

Hosea, part 1

Notes for 8 Aug

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Read: [Hosea](#)

Hosea lived during the 8th Century BC, primarily in the Northern Kingdom. His ministry lasted several decades, beginning with the reign of King Jeroboam II until shortly before the Assyrian conquest.

His purpose was to call Israel back to faithfulness in God. He warned them that if they did not repent, God's judgement would come through foreign invasion.

He was instructed to marry Gomer, whose unfaithfulness symbolised Israel's unfaithfulness to God.

I think this is one of the most remarkable and touching stories about the deep love that Hosea had for his adulterous wife, and the spiritual meaning that the story conveyed about the nature of the love of God for His people.

The book of Hosea is written almost entirely in poetic form. The primary exceptions are chapters 1 and 3 which contain the narratives describing Hosea's marriage to Gomer.

Poetry conveys deep emotional meaning. The narrative in the form of poetry, if considered in a literal sense, can convey misconceptions. Its goal is to convey deep theological truths. We have read passages in the Old Testament, if taken in its literal form, makes Yahweh out to be a tyrant.

Until recently, I realised I have been in the infant department concerning my understanding of much of the Old Testament.

Themes of individual chapters:

Chapter 1:

Israel's unfaithfulness to God and God's covenant love despite that unfaithfulness.

1. Covenant unfaithfulness.
2. Judgment.
3. Hope and Restoration.

How does the chapter identify the sub themes, 1, 2 and 3?

Chapter 2:

1. Israel's spiritual adultery.
2. God's punishment and judgement.
3. God's persistent love.
4. A renewed covenant.
5. Restoration and Reversal.

What is the purpose of God's judgement?

Chapter 3:

1. Redeeming love.
2. Grace rather than mere justice.
3. A period of discipline.
4. Hope for the future.
5. The fear of the Lord.

Having examined the first three chapters, how do they inform you about God's response to unfaithfulness?

Chapter 4:

1. The Divine issue with Israel is no faithfulness, no steadfast love, no knowledge of God.
2. The importance of knowing God.
3. Failure of the priests.
4. Idolatry and spiritual adultery.
5. Judgement resulting from continuous rebellion.

Can a nation flourish if it abandons a knowledge of God?

Chapter 5:

1. Judgement on leaders.
2. Pride prevents repentance.
3. Religious activity without true repentance.
4. Judgement on both Israel and Judah.
5. Withdrawal of God's favours leading to repentance.

Is it clear that judgement and punishment play a crucial role in bringing people back to God? Is punishment always a necessary condition to compel people to repent?

Chapter 6:

1. A call to return to the Lord.
2. God desires steadfast love and not empty ritual.
3. Israel's breach of the covenant.
4. Widespread Corruption.
5. Certainty of corruption.

Is there any purpose to religious ritual? Can it play any role in developing steadfast love in and knowledge of God?

Chapter 7:

1. Hidden sin exposed.
2. Corrupt leadership.
3. The dangers of compromising with other nations.
4. Spiritual blindness.
5. Trusting great military powers instead of God.
6. Insincere prayer.

When you look at the above list, do you think all is lost for Israel?