

Hosea 1:1-2:1

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INTRODUCTION:

v. 1 Hosea's ministry was primarily to the northern kingdom of Israel, in the 8th century BC. We are told in verse 1 that he ministered during the reigns of Uzziah (sometimes called Azariah), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in Judah and that of Jeroboam II in Israel. There were six other kings that ruled in Israel during this time, that aren't listed here, all of them are described as wicked.

Zechariah (6 months) was killed by Shallum.

Shallum (1 month) was killed by Menahem.

Menahem (10 years) Pekahiah (2 years) was killed by Pekah.

Pekah (20 years) was killed by Hoshea.

Hoshea was carried away captive by the Assyrians.

So this was a particularly tumultuous time to minister in Israel. 2 Kings 17:3-23 provides God's assessment of the Israelite kingdom during this time. God had chosen them for himself at the Exodus. But they had turned from God to idols. They served the two golden calves set up by Jeroboam I. They served the host of heaven and Baal. And they even sacrificed their own children to the pagan gods. So Hosea was sent to bring God's judgment against Israel as God finally turned away from Israel.

TAKE A WIFE OF HARLOTRY:

v. 2 Hosea is to live out in his own family, what God has been living out with Israel. God's marriage to Israel began at the Exodus, when God took Israel out of Egypt. For Israel to turn from the command to have no other gods before the Lord, to turn from the prohibition of idols, and to start worshipping idols, was for Israel to turn away from her wedding vows.

JEZREEL:

v. 3-5 Hosea's wife, Gomer, has three children. Each child is given a name that carries with it a message to Israel as God responds to Israel's apostasy. First, Gomer has a son who is to be named Jezreel. God tells Hosea that the reason he wants the boy named Jezreel is that he wants to call attention to the blood that Jehu once shed at Jezreel.

The story of Jezreel starts with the story of Naboth (1Kings 21:1). Jezreel was where Naboth was murdered by Jezebel. And Jezreel was where Jezebel and all of Ahab's sons and allies were struck down by Jehu. But why is God bothered with Jehu when casting down Ahab was what God wanted (2 Kings 10:30)? When Israel had fully given herself to idolatry, to the worship of Baal, to the sacrifice of their own children to idols, her earlier faithfulness was cast into a new light.

LO-RUHAMA:

v. 6-7 Next a daughter was born to Gomer and she was to be called Lo Ruhama, “no mercy.” God declares that he will no longer have mercy on Israel. Israel’s sin has seemingly surpassed God’s mercy. He has no more forgiveness for her. Her hardness of heart has left her with no mercy. There is, however, a mercy that remains for the southern kingdom of Judah.

NOT MY PEOPLE:

v. 8-9 Finally, another son is born to Gomer. His name is Lo Ammi, which just means “not my people.” God spoke to Moses, just before he delivered the Israelites from Egypt, and he said “I will take you as my people, and I will be your God,” (Ex. 6:7). But now God says, “you are not my people, I am not your God.” Except, if you look at it closely, you’ll see that he doesn’t actually say, “I am not your God,” but rather “I am not for you.” If you remember when God met Moses at the burning bush, he gave Moses a special name by which to call God. God is the great “I am.” But now God tells Israel, “I am not.” God has turned his back on the adulteress bride.

HOSEA:

1:10-2:1 Suddenly God turns and gives Israel a very different message. “Hosea” means salvation. And here, in the midst of a terrible pronouncement of judgment, we discover that Hosea came to declare an ultimate salvation that triumphed even over the very just judgment against Israel.

Before Moses, there was Abraham. Before the Exodus, there was the promise to Abraham that his descendants would outnumber the stars in heaven and the sand on the seashore (Gen. 22:16). That covenant was not overthrown.

And not only will they still be God’s people, they will be taken as God’s own sons. In God’s forgiveness, Judah and Israel will come together under one head. It is God’s intention to take back the adulterous woman (Jer. 3:1, 18).



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