **ch 11.8-9** [dare we say ‘achy-breaky heart’?]. Obviously, there will be a lot of summary of content and thought. But I do want to at least keep the trains of thought connected and flowing. This is Yahweh who is speaking from His heart. We want to listen, hear, and catch it all, and especially respond as we should. *“In the message of Hosea we see the passion of God. We see the jealousy of God, the commitment of God, the heartbreak of God, the enthusiasm of God, the love of God. People often talk about what they feel about God. Hosea tells us what God feels about us.” [Tim Chester]*

I / ch 1.1 / MEET HOSEA

1. If you look at the kings of Judah who were reigning when Hosea prophesied, you notice that he ministered during the same times that Isaiah, Micah, Amos, and Jonah prophesied. **Isaiah 1.1; Micah 1.1; Amos 1.1; 2 Kings 14.25.**
2. *“Hosea’s ministry began during a period of expansion and prosperity. The reigns of Uzziah in Judah and of Jeroboam II in Israel during the first half of the eighty century BC was the second golden age in the history of God’s people (after the first golden age during the reigns of King David and King Solomon).” [Tim Chester]* It was *“a period of opulence, prosperity, opportunism, and scheming during which the rich and powerful availed themselves of all opportunities to live luxuriously. Hosea was God’s messenger to a complacent, self-indulgent, and apostate people.” [Willem A. VanGemeren]*
3. However, the prevailing theme and complaint of Yahweh’s heart against them was their spiritual faithlessness, adulteries [both physical and spiritual], and betrayal of their covenant marriage vows and relationship He had established with them.
4. *“Hosea’s experience with the promiscuous Gomer has legitimated his call to be Yahweh’s prophet ... What many would consider a disqualification for the office – a prophet whose own wife was morally out of control – serves in this case as credentials. This is because Yahweh and Hosea have shared the same experience – that of marriage to an unfaithful spouse. Thus the book tells the stories of Hosea’s and Yahweh’s marriages in both first and third-person texts – each ‘husband’ speaks for himself and has the other speak on his behalf.” [Duane A. Garrett]*

II / ch 1.2 - 2.1 / YAHWEH COMMISSIONS HOSEA TO MARRY A WIFE WHO WOULD PROVE TO BE UNFAITHFUL TO HIM ... AS ISRAEL HAD BEEN TO HIM

1. **vv 2-3a** / Yahweh called Hosea to experience the same kind of heartbreak and betrayal that He Himself [Yahweh] was suffering from the unfaithfulness of His people, Israel. Whether Gomer was

promiscuous when Hosea married her, we don't know. But she sure will turn out to be excessively promiscuous – just as Israel had done against Yahweh.

2. **vv 3a-5** / Gomer conceived with their first child, a son. It appears that Hosea was this son's father. Whether the next two children are Hosea's, again we don't know. But, of course, Hosea became a father to them. This first son's name was **Jezeel** by the naming of Yahweh. **Jezeel** means **"Yahweh will sow or plant"** / see **ch 2.22-23**. Jezeel was known in that day for its excessive bloodshed. That is not the meaning of the word/name, but that was its association and connotation / see **1 Kings 21.1, 23 & 2 Kings 10.1-8**. Kinda like 'Watergate' has become synonymous with political scandal – so much so that every scandal since then has had 'gate' tacked on to the end of the scandal. Yahweh could have been associating this history of bloodshed with the child's name, or He could have been drawing a sharp contrast between 'sowing/planting' and 'put an end to.' However, as will see later in **chs 1.11 & 2.21-23**, He will fulfill the literal meaning of **Jezeel** in the latter days.
3. **vv 6-7** / She conceived again and bore a daughter. **And the LORD said to him, "Call her name No Mercy," for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all.** If your translation has 'Lo-Ruhamah,' it's because that's the name in Hebrew. But, it means **'Unloved,'** or **'No Mercy'** as in pity, compassion, or caring for. Yahweh's commitment to Israel was to always have this mercy toward them; but they had so violated their 'marriage vows' to Yahweh as to nullify the marriage. Therefore Yahweh vows to withdraw His vows of mercy to them. He does, however, promise to continue showing mercy to the southern kingdom Judah – at least for that time.
4. **vv 8-9** / **When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. 9 And the LORD said, "Call his name Not My People," for you are not my people, and I am not your God.** This was the base promise and summary of the 'marriage covenant' Yahweh had made with Israel at Sinai / **Exodus 6.7 & Leviticus 26.12**, and numerous other Scriptures – culminating in **Revelation 21.3-4**.
5. **vv 10-2.1** / **Yet**, as we shall see all through Hosea, Yahweh's purpose is to afflict them with His 'tough love' and discipline to bring them back to Himself. He makes that promise here and gives us His word! There is a six-fold promise here: *[1] Restoration of the people; [2] Renewal of the covenant; [3] Reconciliation of the divisions; [4] Reinstatement of the King; [5] Return to the land; [6] Recognition of God.* **All of these promises are 'Yes and Amen' to them and to us through Christ who will come in the fullness of time!** Notice this **'one head'** who will be over them; this is none other than **'David their king'** [**ch 3.5**], and that is none other than Christ! All of these promises will be fulfilled in the New Covenant He will make with them. And we will be included also!
6. Paul quotes this passage at length in **Romans 9.22-26** to show how Yahweh turned away from unbelieving Israel to show mercy to the Gentiles ... and all so that He could turn back and include the believing Israelites again also! In effect, unbelieving Israel became 'Gentile' so they could be called back in again to join the believing Gentiles in the new Israel!

III / ch 2.2-13 / YAHWEH COMMITS TO CONTINUE TO WOO AND ALLURE ISRAEL THROUGH HIS 'TOUGH LOVE' – PLEADING WITH HER TO RETURN TO HIM FROM HER ADULTEROUS IDOLATRIES AND WORSHIP OF THE BAALS

1. **Chapter 2** describes the 'interventions' Yahweh will take as He pleads with Israel to love Him back, return to Him, and be as faithful to Him as He has been to them. He will act toward them in keeping with the names He told Hosea to give to his children: **Jezeel, No Mercy, Not My People**. Israel was acting out every one of these names in their relationship with Him. He will now respond to them in like manner in hopes of showing them their love-debt to Him and need of Him.
2. **v 2** / This is an interesting plea Yahweh makes here. Actually, He is calling on the faithful individuals in Israel to make the pleas for Him to **'your mother'** Israel. He is not pleading with adulterous Israel Himself – He's calling on His believers in Israel to plead with their faithless **mother** on His behalf. Kinda like a betrayed and violated husband would enlist his children to plead

with his estranged wife, their **mother**, on his behalf...because she will not give him the time of day: **‘that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts.’**

3. **vv 3-4** / If she does not return to Him, He will take these drastic measures of punishment against her for her faithlessness. Yahweh calls up images of the very ‘honeymoon’ beginnings of their ‘marriage’ – when He ‘married’ her in the wilderness after redeeming her from bondage in Egypt. **see Yahweh’s similar pleas to Jerusalem and Judah in Ezekiel 16.1-14 ff.** He reminds them how HE had rescued, ‘married,’ and gave them water and all the life provisions they ever needed in the wilderness. But now, if they will not return to Him, He will abandon them as He did NOT do in the beginning.
4. **v 5 / This is what Israel has done to Yahweh:** she has abandoned Him and prostituted herself to the worship of the Baals. The Baals were preeminently gods of fertility. Baal’s worshipers prostituted themselves even physically in their acts of worship to them ... in the hopes of getting from them in return abundant harvests and generous provisions for their needs of life. **For she said, ‘I will go after my lovers,’** adulteries both spiritual and physical with the temple cult prostitutes in their acts of worship / **see ch 4.10-14.**
5. **vv 6-13 / Yahweh commits Himself to a course of ‘interventions’ He will perform against them: find, note, and list all the ‘tough love interventions’ Yahweh says ‘I will...’ do in vv 6, 9-13.** Note also the **‘Therefore’** Yahweh offers at the beginning of v 6. His response to them will be a direct and consequential ‘cause and effect’ response to them and how they have treated Him. **v 5: ‘For their mother...For she said...’ / ‘Therefore I will...’**
6. **vv 7-8** / This is another summary of Israel’s ‘hot’ pursuit after her ‘lovers’ false Baal gods – and their giving themselves in to all their spiritual and physical lusts, desires, and hormones. They were making offerings to the Baals with the very gifts Yahweh had given them in His faithful compassions toward them. But they prostituted themselves and Yahweh’s gifts to the Baals. When Israel finds themselves in hard times because of Yahweh’s interventions, they will return to Him ... but only in pretense. All they’re interested in is whichever ‘god’ can give them the ‘stuff’ they want and crave.

IV / ch 2.14-15 / YAHWEH ‘ALLURES’ ISRAEL INTO THE WILDERNESS OF AFFLICTION TO GIVE HER A ‘DOOR OF HOPE’

1. All of these afflictions Yahweh will bring upon them will serve the purpose of getting Israel off to Himself so He can **speak tenderly to her** – words and messages of love, faith, hope, and salvation.
2. When Israel is finally carried off into exile in Assyria, they will be separated from the Baals and all the corrupting influences they pursued and succumbed to in their homeland. This **Valley of Achor** is found in **Joshua 7.25-26** where Achan was executed for lusting after the plunder of Jericho. **‘Achor’** means ‘trouble.’ Yahweh will rewind and ‘circle back around’ to that event in their Assyrian exile. But what they will learn in the **Valley of Trouble** is that, if they will abandon their idolatries and return to their Husband Yahweh, He will open up for them **a door of hope**. Jesus Christ and His Gospel is that Hope – our Hope – our sure Hope – our only Hope! / **John 12.27 & Hebrews 6.19**

V / ch 2.16-23 / YAHWEH PROMISES HIS GOSPEL...TO BE FULFILLED IN CHRIST!

1. **vv 16, 18, 21** / There is coming a day! **“In that day...on that day...”** This Day has begun in Christ, His New Covenant, and His Gospel! It will be fully and finally consummated in the New Heaven and New Earth.
2. **vv 16-17** / The true Israel [the people of God] will confess Yahweh as her Husband. The name ‘Baal’ just means ‘lord, master, owner.’ It is not just the name of the false gods of Baal. Baal is actually a generic word which was most specifically applied to those gods. On the other hand, ‘Yahweh’ is our God’s proper Name which He Himself gave to Moses at the burning bush and by

which He is known and called. There were many ‘Baals,’ but there is only one ‘Yahweh.’ **“In that Day, declares Yahweh, you will call Me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’”** In other words, the true Israel will confess Yahweh as our covenant Husband and not just as our owner, master, or lord – though He is all that, too. The covenant marriage relationship will be restored in keeping with Yahweh’s promise in **ch 1.10-11**.

3. **v 18** / This **covenant** is reminiscent of the Noahic covenant after the destruction of the flood / **Genesis 9.1-17**. It is also reminiscent of the blessedness of the creation in the first days before the fall into sin and the ensuing corruption that resulted from sin / **Romans 8.18-25**. It is also a **covenant** of the New Creation. That New Creation has already begun in Christ / **2 Corinthians 5.17, et al**. It will be fully and finally consummated in the New Heaven and New Earth / **2 Peter 3.13; Revelation 21.1-5**.
4. **vv 19-20** / Yahweh makes a three-fold promise of **“I will betroth you to Me...”**: *[1] forever; [2] in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy; [3] in faithfulness. And you shall know Yahweh.* This is not just awareness, or even acquaintance. It is not just ‘know about Me,’ but this is the language of intimacy, marital union and faithfulness. This is the same ‘know’ that is used all throughout the Scriptures for conjugal, sexual, marital relationships / as in **Genesis 4.1, et al**.
5. **vv 21-23** / This is Yahweh’s promises reiterated and set in a hymn. To ‘**answer**’ is to respond to the request and need that is presented. ALL of it will come from Yahweh to fully satisfy all their desires and needs. **Yahweh controls, commands, and coordinates all the elements of His creation to administer providences for the salvation of His people and keeping of His covenant.** And the final answer will be: **“Jezreel!”** REMEMBER: **Jezreel** means ‘**Yahweh will sow/plant.**’ Yahweh will save His people and dwell with us forever in the New Heaven and New Earth. **And I will sow her for Myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, ‘You are My people’; and he shall say, ‘You are my God!’**

VI / ch 3.1-5 / YAHWEH COMMISSIONS HOSEA AGAIN TO EXPRESS HIS OWN LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET US GO TO HIS STILL UNFAITHFUL WIFE, GOMER

1. **v 1** / It appears that Gomer has not only promiscuously prostituted herself out to numerous adulterous lovers, but has even fallen into some kind of ‘sex slave’ bondage. She is living with some ‘**another man**’ who owns her ... maybe even pimping her out. Which is exactly what Israel has done to Yahweh. BTW, these **cakes of raisins** were evidently offerings that were made to the Baals, and maybe even eaten during their sexual encounters.
2. **vv 2** / It isn’t just a matter of asking Gomer ‘*who do you want to be with*’ ... Hosea has to ‘redeem’ and buy back his own wife from her sex slave owner. He does. He pays whatever has to be paid to redeem her and take her back to himself. **Think and see 1 Peter 1.18-19 here.**
3. **vv 3-4** / Just as Hosea instructs Gomer that she will have to dwell with him **for many days** as his wife and abstain from her promiscuous and lustful liaisons with other ‘lovers’: **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 ...** so also Yahweh uses that painful, heart-wrenching experience to illustrate His own purposes for the Assyrian captivity and exile He will bring upon Israel. He will separate them from all their illicit paramours and have them to Himself. And all for the purpose of breaking them from their idolatries.
4. **v 5** / In the end – through the Gospel of Jesus Christ – He will call them again to seek Him and love Him with all their hearts as He covenanted with them in the beginning of their marriage relationship.

This will come to pass in the latter days. Those days are NOW! The Gospel of Jesus Christ has begun in Judea [Judah], then on to Samaria [Israel], and even to the ends of the earth! / Acts 1.8 AND HERE WE ARE!