

# The Active Sermon of Hosea's Marriage

## Hosea 1:1-11

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Introduction: Hosea's ministry possibly covered as much as 50 years – under the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, & Hezekiah in Judah & Jeroboam in Israel (1:1). There were 6 other kings who ruled in the Northern Kingdom of Israel for just over 20 years who are not mentioned by name. Perhaps this was because of their extensive corruption & the spiritual destitution of the land or simply because they made no difference to what was happening in that day. Israel was guilty of injustice, immorality, idolatry, & ingratitude (see 4:1-2; 10-12; 8:14; & 10:4). Blanchard summarizes Hosea's day this way: "Hosea watched with growing grief as he saw the nation's prosperity eating away at its moral & spiritual integrity. The lesson is crystal clear. Outward success always carries the risk of inward failure & material plenty can mask spiritual poverty. Hosea's beloved nation had sidelined God while pretending to serve Him, & this terrible truth broke the prophet's heart." While the nation was experiencing a national tragedy, Hosea was experiencing a personal tragedy. His prophetic book begins with a mandate & is followed by its message.

### I. The mandate of Hosea's marriage (:1-2)

#### A. Consider the 2 categories of explaining the mandate:

1. This was hypothetical - it was not a literal marriage, but rather an allegory or simply symbolic.
2. This was a literal marriage – an historical, actual marriage.

#### B. Compare the various views on a literal marriage:

1. The **harlot** view > Gomer was actually an impure woman, perhaps a temple prostitute.
2. The **idolatrous** view > Gomer was an idol worshipper; "*whoredoms*" would refer to spiritual immorality (she was not physically immoral at the time of the wedding).
3. The **proleptic** view (the representation or assumption of a future event) > though Gomer was pure at the beginning of her marriage, she would become unfaithful.
- \*4. The **inner characteristic** view > this is based on the word "*whoredoms*." It is not the word normally used to describe a prostitute; rather "it is an abstract plural that would more likely describe an inner characteristic than an outward behavior. Gomer's latent bent toward immorality that surfaced not long after the marriage" (Barrett).
  - a. This reflects the widespread practice of immorality & sexual license in the society of her day. "She became what she thought about (3:1)" (Barrett).
  - b. "That Hosea knew from the Lord's instruction that she had the potential for hurting him highlighted the unselfish nature of his love" (Barrett).

The lessons (or applications) for us:

1. The **influence** of a licentious culture in which one is immersed can have devastating consequences unless resisted by the power of the Holy Spirit in one's life (James 4:4-6; I John 2:15).
2. The **impact** of true Biblical love – unselfish & sacrificial (cf. Ephesians 5:25).
3. The **insidious** nature of sin – yet Gomer (nor we) can blame her sin on her environment or on the temptations around her. She yielded to her inner sin nature (James 1:13-15).

### II. The message of Hosea's marriage (:3-11)

#### A. The picture of the marriage:

1. In Hosea 1:2, Hosea "compared the unfaithfulness of Israel to marital infidelity. When speaking to Hosea, God deliberately likened idolatry to adultery" (Philipps).

2. Hosea 3:1, *“Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, & love flagons of wine.”*
3. Hosea’s marriage to Gomer is a picture of the Lord’s marriage to Israel.

B. The product (posterity) from the marriage:

1. *“Jezreel”* (Gomer *“bare him a son”*), meaning either “may God scatter” or “may God sow.”
  - a. Its significance – I Kings 21 & II Kings 10:30; the overthrow of Jehu’s dynasty.
  - b. Its symbolism – Israel is to be defeated on the battlefield of Jezreel & the 10 tribes will be scattered & sown among the nations of the world in exile.
2. *“Lo-ruhamah”* (Gomer *“bare a daughter”*), meaning “unpitied.” In Romans 9:25 it is translated *“not beloved”* & in I Peter 2:10, *“had not obtained mercy.”*
  - a. Hosea 1:6, *“...I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel...”* (yet not said of Judah in verse 7).
  - b. Hosea’s naming of the girl thus indicates he disowns her as his child.
3. *“Lo-ammi”* (Gomer *“bare a son”*), meaning “not my people” or “no kin of mine.”
  - a. Hosea’s naming of the boy thus indicates he has no relationship to him.
  - b. “God announced His determination to deny having any relationship to apostate Israel” (Phillips).

Summary: Yet Hosea also prophesies a future day when God will forgive, cleanse, & restore Israel (1:10-11).

Application: Imagine the friends & neighbors of Hosea & Gomer who knew what was happening (Gomer’s unfaithfulness & 2 children as a result). Might they have asked: “What does he see in Gomer?” or “Why doesn’t he divorce her & be done with it?” Could the angels of heaven not think the same thing of the human race (including you & me)? “Yet God’s answer is His love that will not let us go, His love that ‘suffereth long, & is kind’ (I Cor. 13:4)” (Phillips).

Conclusion: What lessons can we learn & apply from this opening chapter of Hosea? Consider first of all that Gomer’s disobedience not only broke harmony in her home, it broke Hosea’s heart. So, too, sin in our lives breaks the law of God & grieves the Spirit of God (cf. Eph. 4:30; I Thess. 5:19; & James 4:5). Note also the almost incomprehensible love of a man for his unfaithful wife. What a testimony of selfless, sacrificial love – a reflection of Christ’s love for His Church, by which husbands are challenged to emulate. Third, consider the patience & longsuffering of our God – with us & with all sinners. II Peter 3:9, *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”*

The chapter closes with the promise of Israel’s ultimate restoration. That day has yet to come, but it will come. For us, might we be reminded & encouraged to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 122:6). That is not only a prayer for Israel to have her eyes opened to the Messiah, but for Messiah to come & bring that ultimate peace during His Millennial reign.

Will we learn & benefit from these lessons of sin, sacrifice, & sovereignty?