

THE MINOR PROPHETS
BOOK OF HOSEA
CHAPTER ONE
5/3/20

After having just completed an intense study of the prophecy and history of Israel we are going back in time to the days of the kings of Israel. A time in fact when the kingdom had split into two kingdoms, The Northern kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. Both kingdoms had fallen into idolatry and God had been warning them both of the danger ahead for them if they did not heed what the prophets were saying.

For those of you that I am mailing the lesson to, I have included a couple of charts for you. One is of the Kings of Judah and one is the Kings of Israel. They show the Kings, their lineage, how long they served, the dates, whether they were good or bad and which prophet or prophets spoke to them. I can't add the charts to my lesson on line but If you would like a copy of them, give me a text and I'll mail you a copy. They are very handy to have while studying any of the era of the kings.

As always, when preparing to study a book of the Bible we need some up-front information. We need to ask three questions:

1. Who is doing the talking (or the writing)?
2. Who are they talking to?
3. Where is it on the time line?

So, before we jump into those questions let's look at the study as a whole. We will study the minor prophets and there are twelve of them. I know, that sounds like a lot but it really isn't. they are called minor prophets not because they are less important than the major prophets, but because the books are shorter, they have less content. All of God's prophets are major prophets, some just have longer books; more to say in other words.

The prophets were God's messengers to the people. Facing the people, they were the voice of God to the people. The priest on the other hand faced God, and was the voice of the people to the LORD. It took both the priest and the prophet in those days to communicate to God. However, in those days, the priests were not doing as they should have. They were allowing, and in many cases joining in, the worship of idols. So, God was sending His prophets to warn His people of the peril they would face if they continued in disobedience. In some instances, the ministries of the different prophets would overlap. Hosea was a contemporary of Amos and Jonah in the Northern Kingdom and Isaiah and Micah in the Southern Kingdom. This shows the seriousness of God's message in that He was sending several prophets to relay His message.

When I taught fourth grade students in Sunday School, one of our goals for the year was to memorize the Old Testament books. Always when it came to the minor prophets, kids would get stuck. So, I broke them into groups of three and that's how we learned them.

Hosea	Obadiah	Nahum	Haggai
Joel	Jonah	Habakkuk	Zechariah
Amos	Micah	Zephaniah	Malachi

We will go through them in that order. Now onto our study of Hosea and our three questions.

- #1. WHO IS DOING THE TALKING? That one is easy, the prophet Hosea. What we know of him is limited, the Bible didn't give us much. We know he was the son of Beerie, (not much about him either), husband of Gomer and the father of two sons and a daughter. His name means Salvation.
- He was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He had a great love and compassion for his people. As Jeremiah would become known as the "Weeping Prophet" so Hosea would be known as the "Broken-Hearted Prophet".
- Number two will also answer number three.
- #2. WHO IS HE TALKING TO? #3. WHERE IS IT ON THE TIME LINE?
- The Northern Kingdom of Israel. We have passed the times of the judges, past Kings Saul, David, Solomon and Rehoboam and the Kingdom has split. Ten tribes have formed the Northern Kingdom called Israel with Samaria as its capital. The remaining two tribes, Judah and Benjamin have formed the Southern Kingdom called Judah and have retained Jerusalem as its capital. The Temple of course was in Jerusalem.
- The years involved were somewhere between 755 BC and 710 BC. That's just about the length of Hosea's ministry.
- On the throne was Jeroboam II (see chart for Northern Kings). Jeroboam I was the first king of the Northern Kingdom and 160 years later another Jeroboam sat on the throne. Both were bad kings. In fact, if you scan down the pages of the list of Northern Kings, you'll see that all of them were bad! Not one good king in the entire history of the Northern Kingdom. Only a small handful of kings in the Southern Kingdom were good. God never intended for the kingdom to split.
- First the people *had* to have a king, in order to be like the other nations around them. God saw it as rejection of Him, but He allowed it.
- Four kings in, the present King Rehoboam was so hard on the people that the kingdom split. Ten tribes went north and the other two stayed south. It was never God's intention. However, He would have continued to bless each kingdom had they embraced Him. Instead they followed after other gods and their disobedience became such a stench in God's nostrils that He sent first Amos, then Hosea, both during the reign of Jeroboam II to warn them. And with that we have answered our three opening questions. Hosea is doing the talking to the people of the Northern Kingdom and at times to the Southern Kingdom as well, during the reign of Jeroboam II and six other kings behind him. His years of service ran from 755 BC to 710 BC. Now we are ready to get into chapter one. I recommend you read the entire first chapter before we get started.
- **Verse 1** *The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beerie during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and of Jeroboam son of Joash, King of Israel.*
- I'll be using, for the most part, the Holman Christian Study Bible and my reference material will be J. Vernon McGee's *Thru the Bible Study*, Dr. H.A. Ironside, The Davis Dictionary, The King James Study Bible, and several Old Testament reference books.
- Verse 1. The first verse starts out with the names of four kings but they were kings of Judah. Then he mentions Jeroboam who was King of the Northern Kingdom. The

names are mentioned for a couple of reasons. One, is that the message was not for Israel alone but for Judah as well. Secondly, Hosea's ministry ran the length of several kings in both kingdoms. This record keeping method of theirs has preserved so much of their history that would have been lost forever during the long years of the Diaspora. So, don't get confused with the names. Keep Jeroboam and Israel, the Northern Kingdom in front of your mind.

- **Verse 2** *When the LORD first spoke to Hosea, He said this to him: Go and marry a promiscuous wife and have children of promiscuity for the whole land has been promiscuous by abandoning the LORD.*
- Wow! As I began to study the different and varied sources of information available to me, I'm astounded at the different interpretations. One interpretation is that the story is an allegory and never happened at all. The reasons they site for this interpretation are: 1. God would never have commanded a prophet to enter such a revolting alliance and one that might lessen his influence over the people. 2. The law of Moses forbade a priest to marry an unclean woman. Although prophets weren't held to the same laws as priests, they were none the less considered a sacred class. Therefore, God would scarcely direct them to enter into wedlock with the unclean. 3. The actions of the first chapter, if real, would require years for its performance, involving not only the prophet's marriage, but the birth of several children, and the symbolic lesson would be lost.
- The other, more popular interpretation is that the narrative is held to be true and depicts the story of domestic tragedy in real life and the command in verse two directing the prophet to take a wife of whoredom, (KJV) is regarded as meaning not a woman already steeped in sin, but one who was as yet innocent. After her marriage, a propensity towards impurity proved to be more than the woman could control and she proved unfaithful in her marriage vows.
- Dr. McGee seems to think that Hosea loved this woman before God commanded him marry her. Possibly she already had some reputation because of the wording in the verse 2. The King James uses the word "whoredoms" *And the LORD said to Hosea, go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms...* The Holman says, *Go and marry a promiscuous wife and have children of promiscuity.* I feel like the word whoredoms is a much stronger word than promiscuous. So, either Hosea believed his love for this woman of whoredom would change her and make her faithful to him; Or, he thought of her as a bit of a flirt and that marriage would settle her down; Or, he just loved her so much he didn't care about her past. He believed he could make her happy to be with him and no other. Did Hosea recognize that God was using him to make a statement? The last line in verse 2 says, *for the whole land has been promiscuous by abandoning the LORD.* Whatever the reason that God had, Hosea did as he was instructed.
- The children of promiscuity are understood, by many, to be the prophet's own sons and daughter. Whether Hosea knew in advance or not that his wife would be unfaithful to him, it is evident that he loved her and was devastated by her unfaithfulness. God used this broken-hearted prophet to show Israel a picture of herself.

- The Book of Hosea is a story of one-sided love that represents the relationship between Israel and God. As Gomer is married to Hosea, so Israel is betrothed to God. Both relationships gradually disintegrate. Gomer runs after other men and Israel runs after other gods. Israel's spiritual Idolatry is illustrated by Gomer's physical adultery.
- The development of the book can be traced in two parts:
 - The adulterous wife and faithful husband (chapters 1-3)
 - And the adulterous Israel and faithful LORD (Chapters 4-14)
- **Verses 3-5** *So he went and married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. Then the LORD said to him: name him Jezreel, for in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu and put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.*
- Not only the marriage but also the children are going to present a real spiritual lesson for the nation Israel.
- Just a footnote: Isaiah's children also had a spiritual message for the nations. Obviously, God used this method more than once.
- So, Gomer has a son and calls him Jezreel. Dr. McGee says the name means "God will scatter"
- God said, "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel." Jezreel is the name of a city and also of a famous plain, the Plain of Armageddon, or the Valley of Esdraelon. It has a long, bloody history and will have a similar future as the place where the last war will end. God is saying here that He will scatter the Northern Kingdom.
- God was eventually going to cast Israel, the Northern Kingdom, out of His sight among the Gentiles that they might be chastened for their iniquities. He had redeemed them in grace and brought them to Himself, but they had proven false and treacherous.
- Therefore, they must learn by judgement what they would not learn by loving kindness. He connects their destruction with "the blood of Jezreel." A little background is needed here, I think. Jezreel was a fortified city not far from mount Gilboa. It was one of the capitals of Ahab and also his son. Jehu was an Army Commander under Ahab. The story of Naboth and his vineyard took place in Jezreel and it is where the heads of Ahab's seventy sons were piled at the gates of the city by order of Jehu. The bloodshed in these verses is referred to by Hosea as "the blood of Jezreel", and he prophesied that it should be avenged.
- This connection is most significant because the reigning house of Israel had succeeded to the throne through that very blood of Jezreel. When Jehu became the instrument for the destruction of Ahab's house at Jezreel, he ascended the throne, and Jeroboam II was his dynasty. Jehu who had been a soldier in service to Ahab.
- Ahab and Jezebel had been rejected for their crimes and Elijah had been commanded to anoint Jehu as King over Israel (Northern Kingdom). Although Elijah had been commanded by God, it was in fact, Elisha who carried it out as God had taken Elijah home.
- But neither Jehu nor his house profited by the lessons of Ahab's judgement. They had themselves walked in the ways of the nations and followed false gods. Therefore, the blood of Jezreel would be avenged upon them and they too should be cut off.
- More is connected with Jezreel. This place was originally the inheritance of the righteous man Naboth. (1 Kings 21) Naboth had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel. Ahab coveted the

vineyard and sought to buy it to transform it into a garden. Naboth refused as it was his inheritance! Heavy and displeased Ahab “lay him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread” (1 Kings 21:4) He pouted!

- The proud and willful king could not fathom the idea that one so insignificant as this Jezreelite should refuse him! His heathen wife Jezebel, wrote letters in his name proclaiming a fast. She hired two men to falsely accuse Naboth of blaspheming God and Ahab had him stoned to death. His inheritance forfeited, Ahab went to take possession of it and ran smack into Elijah who came with a message of judgement from God on his lips.
- Ahab’s doom was sealed and his house would fall. The blood of Jezreel would be his ruin—even Jezebel got hers. The Lord said of her, *the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.*
- Therefore, Jehu’s dynasty had come to the throne through the blood of Jezreel but alas, they failed to learn and continued to disregard God’s hatred of sin and especially idolatry!
- Therefore, this same Valley of Jezreel should be the scene of their judgement, and some years later, in that very spot (called Esdraelon) Israel would be defeated by Assyrians and taken into captivity.
- **Verse 6** *She conceived again and gave birth to a daughter, and the LORD said to him: Name her No Compassion, for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel.*
- The King James call the daughter Lo-ruhamah – the Holeman uses the phrase No Compassion as her name. So, we get the point.
- The name itself, Lo-ruhamah means: “not having mercy or pity.” Her significance is twofold: God’s compassion has come to an end for Israel and her judgement is imminent.
- Dr. McGee says the name means: “never knew a father’s pity” he contends it wasn’t that she was an orphan, but she did not know who her father was. God is saying through this circumstance to the people of the Northern Kingdom who had gone into idolatry, “You will not know my pity for I am not your Father!”
- You can trifle with God too long. The nation Israel did, and the day came when God said, “I will no longer have mercy on you.”
- **Verse 7** *But I will have compassion on the house of Judah, and I will deliver them by the LORD their God. I will not deliver them by bow, sword, or war, or by horses and cavalry.*
- The Lord would still have mercy on Judah and would save them from their enemies. They had not yet revolted openly, as had the ten tribes. The Northern Kingdom had broken the covenant entered into long ago at Sinai and reaffirmed in the plains of Moab. From the beginning, they had been treacherous and rebellious; therefore, on the ground of merit, they can claim nothing. Hence, God gives them up for the time being and refuses to own them as His people. This sentence remains unrepealed to this day. At the Babylonian captivity, (in a hundred years or so) Judah also came under the same sentence, and all Israel have been in the shadow ever since.
- **Verses 8-9** *After Gomer had weaned No Compassion, she conceived and gave birth to a son. Then then the LORD said: Name him Not My People, for you are not by people, and I will not be your God.*
- The third child was called, Lo-ammi in the King James. It means of course, “not my people.” The singular use would be “not my child.” There was a question about the second child;

there is no question about this one. God is saying to the nation Israel, *Ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.*

- At this point let me interject some current day information here. This verse is so often used by those who teach that the Church has replaced Israel and that God is through with the nation Israel. We have to be very careful about reaching in a pulling a verse out of context. If the entire prophecy of Hosea is read, no one can convincingly argue that God is through with Israel. The next verse makes this clear.
- **Verse 10** *Yet the number of the Israelites will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted. And in the place where they were told: you are not My people; they will be called: Sons of the living God.*
- In spite of the numerous times forces have tried to annihilate the Jewish people, god's promise is that they will increase *as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered.*
- No, God is not through with Israel-that's clear when you read the entire Word of God.
- **Verse 11** *And the Judeans and the Israelites will be gathered together. They will appoint for themselves a single ruler, and go up from the land for the day of Jezreel will be great.*
- "The nations will come together" further evidence that the ten tribes were not and are not lost.
- They will appoint themselves one head. That's never happened before. They are obviously referring to Messiah.
- The great influx of Jewish people returning to the land that began even before World War II and has continued to escalate over the decades is often considered the fulfillment of this Old Testament scripture. Dr. McGee disagrees with most scholars on this matter and we will look closer at that later.
- So, to sum up what we've covered in chapter one, God has commanded Hosea to choose a wife of whoredom or promiscuity and to have children by her. The Bible says he married her and she bore him a son. God told Hosea to name him Jezreel for God would avenge the blood on the house of Jehu and put an end to the Kingdom of the house of Israel.
- She bore him a second child, a girl, who he was commanded to name, No Compassion, for God would have no compassion on His people any longer.
- A third child, a son, was called, Not My People, because God had turned away from them and would no longer claim them as His own. Their constant disobedience and idol worship would now be judged.
- Yet God left them with a smidgen of hope as He always does. In verse 11 He tells them that they will continue to increase and one day they will be so vast they will be innumerable. In later years, after they have gone into captivity, this promise they could take with them and know in their hearts that it would not last forever.
- OK, that's it for chapter one, I hope you are enjoying it. Read all of chapter two for next week and please let me know if you want me to send you copies of the Kings chart. It really will be helpful now and always.