# The Book of Hosea

## Objective:

* To reveal the great love of our Lord in the salvation story
* Compare between Hosea’s love to his unfaithful wife and Jesus Christ’s love to us.

## Memory Verse:

***“I will love them freely and my anger has turned away from him”* (Hosea 14:4).**

## References:

1. “Hosea,” By Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
2. The New Open Bible - Introduction to the Book of Hosea

## Introduction:

 The book of Hosea is one of the small books of the Bible, and Hosea is considered one of the Minor Prophets in the Old Testament. The book consists of 14 chapters and contains a living prophecy experienced by Hosea through his marriage to a harlot called Gomer. The name “Hosea” means salvation, which is similar to Joshua and Jesus in Hebrew. Hosea prophesied for 40 years during the reign of six different kings in the northern territories of Israel. When Hosea began his ministry, Israel was enjoying a temporary period of political and economic prosperity under Jeroboam II. However, the nation crumbled when the Assyrians strengthened. The reign of Israel’s last six kings was relatively brief since five were murdered and a sixth was carried captive to Assyria. During this prophetic ministry, Hosea repeatedly echoes his threefold message:

1. God abhors the sins of His people.
2. Judgment is certain.
3. But God’s loyal love stands firm.

 However, the people of Israel refused to heed Hosea’s warning of imminent judgment. The people were in spiritual stupor, riddled with sin and idolatry.

## Lesson Outline:

The book of Hosea is divided into two main themes:

1. Adulterous wife and faithful husband- chapters 1:1 to 3:5
2. Adulterous Israel and faithful Lord - chapters 4:1 to 14:9

### I. The adulterous wife and the faithful husband

 God instructed Hosea to marry a harlot called Gomer, and he loved her. She gave him two sons and a daughter. The meanings of their names were indications and warnings of what is going to happen in Israel. The first child was named Jezreel, which means God scatters. The second was named Lo-Ruhamah, which meant not pitied, and the third was called Lo-Ammi, meaning not My people.

 Subsequently, Gomer went and committed adultery with other lovers and left Hosea, who loved her faithfully. Yet, Hosea went after her and brought her back and kept her with him. Hosea had compassion for his people; his personal suffering because of Gomer gave him some understanding of God’s grief over their sins. In Hosea’s relationship to Gomer, he portrays God’s faithfulness, justice, love and forgiveness toward His people. Thus, his words of the coming judgment is passionately delivered and tempered with a heart of tenderness.

### II. The adulterous Israel and the faithful God

 Israel refused the knowledge of God and ran after idols and committed many sins. Israel also refused to repent, which angered God. Hosea upbraids his people for their lying, murder, insincerity, and idolatry. The people have violated all of God’s commandments. Even now, God want to heal and redeem them, but in their arrogance and idolatry they rebel. Israel’s disobedience will lead to her dispersion (Hosea 8-10). Israel spurns repentance, and the judgment of God can no longer be delayed.

 God is holy and just, but He is also loving and gracious. God must discipline, but because of His endless love, He will ultimately save and restore His people. “How can I give you up Ephraim? I will heel their backsliding. I will love them freely for my anger has turned away from him” (Hosea 11:8, 14:4).

### III. God’s love to us was revealed on the Cross

 Hosea’s experience was an attempt from God to show us, with our limited feelings and emotions, His unlimited love for us. A greater love is shown on the Cross. God Himself came down to earth and carried our sins in His Body to bring us back home with Him. There is no greater love than this, that He puts Himself for His beloved.

## Applications:

Let us show our love to God through a truthful repentance and confession.

## Questions:

* What is the meaning of the name “Hosea”?
* Who was the wife of Hosea?
* How many chapters are in the Book of Hosea?
* What is the main theme of the Book of Hosea?
* What is the resemblance between Hosea’s wife and Israel?

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**The Twenty-Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir**

***The Departure of St. Hosea, the Prophet***

 On this day, St. Hosea, the prophet, one of the twelve minor prophets of Israel, departed. This righteous man prophesied during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, King of Israel. (Hosea 1:1)

 He mentioned in his prophecy some remarkable and marvelous things. He rebuked the children of Israel for their sins and their transgressions and warned them in advance about the evil things that would befall them because of their offenses. He promised them the uplifting of these calamities if they returned to the Lord their God.

 He also prophesied about the passions of our Savior, His Resurrection and the salvation of the human race. He said, “He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day, He will raise us up, that we may live in his sight. Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord...” (Hosea 6:1-3)

 He prophesied also about the abolishment of the sting of death and the dominion of hell by saying, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction." (Hosea 13:14) "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (I Corinthians 15:55)

 He departed at a blessed old age.

***His prayers be with us, Amen***

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**THE BOOK OF HOSEA[[1]](#footnote-1)✝**

 Hosea the prophet, a native of the Northern Kingdom, ministered to his people in Israel who were in a very bad moral state; the worship of idols diffused every vise among the people. There was no truth, nor mercy nor the knowledge of God. There was swearing, lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery (4:1,2).

 Hosea, in his book, shows a tender feeling of compassion for the people of his own land and expresses God's love for them in unforgettable terms. Hosea was sent both to denounce the sins of the people and to proclaim to them the compassionate love of God and His willingness to have mercy upon them if they returned to Him (5:15).

 The names Hosea, Joshua, and Jesus are all derived from the same Hebrew root; the word “Hosea” means salvation, but “Joshua” and “Jesus” mean Yahweh is Salvation. Hosea, as God's messenger, offers the possibility of salvation if only the nation turns back from idolatry to worship of the True God of Israel.

**The Time of Hosea:**

 Hosea began his ministry at the end of the reign of Jeroboam II and prophesied for the next 50-60 years, during the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. He was contemporary to six other prophets: Amos, Isaiah, Micah, Joel, Jonah and Obadiah.

 Hosea was God's messenger to the Northern Kingdom of Israel and only mentions Judah accidentally. He addresses Israel sometimes as Samaria, Jacob or Ephraim because that tribe was the largest of the twelve tribes and the leader in rebellion.

**The Prophet’s Call:**

 The call of Hosea was unique. The prophet relates how, at the Divine Command, he married a woman of questionable character, who used to be a harlot called Gomer; after bearing him three children, she left him for her other lovers and then fell in slavery. But he brought her back from slavery and loved her and sought by every means to induce her to be faithful to him (1:2-3:3). Hosea himself was made a sign to the people in his suffering love for a faithless wife and whom he brought back from a life of shame. He was a picture of God’s love for His rebellious people who had broken their covenant with Him and had given themselves up to the worship of idols.

 Isaiah's three children were appropriately named by God as signs to Israel:

 The first son was named Jezreel, which means what God sows or the plant of God. Its implication is God's warning to disperse His people as the sower scatters the seeds. (After seventy years, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was exiled by the Assyrians.)

 The second child was a daughter named Lo-Ruhamah, which means without mercy and translated in Rom 9:25 "who was not loved." The implication is that when mercy goes, wrath comes right away.

 The third son was named Lo-Ammi, which means you are not My people. Because they forsook God, God forsook and rejected them. St. Paul explains Hosea 1 in Romans 9:25: God's rejection of Israel is temporary till the remainder is saved in the last days, believing in Christ.

**The Prophets Message:**

 The major part of Hosea, chapters 4-14, is composed of a continuous series of messages in which he alternately warns the people concerning their sins and pleads with them to give up their wicked ways and return to God Who loves them (Hos 4:1-2, 6:1-3, 10:12).

 Hosea explains how God hates the sins of His people. Yet God's loyal love stands firm. In chapter 11, God is pictured as a Father who taught His child to walk and when he became tired, took him in His arms and carried him: *“I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love and I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them”* (Hos 11:4).

 The last chapter contains another beautiful appeal for repentance, combined with a promise of forgiveness and final restoration, conditioned upon their return to God (14:1-8).

 The book ends with an advice to make wise use of the light which they have received (Hos 14:9).

**Verses about Ephraim in the Book of Hosea:**

**God’s Judgment on Ephraim:**

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| 5:9 | *"Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke.”* |
| 5:11 | *"Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment because he willingly walked by human precept.”* |
| 5:12 | *"Therefore 1 will be to Ephraim like a moth and to the house of Judah like rottenness.”* |

**The punishment comes not only from Assyria; God Himself will destroy their belongings:**

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| 5:14 | *"For I will be like a lion to the house of Ephraim. And like a young lion to the house of Judah.”* |

**The Sins of Ephraim:**

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| 7:8,9 | *"Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples” (in work, in trades and in marriage as Solomon; what communion has believers with unbelievers?).* |
| 7:11 | *"Ephraim also is like a silly dove without sense.”* |

**The Result of Ephraim’s Sins:**

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| 8:7 | *"They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. The stalk has no bud, it shall never produce meal. If it should produce, aliens would swallow it up.”* |
| 8:8 | *"Like a vessel in which there is no pleasure.”* |
| 8:9 | *"Ephraim has hired lovers.”* |

**How God dealt with Ephraim:**

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| 11:3,4 | God's great love and help to Ephraim. |
| 11:8,9 | *"I will not destroy Ephraim. For I am God and not man. The Holy One in your midst.”* |
| 14:4-7 | *"I will heal their backsliding. 1 will love them freely. For My anger has turned away from him. I will be like the dew to Israel.”* |

**Christ in the Book of Hosea:**

1. **Hosea 11:1**: a prophecy about Christ in Egypt and His return to Israels; “*When Israel was a child, I loved him and out of Egypt I called My Son*” (Matt 2:15). The exodus of Israel from Egypt as a new nation was a prophetic type of the Messiah Who was called out of Egypt. Both Israel and Christ left Palestine to take refuge in Egypt.
2. **By implication**: Christ's loving work of redemption can be seen in Hosea's redemption of Gomer from the slave market.
3. **Christ is the Real Bridegroom**: Who betrothed His fiancé (the Church or the soul) to Himself forever in righteousness and justice, in loving-kindness and mercy, and in faithfulness; and she will know the Lord through Him (Hos 2:19,20).
4. **Hosea 3:4,5**: "*For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar without ephod or terophim. Afterwards the children of Israel shall return, seek the Lord their God and David their king and fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.*"

From a negative view, Christ is manifested here as King, Priest, Prophet and the New David, or the Son of David. Then Israel will return to Him in the last days (Rom 11).

1. **Hosea 6:2**: a prophecy about the risen Christ after 3 days; “*After two days, He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight*.”
2. **Hosea 13:4**: *“There is no Savior beside Me.”*
3. **Hosea 13:14**: Christ is our Redemption and Resurrection; *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death, O death I will be your plagues. O Grave I will be your destruction."*

"Death is swallowed up in victory.
O Death, where is your sting?
O Hades, where is your victory" (I Cor 15:54,55).

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# The Book of Hosea

#  Verse to Memorize: ANd9GcQS200TGAdULXn8cyUTlVgWuOcA2W2cK5ZMSnosqn_Csw3EvJ1LANd9GcQS200TGAdULXn8cyUTlVgWuOcA2W2cK5ZMSnosqn_Csw3EvJ1L

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| *I will love them freely and my anger has turned away from him.***Hosea 14:4** |



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1. ✝ Biblical Studies, Old Testament IV, The Prophets, by Dr. Margret F. Mikhail, Pope Shenouda III Coptic Orthodox Theological Seminary, Fall 2005 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)