

Hosea

Who, When, Where

Written by Hosea.

This book covers the reign of five kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah and Jeroboam, who reigned about 780BC through to about 680BC. Uzziah reigned for about 50 years and Hosea probably started towards the end of that reign, during the period that Israel was divided into two kingdoms.

In Israel. The various children of Hosea and his adulterous, prostitute wife represent the Southern and Northern kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

Summary

Yahweh tells his prophet Hosea to marry a prostitute and have children as a demonstration of how much God loves Israel even though she is constantly worshipping other gods. Idolatry is really just spiritual adultery isn't it. And about 100 years after Hosea's message, Israel still hadn't repented. She still hadn't changed her ways. So God's judgment came on them and they were exiled to Babylon for 70 years.

Before You Read

Marrying a prostitute is not your stereotypical instruction to a prophet. Imagine being the prophet of Yahweh, thinking how you might be used to lead your people to righteousness and devotion. And Yahweh tells you to marry a prostitute adulterer. Imagine telling people "Yahweh told me to"... "Sure he did..." And she wasn't even an ex-prostitute!

It's also interesting that God didn't just say to Hosea, "Go and tell my people this...", he said, "Show my people this by your life..."

Again, not the way you might think God wants you to live!

And this message took years to deliver. Marriage, 3 children... This might be a 10 year mission from God to deliver one message. (which was mostly ignored).

Hosea also underscores the importance of the meanings of children's names. Bible names have meaning. Yeshua means "Yahweh saves". We lose a lot when we just transliterate names and don't translate their meanings.

Key Verses

Hosea 2:19-20

I will betroth you to me forever. Yes, I will betroth you to me in righteousness, in justice, in loving kindness, and in compassion.

I will even betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know Yahweh.

How awesome .. God's love. So not dependent on our behaviour our response. He just loves his people because of who he is.

Hosea 5:15

I will go and return to my place, until they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face.

In their affliction they will seek me earnestly.

Isn't this so true. It's not until things are tough that we turn our minds to whether we are pleasing God. We so blindly assume that all is well spiritually when all is well physically.

Hosea 6:6

*I desire mercy, and not sacrifice;
and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.*

Yahweh gave Israel the Law. Then he gave them sacrifices for covering things over when they broke it. But he doesn't want religion, or even religious worship. What he really wants is changed lives. Lives that glorify him.

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

How does this book relate to the church? Much more than "God's people" we are also called "The bride of Christ". And yet, the modern western church doesn't just flirt with the world, it sleeps around! The church is engaged to Yeshua but it takes "Friends with benefits" to a whole new level. We see churches run like businesses, services that look like concerts, and Bible teaching, music, and even life advice for sale even though they are the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

There are a few other stories in the Bible about how abominable it is to sell ministry, but here we are... If we're really honest, the church has gotten pretty slutty.