

BOOK OF HOSEA THEMES

Hosea uses the symbolic presentation of marriage of Hosea and Gomer to God's love for the idolatrous nation of Israel. This is a rich metaphor of sin, judgment, and forgiveness. Hosea reminds Israel that God is loyal to His covenant people even though they have been unfaithful. Though Israel continued to turn to false gods, God's love is portrayed as the long suffering husband (Hosea, God) to his unfaithful wife (Gomer, Israel). The following are the thematic concepts Hosea uses to teach the nation. Hosea stresses the Biblical doctrines of sin, judgment, God's loyal love, and salvation. Hosea assures us of God's unconditional love for His people.

NAMED CHARACTERS

There are others who are named in the book, but these are the main characters.

HOSEA - (Ho.1:1). Means "salvation". The prophet pictures God. He had to live his message before he preached it to the people. His life was a divine object lesson where he experienced deep sorrow in his own marriage because of the sins of his wife.

GOMER - (Ho.1:3). Means "completion". She is full of sin as a picture of Israel.

JEZREEL - (Ho.1:4). Means "scattered". Refers to the time when God will scatter Israel among the nations

LO-RUHAMA - (Ho.1:6). Means "unpitied". Refers to God lifting His mercy from the nation, and permit her to suffer

LO-AMMI - (Ho.1:9). Means "not my people". Refers to their present time of being out of fellowship with God

PICTURE OF JUDGMENT

God disciplines Israel through the nation of Assyria. Hosea's message is also one of warning to those who turn their backs on God. NT believers can be spiritual adulterers as well (1Jn.2:15-17; Rv.2:1-7; Ja.4:1-10). Believers who love the world are false to our Savior, and break His heart (2Co.11:1-3).

- (1) The coming of a swift eagle (Ho.8:1)
- (2) The wrath of a whirlwind (Ho.8:7)
- (3) The burning of a fire (Ho.8:14)
- (4) The nation scattered (Ho.8:8; 9:17)
- (5) They will reap more than they sow (Ho.10:12-15)

GOD'S DESCRIPTION OF ISRAEL

- "morning cloud" (Ho.6:4) Israel's loyalty quickly evaporates like dew
- "cake not turned" (Ho.7:8). Israel's religion was only surface deep (half baked)
- "grey hairs" (Ho.7:9). Israel losing her strength, yet unaware
- "silly dove" (Ho.7:11). Israel unstable going from one ally to another
- "deceitful bow" (Ho.7:16). Israel's unfaithfulness is like a faulty bow

ISRAEL AS GOD'S 'WIFE'

Ho.1:2, "a wife" — God considers Himself married to the nation of Israel (Is.62:5; Je.3:14). She should have remained faithful to Him. God sees when we are intimate with the world. We cannot serve two masters. (Mt.6:24).

- "For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." (Is.62:5)
- "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:" (Je.3:14)

RESULT OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

1. God would weaken His people's strength as a moth weakens clothing (Ho.5:12).
 - This is a metaphor of slow destruction.
 - Israel is no longer an influence for good and a testimony of God in the world.
2. God's judgment would be seen as a young lion and a bear roaring (Ho.11:10; 13:7-8).
 - This is the sound of a parent calling her little ones home.
 - Certainly when God 'roars' it brings fear.
3. God will withdraw from His people (Ho.5:6).
 - Israel will bring her sacrifices ("flocks" and "herds"), but God will not be found (Am.5:21-23; Is.1:10-15).
 - But God will restore Israel ultimately, in spite of her negative responses in the past to His love and light.

FORESHADOW

"And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." (Ho.2:23)

Paul (Rm.9:25) and Peter (1Pe.2:10) quote this verse and widen it to all people, not just Jews. Gentiles were not originally called "God's people." But God in His mercy and grace has provided Jesus Christ, and by faith in Him we are grafted into the tree (Commonwealth of Israel) of His people (Rm. 11:11-18; Ep.2:12).