

I. Introduction

- A. Marriage: Bridegroom and the Bride (see message)
 - 1. Meta narrative from Genesis to Revelation
 - 2. Jesus and us (the church)
- B. Can God divorce his Bride? (Primary question the prophets answer)
 - 1. Israel was consistently unfaithful
 - 2. Cheating with other gods and foreign lords
 - 3. Israel didn't see herself as unfaithful or as a bankrupt lover (US!)
 - 4. Israel gave God ample legal grounds for divorce. What would God do?
- C. *We know what God did, but do we understand the depth of love He has for His people?
This is the story of Hosea.
- D. *Clarification: sin, abusive/violent relationships, get out

II. God vs. the children of Israel

- A. Chapter 4: Accusation of idolatry, breaking God's covenant, and rejecting justice
 - 1. *Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. (Hosea 4:1-2)*
 - 2. Loving and serving other gods/high places and temples (reference back to Hosea 4:1-2)
My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore. They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. (Hosea 4:12-13a)
 - a. Jereboam built two temples with golden calves in Bethel and Dan
 - b. Chemosh (Moabite)/Molech (Canaanite): human sacrifices, specifically child/infant sacrifice called passing through the fire bringing financial prosperity
 - c. Baal/Asherah: Ahab and Jezebel built a temple and altar to Baal and set up Asherah poles in Israel along with temple prostitution (men and women).
Worshiped for fertility in humanity and agriculture
- B. Chapter 5: The totality of Israel's rebellion and the inevitable consequences of sin
 - 1. *The pride of Israel testifies to his face; Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in his guilt; Judah also shall stumble with them. (Hosea 5:5)*
 - 2. Even in crisis, no repentance
When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound, then Ephraim went to Assyria, and sent to the great king. But he is not able to cure you or heal your wound. (Hosea 5:13)
- C. Chapter 6: Disingenuous repentance is rejected by God. He desires love and obedience over empty rituals and ceremonial worship.
 - 1. Words without obedience

Come, let us return to the Lord; for He has torn us, that He may heal us; He has struck us down, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live before Him. Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord; His going out is sure as the dawn; He will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the Earth. ... What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away. (Hosea 6:1-3, 4)

2. For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. (Hosea 6:6)

D. Chapter 7: Rejection of God and alliance with other nations -

The pride of Israel testifies to his face; yet they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek him, for all this. Ephraim is like a dove, silly and without sense, calling to Egypt, going to Assyria. (Hosea 7:10-11)

E. Chapter 8: Rejection of God's laws and consequential destruction

1. Disobedience

They made kings, but not through Me. They set up princes, but I knew it not. With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction. I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence? For it is from Israel; a craftsman made it; it is not God. The calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces. (Hosea 8:4-6)

2. Other loves

For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild donkey wandering alone; Ephraim has hired lovers. Though they hire allies among the nations, I will soon gather them up. And the king and princes shall soon writhe because of the tribute. Because Ephraim has multiplied altars for sinning, they have become to him altars for sinning. (Hosea 8:9-11)

3. Destruction

For Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces, and Judah has multiplied fortified cities; so I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour her strongholds. (Hosea 8:14)

F. Chapter 9: Fruitful to fruitless history/lament

1. Though they hire allies among the nations, I will soon gather them up. And the king and princes shall soon writhe because of the tribute. (Hosea 9:10)
2. Every evil of theirs is in Gilgal; there I began to hate them. Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of my house. I will love them no more; all their princes are rebels. (Hosea 9:15)

G. Chapter 10: Corrupt leaders lead far from God and people willingly follow

1. Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit. The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built; as his country improved, he improved his pillars. Their heart is false; now they must bear their guilt. The Lord will break down their altars and destroy their pillars. (Hosea 10:1-2)
2. The inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the calf of Beth-aven. Its people mourn for it, and so do its idolatrous priests—those who rejoiced over it and over its glory—for it has departed from them. (Hosea 10:5)

3. Call to repent
Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you. (Hosea 10:12)

4. *Guilty, no legit defense, no contest!

III. Chapter 11: God's emotional breakdown

A. God's love as a father toward His Son

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. The more they were called, the more they went away; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols. Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk; I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them. (Hosea 11:1-4)

1. God chose, loved, and rescued Israel
2. God's love has been expressed in His pursuit of Israel and His presence with Israel.

B. God's emotion

1. Anger

They shall not return to the land of Egypt, but Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to Me. The sword shall rage against their cities, consume the bars of their gates, and devour them because of their own counsels. My people are bent on turning away from Me, and though they call out to the Most High, He shall not raise them up at all. (Hosea 11:5-7)

2. Heartbreak

How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within Me; My compassion grows warm and tender. (Hosea 11:8)

3. Compassion and mercy

I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath. They shall go after the Lord; he will roar like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west; (Hosea 11:9-10)

4. *But, as in all relationships, this is complicated. However, unlike all our relationships, God is perfect, holy, right, and good. The old adage, "It takes two" does not apply here. Blame and fault is solely on Israel.

5. *But God will not execute His burning anger because His compassion burns hotter than His wrath.

IV. Transfer

A. Israel's offense, rebellion, and unfaithfulness, to the degree that she embodies a whore/prostitute.

1. Dependence on God: Prosperity resulted in Israel drifting further and further from God toward dependence on self and others.
2. Love for God: Israel's worship of other gods destroyed her witness and her uniqueness.

3. Arrogance and shame with God: Israel relied on other kings and lords for her satisfaction and survival. Particularly Assyria and Egypt.
 4. Leaders (priests and kings) led the people where they willingly went.
 - a. Other gods
 - b. Foreign lords
 - c. Sin upon sin upon sin
 - d. Abuse of one another and a rejection of justice
- B. Not just about Israel but my sin and rebellion
1. Israel did not see herself the way Hosea illustrated her and neither do we.
 - a. Our dependence, our love, our arrogance, and our shame
 - b. How we lead and where we lead
 2. My prostitution
 - a. Wealth
 - b. gods
 - c. Ideology/politics/nationalism
 - d. Imitation of who
 3. *Make a list, share with others, offer it to God, and repent.
 4. Repentance is clearing/leveling everything so that God can replace it with a whole new crop.
 5. *No matter how bad, God's compassion burns hotter than His wrath. The key is repentance and crying out to Jesus.

COMMUNION