

# Commentary Notes - Hosea

by Walter Beuttler

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*Walter Beuttler's sermon on Hosea explores the themes of God's faithful love and Israel's unfaithfulness, emphasizing the call to repentance and restoration.*

**Topics:** "Gods Faithfulness", "Spiritual Restoration"

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## Description

Walter Beuttler delves into the Book of Hosea, emphasizing the theme of 'return' as a reflection of God's attitude towards His backslidden people. The book portrays God as a deserted yet faithful lover, with Israel depicted as Jehovah's adulterous wife, ultimately purified and restored. Through the life of the prophet Hosea, who experienced a dramatic and heartbreaking marriage to an unfaithful woman, the message of God's faithful love for an unfaithful nation is powerfully conveyed.

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## Transcript

### A. THE BOOK OF HOSEA

1. The key word of the book is "return," used 15 times as an indication of God's attitude toward his backslidden people.
2. The book summarizes what Hosea felt and taught during his long career as a prophet to Israel in a time of defection from God and the worship of idols accompanied by heathen vices.
3. In this book God is presented as the deserted yet faithful lover.
4. Israel is viewed as Jehovah's adulterous wife, repudiated by her husband, but ultimately purified and restored.

### B. THE PROPHET HOSEA

1. The only fact in the life of Hosea, with which we are acquainted, is his marriage to an unfaithful woman called Gomer.
2. This story is one of the most dramatic and pathetic in the entire divine record.
3. At God's command Hosea must take a course that will wreck his home and break his heart. He is bidden to take as wife an unchaste woman, or one of such a character that she would likely prove unfaithful, and to have children whose legitimacy might well be questioned.

4. The tragedy of an unfaithful spouse must touch Hosea's heart so that his own grief might teach him something of God's grief.
5. Hosea has now, what might be called, a kind of fellow-feeling with his loving God. Both experienced the same sorrow and were grieving in undiminished though bitterly frustrated love.
6. Now Hosea could feel the very throb of the heart of God and convey his message so much better, the message of a brokenhearted lover to his unfaithful spouse. Thus Hosea became the prophet of faithful love.

### C. THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK

1. Hosea's own domestic sorrow was to be a figure of the broken relationship between God and Israel.
2. The unfaithfulness of Hosea's wife was to be a picture of Israel's unfaithfulness to God.
3. Hosea's faithful love for an unfaithful wife was to symbolize the faithful love of God for an unfaithful nation.

(With due acknowledgement to Pulpit Commentary)

### A HEARTBROKEN PROPHET, 1:1-3:5

#### A. THE DESERTED LOVER, 1:1-2:23

1. The abandonment of God in favor of other lovers is likened to what in 1:2? The prostitution of the body for hire, metaphorically applied to the desertion of the worship of the true God for the worship of idols
2. What is to be understood by "a wife of whoredoms," 1:2? A married woman who by character, if not by practice, is also a prostitute
3. Of what was Hosea's unhappy marriage to Gomer symbolic, 1:2? Of God's unhappy relationship with his people
4. Give the literal meaning of the names of Hosea's children with their significance, 1:3-9:
  - (1) Jezreel - "God sows," (like seed). Jehu must reap judgment for his slaying of the 70 sons of Ahab in 2 Kings 10:1-14
  - (2) Lo-ruhamah - "Unpitied." God will take his people away without pity
  - (3) Lo-ammi - "Not my people." God will disown and reject his people
5. What prediction is made concerning Israel in 1:4 and 1:6? The cessation of the kingdom which began with the overthrow of the dynasty of Jehu and culminated with the Assyrian captivity some 50 years later (722 B. C.)
6. As a whole, what do the names of Hosea's children symbolize? The dreadful consequences of Israel's sinfulness and obstinate disobedience
7. Yet what is anticipated in 1:10-11? The ultimate repentance and restoration of Israel

8. Who is addressed in 2:1-2? Those in Israel who retained their godliness and continued steadfastly in their loyalty and love to Jehovah

9. What is the godly remnant urged to do, 1:2? To raise its voice in solemn warning and earnest protest against the national defection from God and the wickedness committed in the land

#### B. THE DESERTED LOVER, 1:1-2:23 (cont'd)

1. Use the following quotations from 2:5 and point out four common causes of backsliding:

(1) "I will go after my lovers" - Misplaced affection, i. e., the taking of one's love from God and bestowing it upon other objects of affection

(2) "That give me my bread and my water" - Means of subsistence, i. e., the abandonment of God in favor of seeming material advantages

(3) "My wool and my flax" - Fashionable clothing, i. e., attire either in worldly fashion or in excess of actual requirement

(4) "Mine oil and my drink" - Luxurious living, i. e., extravagant indulgence in pleasure and the gratification of one's own desires

2. List the results of turning away from God in:

(1) 2:6 - Inability to achieve one's purpose

(2) 2:7 - Consequent disillusionment

(3) 2:9 - Loss of the very thing desired

(4) 2:11 - Joylessness instead of joyfulness

3. What takes place in:

(1) 2:14-16? God will cause Israel to return to him through disciplinary suffering

(2) 2:17? God will once and for all cure Israel of her propensity to idolatry

(3) 2:18-23? God, after Israel's purification, will again take her for his own

#### C. THE FORGIVING LOVER, 3:1-5

1. Who is the woman in 3:1 and what had apparently happened? Gomer had abandoned Hosea and became another man's mistress who eventually sold her in the open market where Hosea bought her back

2. How does the incident in 3:1-3 reveal God? That he in mercy and unquenchable love is willing to take unfaithful Israel back

3. Specifically, what great truth is symbolized in 3:2? Redemption, i. e., a repurchase through the paying of a ransom, 1 Pet. 1:18-19

4. Give the essence of 3:4-5: For a long time Israel is to be without a civil government, a national religious life, and without a ministering prophet bringing revelations from God to the people

A BROKEN-HEARTED GOD, 4:1-14:9

A. ISRAEL'S SINFULNESS, 4:1-13:16

1. The cause of the drought in 4:1-5 was what? The great ungodliness of the people who were without truth, mercy and the true knowledge of God

2. List God's accusations against Israel from:

(1) 4:6 - They rejected the knowledge of God

(2) 4:6 - They forgot the law of God

(3) 4:7 - They sinned against God

(4) 4:8 - They enjoyed their sinful ways

(5) 4:10 - They ignored God

(6) 4:12-19 - They practiced religious prostitution

3. Comment on 5:6, 15: God withdraws his presence in the hope that the resultant affliction will lead to repentance and seeking after God

4. What takes place in 6:1-3? A sorrowing God is wooing his people back by a sorrowing prophet

5. Explain the following figures:

(1) A morning cloud, 6:4 - The superficiality of Israel's religious life

(2) A cake not turned, 7:8 - The duplicity of Israel's character

(3) A silly dove, 7:11 - The stupidity of Israel's confidence

B. ISRAEL'S SINFULNESS, 4:1-13:16 (cont'd)

1. To whom does the eagle in 8:1 refer? To Assyria in anticipation of the coming invasion and captivity of Israel

2. What is described in 8:1-10:15? Israel's category of sins, not the least of them being the worship of the golden calf

3. To what are the people called in 10:12? To acts of righteousness, repentance, and seeking God

4. Chapter 11 pictures God how? As yearning for his people in sorrowing love

5. In 11:8 God is in a dilemma. Wherein? God is in an emotional conflict, so to speak, in that his love is reluctant to consent to the judgment demanded by his holiness

6. Comment on:

- (1) 12:6 - God calls Israel to repentance, righteousness, and devotion to God
- (2) 12:10 - God did all he could for his people by using diverse methods of speaking
- (3) 12:13 - The ministry of the prophet is necessary to both deliverance and preservation

7. Note two unfortunate results of God's goodness to his people, 13:6:

- (1) Their heart became exalted in pride
- (2) They felt independent of God and forgot him

8. Israel's calamity is due to what, 13:9? To her own willful and obstinate disobedience

### C. ISRAEL'S RETURN, 14:1-9

1. God pleads with Israel to do what in:

- (1) 14:1? To return unto God, for as she fell by her own act of disobedience so alone can she rise by her own act of obedience
- (2) 14:2? To demonstrate her change of heart, not by silver and gold so lavishly spent on her idols, but by articulated confession
- (3) 14:3? To renounce her evil ways of placing her confidence in worldly resources
- (4) 14:3? To recognize that the manufacture of man's hands cannot be man's god

What does God promise in:

2. What does God promise in:

- (1) 14:4? A loving and compassionate response
- (2) 14:5? Refreshing, purity and stability
- (3) 14:6? Prosperity, beauty and fragrance
- (4) 14:7? Of becoming a source of blessing
- (5) 14:8? Their ultimate recognition of God's law

3. Note what God finally had to say in 14:9 by:

- (1) A declaration - The ways of the Lord are right even in judgment, whether understood or not
- (2) An appeal - The just are to walk in the ways of God whether others do so or not
- (3) A warning - The transgressors will surely fall in these very ways by their failure to obey

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