

Survey of Minor Prophets
Lesson #1
Hosea 1:1-4:19

Today we are beginning a study of the Minor Prophets. This study will cover the books of Hosea through Malachi. The book of Hosea was written shortly before the time that the book of Isaiah was written. In this book the Lord used certain events that happened in the life of Hosea as an example for the nation of Israel. These events show how unfaithful the nation of Israel had been to the Lord. However, even though Israel was an unfaithful nation, God gave the nation of Israel certain promises to show what the Lord is going to do for the nation of Israel in the future. These promises and the example of Hosea and the way that he treated his wife give us some real examples of the greatness of the love of God.

As you study this lesson, you should use the following objectives to guide you in your study. By the time you complete this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain the meaning of the names of the children of Hosea.
- Explain how the wife of Hosea provided an example of the nation of Israel.
- Give a summary of the history of the nation of Israel.
- Explain what sins Israel was committing at the time of Hosea.

Hosea married a woman that became a very unfaithful and sinful wife. The Lord allowed this marriage and used the unfaithfulness of this woman as a living example of unfaithfulness to God by the nation of Israel. The Lord warned Hosea that his wife would not be faithful. This was why she provided a very clear example of the unfaithfulness of Israel. Gomer became unfaithful to Hosea just as Israel continued to be unfaithful to the Lord. In fact at that time the nation of Israel had completely departed from the Lord.

1. Read Hosea 1:1-11 and write the name of the woman that Hosea took as his wife.
2. Explain why the Lord used the unfaithfulness of the wife of Hosea to show the unfaithfulness of the nation of Israel.
3. Explain why you think that the Lord warned Hosea that his wife would not be faithful to her marriage vows.

Three children were born to Hosea and Gomer. Each of these children was given a name that would be a sign to the nation of Israel. The first son was called "Jezreel". This was a sign to Jeroboam II that God was going to judge the sins of the family of Jehu and also judge the entire nation of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. The second child born to Hosea and Gomer was a daughter. She was given the name of Lo-Ruhamah. Her name means "not pitied". This was a sign that the time had come for the judgment of the nation of Israel. God was showing that he would no longer show pity to Israel. The name of the third child means "not my people". This was the condition of the nation of Israel as long as they failed to trust in the Lord.

4. Read Hosea 1:1-11 and write the name that was given to the third child of Hosea and Gomer.
5. Explain what lessons you learn from the names that were given to the children of Hosea and Gomer.
6. Explain why you think that God told Hosea what to name each of the children so that he could use those names as signs to the people of Israel.

Although the people of Israel were not recognizing the Lord as their God at the time of Hosea, the Lord still gave a promise for Israel about the future. There will always be a future for Israel because of the unconditional covenant that the Lord made with Abraham. God promised Abraham that one day the nation of Israel would have so many people that they would be like the sand of the seashore. God said that at time they would be known as the sons of the living God. At that time in the future the nations of Israel and Judah will become one nation again. They will be the people of God because they are going to obtain pity from God in that day.

7. Read Hosea 1:1-11 and write what day the Lord said would be great in the future.
8. Explain why it is important to understand that the Lord will never forget the covenant that He made with Abraham.
9. Explain why you think that God says that there will come a time in the future when the people of Israel will be known as the sons of the living God.

As we study chapter two of this book, we are given a real picture of the sinfulness of the nation of Israel. In this chapter the nation of Israel is pictured as the wife of God while the individual members of the nation are pictured as children. The nation of Israel was committing spiritual adultery with the idols of the land. As a result, God promised that He would make the nation of Israel naked and show the terribleness of her sinful condition. Israel had chosen to follow idols because the nation thought that those idols were supplying her food, her clothing and her luxuries. However, Israel did not realize that the Lord was the One that was supplying all of these things.

10. Read Hosea 2:1-23 and write what God said would happen when Israel went seeking her lovers.
11. Explain why the Lord calls the worship of idols spiritual adultery and said that He would show Israel the terribleness of her sinful condition.
12. Explain why you think that the people chose to follow idols and say that those idols were supplying their need for food, clothing and luxuries.

God said that He was going to bring famine and great need to the nation to cause the people of Israel to realize that God was their true husband. God was the One that had supplied all of the needs of Israel and not Baal even though the people were worshiping Baal. Now God was the One that was going to bring both physical and spiritual judgment on the nation of Israel. God was going to bring famine and uncover the spiritual nakedness of Israel in front of her idols. God said that He would cause happiness in Israel to cease. God said that He would do this by bringing judgment on Israel for all of the time that the nation had followed Baal.

13. Read Hosea 2:1-23 and write who the nation of Israel had forgotten when she went after her lovers.
14. Explain why God said that it was necessary for Him to judge the nation of Israel because of their worship of idols.
15. Explain why you think that the people of Israel failed to realize and understand that God was the One that was supplying all of their needs.

Even though Israel had forgotten the Lord, the Lord promised to speak kindly to the nation of Israel and bring the nation back to Himself. God promised that the Valley of Achor would be a door of hope to Israel just as it had been a door of hope when Israel had come out of Egypt and entered into the land. The Valley of Achor was the place where Achan and all that belonged to

his family had been stoned to death because of the sin of Achan. After judging the sin of Achan in the Valley of Achor, the Lord was able to bless the rest of the nation of Israel. God also said that Israel would one day call the Lord my husband instead of my lord.

16. Read Hosea 2:1-23 and write what God promised to take out of the mouth of the nation of Israel.

17. Explain why the Valley of Achor is called a door of hope even though it was the place where Achan and his family were stoned to death.

18. Explain why you think that judgment can be followed by blessing if people will turn from their sin and turn to the Lord.

God promised that the day would come in the future when Israel would have peace and no more enemies would come against the nation. In that day God said that He will woo Israel like a pure virgin instead of looking at her as an adulterous wife. In that day Israel will become a faithful and pure wife. In that day the nation of Israel will be the people of God. They will have obtained pity in the sight of God. God said that in that day the nation would obtain mercy even though there would be a day of judgment that would come first. God said that the nation will be called the people of God in that day. The people will also recognize the Lord as their God.

19. Read Hosea 2:1-23 and write how long God said that the nation of Israel would be betrothed to God.

20. Explain what this chapter teaches about the fact that God will one day change the judgment of Israel into blessing.

21. Explain why you think that the Lord said that He would woo Israel like a pure virgin even though the people served idols for many years.

The wife of Hosea had been a prostitute before she had married Hosea. After the birth of her three children, she returned to her life of prostitution. Although she had gone back to her old ways, the Lord encouraged Hosea to continue to love her. Then Hosea was instructed to go and buy his wife back out of her life of prostitution. God said that the wife of Hosea was a picture of the nation of Israel. The people of Israel had turned away from the Lord to follow other gods. They had loved the cakes of raisins that were used in the heathen feasts as sacrifices to idols.

22. Read Hosea 3:1-5 and write how much money Hosea paid to buy his wife back from her life of prostitution.

23. Explain why the Lord encouraged Hosea to continue to love his wife even though she had gone back to her life of prostitution.

24. Explain why you think that God told Hosea to go and buy his wife back out of her life of prostitution.

Fifteen pieces of silver was half the normal price for a slave. The wife had so lowered and destroyed herself that she was of very little value even as a slave. The food that Hosea gave along with the silver was the food that was normally fed to horses. This again speaks of the complete worthlessness that goes along with sin. When Hosea brought his wife back, he told her that she would live with him for many days. However, she would not live with him as his wife because of her sin. God told Hosea to do this because He said that the wife of Hosea was an example of the nation of Israel and what would happen to that nation.

25. Read Hosea 3:1-5 and write how long God said that the nation of Israel would be without a king.

26. Explain why the price that Hosea paid to buy back his wife from sin showed that she had little value left in herself.

27. Explain why you think that God sent Christ who had a life of infinite value to buy us back from our sin that had destroyed our value.

Here we see an amazing prophecy that is still true of the nation of Israel even today. Israel has been without a king or a prince for more than 2500 hundred years. They have been without a sacrifice or even a land for almost 2000 years. In spite of these things, the people of Israel have continued to maintain their identity as a group of people. During this entire time they have not followed idols even though they have not served the Lord either. Here we see that the Lord is giving them a promise that Israel will return to Him in the latter days and against serve Him. Although that day has not come yet for the nation of Israel, that day is coming soon. Then the entire nation of Israel will again serve the Lord.

28. Read Hosea 3:1-5 and write what God said that the nation of Israel would experience in the latter days.

29. Explain what you learn about the nation of Israel from what happened to the wife of Hosea.

30. Explain why you think that God has preserved Israel as a nation for almost 2000 years even though they had no land of their own during that time.

As we come to chapter four, we are given a summary of the sins of Israel that has made it necessary for God to leave the nation of Israel like a wife without a husband for these many years. This summary will be expanded throughout the rest of the book of Hosea. God began this charge against Israel by pointing out the fact that the nation of Israel had rejected the Word of God. As a result, the people of Israel had broken all of the commandments of the Lord. This sin had involved all of the people including their priests and their false prophets.

31. Read Hosea 4:1-19 and write why God said that His people were being destroyed.

32. Explain why God shows that there are serious consequences for any person or nation that rejects the Word of God.

33. Explain why you think that even the priests of Israel had become involved in the sinful practices of the nation.

The people of Israel had chosen to reject the knowledge that they had been given by the Lord in His Word. They had forgotten the law of God. This is the reason why God said that there would be no priest among them. The people were all guilty of sin. This included the priests as well as the people. They had all set their hearts to do evil. Now God said that the people would eat but they would not be satisfied. God said that the people had committed spiritual prostitution by following idols so God said that the people would not increase. In addition, this spiritual prostitution had led to all forms of moral impurity and drunkenness.

34. Read Hosea 4:1-19 and write what these things do to the heart.

35. Explain why spiritual prostitution will also lead people to commit all forms of moral impurity and drunkenness.

36. Explain why you think that God said that the nation of Israel would have no priest among them.

Romans chapter one describes the way that these sinful practices lead to greater and greater sin. When the people began to follow their idols, every form of sin came along with that idol wor-

ship. Their daughters became prostitutes. The men began to live in adultery. The people were offering sacrifices and incense to their idols on the tops of all of the mountains and hills. The men would go together with these prostitutes to offer incense to their idols and then they would commit various acts of immorality together. This is something that has always been a part of idol worship.

37. Read Hosea 4:1-19 and write how God said that Israel had slid back.

38. Explain what you learn about the dangers of idol worship for this chapter.

39. Explain why you think that immorality always becomes a part of idol worship among any people.

As Hosea spoke of the sinful ways of the people of Israel, he warned Judah not to follow in these same sinful ways. Israel had become like a heifer that refused to be led. Israel had joined itself to idols so that it was beyond the point where it would return to the Lord. For this reason the people of Judah were warned to completely avoid the people of Israel so that they would not fall into these same sinful practices that were being committed by the nation of Israel. The people of Israel had reached the point where their sinful practices did not satisfy them and so they had now chosen to go after other forms of sin and shame.

40. Read Hosea 4:1-19 and write how Hosea said that the people of Israel would one day feel because of their sacrifices to idols.

41. Explain why Judah was warned to completely avoid the people of Israel so that they would not turn to the same sins.

42. Explain why you think that the sinful practices of people do not satisfy them so they turn to greater forms of sin and shame.

Reread Hosea 1:1-4:19 and write down the three most important lessons that you learned from these chapters.