

HOSEA

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BACKGROUND

The reign of Jeroboam II in Israel's northern kingdom (793-753 B.C.) was the "golden age" of the north, with great military successes and a thriving economy. Spiritually, however, the nation did not do so well. Hosea began his prophetic ministry near the end of Jeroboam's reign, and during most of his 40 years of ministry things only became worse, climaxing in Israel's fall in 722 (see [2 Kings 17](#)). Four of Israel's final six kings assassinated their predecessors ("one murder after another," [Hosea 4:2](#)). As the last prophet before Israel's fall, Hosea pleaded with his people to turn to God and be saved. He warned of Israel's coming judgment but also of its final restoration. He has been called "the prophet of immediate doom and eventual hope."

In obedience to an unusual instruction from God, Hosea married a prostitute and, as could be expected, endured her unfaithfulness in marriage ([Hosea 1-3](#)). The lessons he learned from his marriage helped him address the issue of Israel's unfaithfulness to God ([Hosea 4-14](#)).

Hosea's ministry overlapped that of Amos and the first half of the ministries of Isaiah and Micah.

AUTHOR

Hosea's mission was to the northern kingdom, and he was probably from that area as well. His many illustrations drawn from agriculture suggest he may have been a farmer. His name means "salvation."

DATE AND LOCATION

Hosea's ministry probably began c. 760 B.C. and ended c. 720, two years after the northern kingdom's fall. It is likely that he is one who escaped (see exposition on [§2 Chron. 30:1-9](#)). He may have fled to the southern kingdom and completed his writings there.

RECIPIENTS

Though he mentions Judah as well, Hosea addressed his prophecies primarily to the northern kingdom, which he often referred to as "Ephraim," the dominant tribe.

PURPOSE

To warn of God's impending judgment on Israel while showing the balance between his justice and his love:

- God's *love* does not mean he can forget sin. Sin must be punished.

- On the other hand, God's *justice* does not mean that he desires to completely end his relationship with his "wife" (Israel). God constantly tries to draw Israel back to himself. Even in the wake of judgment he will preserve a remnant.

UNIQUE FEATURES

- Hosea was the only prophet from the northern kingdom who recorded his prophecies (though Jonah was from the north, the book of Jonah is primarily a narrative about him, not by him).
- He was the only prophet to minister to the northern kingdom right up to its fall. He has been called "the deathbed prophet of Israel."

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

Isaiah:

- Both used the illustration of a husband and wife to portray God and Israel ([Hosea 2:19](#); [Isaiah 54:5](#)).
- Both Hosea and Isaiah had children with symbolic names ([Hosea 1:4, 6, 9](#); [Isaiah 7:3](#); [Isaiah 8:3-4, 18](#)).
- Both called God the "Holy One," a rare title for God outside of Isaiah ([Hosea 11:9, 12](#); about 30 times in Isaiah).

OUTLINE

1. A CASE STUDY IN ADULTERY: GOMER ([Hosea 1-3](#))
2. A CASE STUDY IN ADULTERY: ISRAEL ([Hosea 4-14](#))
 - A. The charges against Israel ([Hosea 4-7](#))
 - B. The coming judgment of Israel ([Hosea 8-10](#))
 - C. The final restoration of Israel ([Hosea 11-14](#))

TIMELINE

931 B.C.:	Kingdom divides, Israel, Judah
760 B.C.:	Hosea begins ministry
740 B.C.:	Isaiah begins ministry
722 B.C.:	Fall of Israel
720 B.C.:	Hosea's last prophecy
586 B.C.:	Fall of Judah

Hosea 1:1-2 *The prophet and the prostitute: A marriage made in heaven?* God instructed Hosea to marry a prostitute, who would then bear him "children . . . born to [him] from other men" ([Hosea 1:2](#)). The text of Hosea, along with other Bible books, suggests some reasons for this most unusual directive:

- *The experiential reason:* Marriage to an unfaithful wife would help Hosea understand God's anguish over his people's spiritual fornication. God often compared his relationship to Israel to a marriage (see [Hosea 2:19](#); [Isaiah 62:5](#); [Jeremiah 3:14](#)), and its frequent apostasy to adultery or prostitution ([Hosea 1:2](#); see [Hosea 4:12](#); [Isaiah 1:21](#); [Jeremiah 3:1](#)).
- *The illustrative reason:* Hosea's marriage would provide a real-life example of his message to Israel ([Hosea 1:2](#); see [Hosea 3:1](#)).
- *The prophetic reason:* God would direct Hosea to give his children names describing the future punishment and eventual restoration of Israel.

Hosea 1:3-9 *Tragic names for their children.* Hosea married Gomer, and she bore him three children, to each of whom God gave a prophetic name:

- Jezreel, their first son, would remind Israel that God would soon punish Jehu's dynasty for the brutal murders he committed at Jezreel. While Jehu's destruction of Ahab's family was commended by the Lord (see [2 Kings 10:30-31](#)), Jehu's wholesale slaughter of many others apparently went beyond the Lord's intent.
- The daughter's name, Lo-ruhamah, meant "not loved" and had a double significance:
 - God's compassion for Israel, the northern kingdom, had come to an end; its judgment was imminent.
 - However, God still had compassion for Judah, the southern kingdom, and would deliver it through supernatural means (see [2 Kings 19](#)).
- Their second son's name, Lo-ammi, means "not my people." This was not a denial of God's unconditional covenant with Abraham (see [Genesis 12:1-3](#)). That covenant continues to the present day, unchanged though as yet unfulfilled ([Hosea 1:10-2:1](#); see [Romans 11:1-2](#)). God was speaking through Lo-ammi to those Israelites who, while related to Abraham physically, were not related to him or his God spiritually.

Hosea 1:10-2:1 *Better names someday.* Looking beyond his coming judgment on Israel, the Lord promised that the judgment would someday be reversed, and Israel would be loved (Ruhamah) and would become his people (Ammi) once again. They would be "like the sands of the seashore" in number ([Hosea 1:10](#); see [Genesis 22:17](#)). This, of course, will happen when Israel repents and receives a new heart (see exposition on [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)).

Paul explicitly applied the promise of [1:10](#) to Gentiles as well as Jews (see [Romans 9:23-25](#); [1 Peter 2:10](#)).

Hosea 2:2-5 *"Try to reason with your mother!"* Looking beyond Hosea's personal domestic tragedy, God charged Israel, his wife, with adultery, and urged "her" believing children to call her to repentance. Just as Gomer had sought "food and drink . . . clothing of wool and linen" from other men, Israel had sought spiritual sustenance from false gods.

[Hosea 2:6-13](#) *"I'll try anything to keep her from sin!"* Both God and Hosea tried desperately to keep their "wife" from sin, thinking she would surely come to her senses ([Hosea 2:6-7](#)). Surely she would come to realize that her true blessings came from her true husband, not from her adulterous lovers ([Hosea 2:8](#)). Just as the Israelites at Sinai had taken their God-given wealth and made the golden calf, so the Israelites of Hosea's day were using their God-given wealth to worship Baal ([Hosea 2:8](#)).

Hosea (like God) was prepared to go to great lengths to bring his wife back to her rightful place. He would deprive her of her luxuries, expose her before her lovers, and remove every occasion of joy from her life. Hopefully then, instead of finding her deviation satisfying, she would realize that her sin had consequences ([Hosea 2:9-13](#)).

[Hosea 2:14-23](#) *Her story will have a happy ending!* If Gomer and Israel would deal with their sin, they would find restoration and joy ([Hosea 2:14-17](#)). "In that coming day," referring to the end of human history (see exposition on [Isaiah 2:5-4:1](#)), Israel's restoration will result in the lifting of the curse from nature ([Hosea 2:18, 21-23](#); see [Romans 8:19-22](#)). Warfare will end ([Hosea 2:18](#); see [Isaiah 2:4](#)). The people will once again own the Lord as their God, in fulfillment of the New Covenant (see [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)). The tragedy that had befallen both Gomer and the nation Israel will be completely reversed. That new day ([Hosea 2:21-23](#)) will be better even than the days of Israel's youth ([Hosea 2:15](#)). The names of Hosea's children will change to their positive meanings of "love" and "my people" ([Hosea 2:23](#)). Even Jezreel will be known not as bloodshed but as its positive meaning: "God plants" ([Hosea 2:22](#)).

[Hosea 3:1-5](#) *The power of love and hope.* God told Hosea to reclaim Gomer from her life of adultery, as an example of his love for adulterous Israel. Hosea literally bought his wife back and begged her to stay with him. He saw their loveless marriage as a symbol of Israel, which would for "a long time" be committed neither to idolatry nor to God ([Hosea 3:4](#)). Yet he was confident that Israel would one day return to its rightful husband ([Hosea 3:5](#)).

The price Hosea paid to redeem Gomer indicates the depth to which she had sunk. The usual price for a slave was 30 shekels of silver (see [Exodus 21:32](#)), but he paid only 15 for Gomer. Barley was considered fit only for animals.

Hosea's vision of a religionless Israel ([Hosea 3:4](#)) seems prophetic of the agnosticism common among many Jews today, who are committed neither to their own nor any other religious tradition. Yet in God's appointed time, Israel will come to its senses and experience a national regeneration ([Hosea 3:5](#); see [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)). Then, they will "return to the LORD their God and to David's descendant, their king," that is, Christ the Son of David.

[Hosea 4:1-3](#) *The indictment against Israel.* Having experienced the unfaithfulness of his own wife ([Hosea 1-3](#)), Hosea spoke to Israel about its unfaithfulness to God ([Hosea 4-14](#)). Hosea charged Israel with having totally forsaken God and having therefore become hopelessly immoral. This had brought great suffering on the whole nation. Sin affects not only the human sinner but animate and inanimate creation as well ([Hosea 4:3](#)).

[Hosea 4:4-10](#) *Like priests, like people!* All Israel was guilty before God. When God sent them priests to reveal his will, they only argued with them ([Hosea 4:4](#)). Therefore they would "stumble" even in broad daylight ([Hosea 4:5](#)). Because they had willfully rejected knowledge of God, he would reject them as his witnesses to the world ([Hosea 4:6](#); see exposition on [Isaiah 43:8-13](#)). Both

laypeople and priests had become hopelessly corrupt, feeding off each other's sin. God would bring their false religion to naught ([Hosea 4:7-10](#)).

Humanity's problem is not a lack of information about God but willful rejection of the abundant information available. Just as both people and priest encouraged each other's sin in Hosea's time, churches today often call pastors who will be like them rather than help them to be like God.

[Hosea 4:11-19](#) *Idolatry, intoxication, immorality: Substitutes for truth.* Because Israel had strayed from its true God ([Hosea 4:12](#)), it had become involved in idolatry, drunkenness, and depraved sexual sins. Israel ("Ephraim," [Hosea 13:12](#)) was beyond hope and should be left alone (compare exposition on [§Jeremiah 7:16-27](#)). The people of Judah were warned against associating with their northern relatives ([Hosea 4:15](#)). Israel's decision to reject God was futile and would ultimately bring judgment ([Hosea 4:19](#)). Those who reject God always seek a substitute to fill the resulting void.

[Hosea 5:1-7](#) *Sins too great, sacrifices too late.* Though Israel and its leaders had not ignored God, their spiritual defection and adultery did not escape God's notice. Try as they might to hide their true condition, God saw them for what they were ([Hosea 5:1-3](#)). They were enslaved by their sins ([Hosea 5:4-5](#)). Judah shared in Israel's sin and would also share in its judgment ([Hosea 5:5](#)). When they came to the end of themselves and finally sought God with their religious formality, they would not find him, for he would have withdrawn himself from them ([Hosea 5:6](#)).

[Hosea 5:8-15](#) *He'll strike like a lion, then he'll retire.* Hosea called on the ram's horn to sound the warning of judgment. Again he noted the willful nature of Israel's sin ([Hosea 5:11](#)). "Determined to worship idols" ([Hosea 5:11](#)) recalls Jeroboam's blatantly rejecting the Aaronic priesthood, installing his own priests, and setting up golden calves at Dan and Bethel (see exposition on [§1 Kings 12:25-33](#)).

Israel's decay would be rapid, like that caused by a moth; Judah would decay more gradually, like dry rot ([Hosea 5:12](#)). Judgment would fall on the southern kingdom 136 years after it fell on the north, but it would be equally certain for both ([Hosea 5:13-14](#)). When destruction came, God would withdraw from his people, allowing their well-deserved punishment to bring them to repentance ([Hosea 5:15](#)).

[Hosea 6:1-3](#) *Looking ahead to the Millennium.* Hosea looked beyond the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, to the day when Israel as a nation will be converted (see [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)) and God will set up his millennial kingdom. A remnant of Israelites, both northern and southern, would repent during and after the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities (see exposition on [§Isaiah 10:20-23](#)); but at the end of time, the entire nation will turn to God (see [Romans 11:26-27](#)).

[Hosea 6:4-11](#) *What should he do to them?* Throughout their centuries of spiritual vacillation, God had often confronted Israel and Judah through his priests and prophets ([Hosea 6:4-6](#)). But just like Adam, they deliberately disobeyed ([Hosea 6:7](#)). Thus the Lord's rhetorical question: "What should I do with you?" ([Hosea 6:4](#)). Judah would fare no better in judgment than Israel, for it had committed the same sins ([Hosea 6:11](#)). Judah would have ample opportunity to learn from the northern kingdom's fall, but tragically would not (see exposition on [§Jeremiah 3:6-11](#); on [Hosea 6:6](#), see [1 Samuel 15:22](#); [Matthew 9:13](#); [Matthew 12:7](#)).

[Hosea 7:1-10](#) *God and his unwilling patient.* God wanted to heal Israel's spiritual disease, but Israel wasn't interested ([Hosea 7:1-3](#)). Like a hot oven, the people were consumed with sexual passion

([Hosea 7:4-7](#)). In dividing its loyalties between God and its pagan neighbors, Israel was like a half-baked cake, burned on one side by the overheated oven ([Hosea 7:8-10](#)).

[Hosea 7:11-16](#) *Choosing the wrong friends.* Like a silly dove, Israel tried to play Egypt and Assyria against each other through political alliances, while failing to trust in God as its true security (see [Isaiah: Background](#) and exposition on [Isaiah 30:1-17](#)). God would see to it, therefore, that both nations would turn against them ([Hosea 7:12, 16](#); see [2 Kings 17](#)).

[Hosea 8:1-14](#) *They'll reap more than they sow!* Israel's sin was so great that no eleventh-hour repentance could save it ([Hosea 8:2-3](#)). Israel had sown the seed of its own defeat and would reap much more than it had sown ([Hosea 8:7](#)). God would sweep them away in judgment, and the blessings that should have been theirs would be "swallowed up" by their conquerors ([Hosea 8:7-8](#)). God had wanted Israel for himself, but they had "sold themselves" to foreign lovers and followed pagan religions ([Hosea 8:9-14](#)). Judgment must surely come to both Israel and Judah.

Though Judah's final defeat would not come till 586 B.C.—136 years after Israel's fall to Assyria in 722—the Assyrian king Sennacherib would invade Judah in 701 and destroy all of the fortified cities except Jerusalem, which would be miraculously spared ([Hosea 8:14](#); see [Hosea 1:7](#); [2 Kings 18:13-19:37](#)).

On Samaria's "calf" ([Hosea 8:5](#)), see [1 Kings 12:25-33](#). Israel would figuratively return to the bondage of "Egypt" ([Hosea 8:13](#)), though this time in Assyria.

[Hosea 9:1-9](#) *Their sentence: Exile in Assyria.* Because the people of Israel had behaved "like prostitutes" with foreign gods ([Hosea 9:1-2](#)), they would be exiled to "Egypt," that is, Assyria ([Hosea 9:3-6](#)). Israel's sin had so completely warped their spiritual discernment that they considered God's true prophets to be insane fools ([Hosea 9:7-8](#)). They had become as depraved as the men who committed the unspeakable atrocity at Gibeah ([Hosea 9:9](#); see [Judges 19](#)).

[Hosea 9:10-14](#) *Their curse: Barren wombs.* Like a caring father, the Lord looked back to the time when Israel became a nation, portraying it as grapes in the wilderness and the firstfruit of a fig tree. Israel had been a pleasure to God as he anticipated their growth ([Hosea 9:10](#)). Now, in his anger, he pronounced a curse on the entire process of procreation and child rearing ([Hosea 9:10-14](#)). To people of that day, barrenness was the worst of all curses. The prophet could wish no greater judgment on Israel.

[Hosea 9:15-17](#) *From Gilgal to exile.* Citing Gilgal as a symbol of Israel's sin, God cursed the nation once more with barrenness and exile. They would become "wanderers, homeless among the nations." Gilgal was a place of idol worship (see [Hosea 12:11](#); [Amos 4:4](#)) and was also the place where Israel had made Saul its first king (see [1 Samuel 11:14-15](#)), doubly signifying Israel's rejection of God, its true King.

Though a few people from the northern tribes would escape to Judah when Israel fell and some would remain in the land (see exposition on [2 Chron. 30:1-9](#)), the majority would never return from exile. Yet these 10 "lost tribes" are known to God (see [James 1:1](#); [Rev. 7:4-8](#)), and in his time they will all be restored (see exposition on [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) and on [Ezekiel 37:1-28](#)).

Hosea 10:1-8 *The more it received, the more it rebelled.* The more God had blessed Israel, the more they had used those blessings to finance their paganism, but God would break down their pagan altars ([Hosea 10:1-2](#)). Neither their king nor their idols could save them; in shame and desperation they would call on the mountains to cover them ([Hosea 10:3-8](#); see [Luke 23:30](#); [Rev. 6:16](#)). Recalling again the atrocity at Gibeah ([Hosea 10:9](#); see [Hosea 9:9](#)), the Lord implied that the present generation was as depraved as the wicked men of Gibeah (see [Judges 19-20](#)). Comparing Israel to a "trained heifer," he declared that, though he had made their work enjoyable, he would now subject them to harsh discipline ([Hosea 10:11](#)).

Hosea 10:12-15 *Want to reap love? Sow righteousness!* Israel could find mercy instead of judgment, if only they would repent and seek righteousness. God called on them to repent right away ([Hosea 10:12](#)). Otherwise, the only option was judgment ([Hosea 10:13-15](#)).

Hosea 11:1-7 *Their tragic journey: From Egypt to Canaan . . . to Assyria.* God spoke tenderly of his deep love for Israel, comparing it to the love of a father for a disobedient child. He had "taught Israel how to walk," that is, revealed his will to them. He "took care of" them and "stooped to feed" them. He had remained faithful though they were faithless. Now, despite his great reluctance to do so ([Hosea 11:8](#)), he must punish them—this time with exile in Assyria instead of Egypt ([Hosea 11:5](#); see [Hosea 8:13](#); [Hosea 9:3](#)).

Matthew applied [Hosea 11:1](#) to Christ (see [Matthew 2:15](#)). God called both Israel and Jesus his son (see [Exodus 4:22-23](#)), and both lived for a while in Egypt. Matthew's use of the passage shows the beautiful identification of the Son of God with the historical people of God. Both had a unique relationship with the Father.

Hosea 11:8-11 *Punished with regret, restored with rejoicing.* Though the Israelites deserved their punishment, God, as a loving Father, was reluctant to bring it about ([Hosea 11:8-9](#)). Therefore, even as he was preparing their punishment, he was also preparing their everlasting salvation ([Hosea 11:10-11](#)). He will "roar like a lion," summoning them from their lands of captivity (compare [Isaiah 11:12](#); [Isaiah 43:5-6](#); [Ezekiel 37:12](#)). They will return like a flock of birds—not like the silly doves of [Hosea 7:11](#), but "trembling" with a proper sense of awe before their Redeemer, who will restore them to their land.

Hosea 11:12-12:6 *"Back to Bethel!"* Israel was seeking spiritual life from idolatry, which was as hot and dry as the desert wind ([Hosea 11:12-12:1](#)). Though Judah, compared to Israel, was still walking with God ([Hosea 11:12](#)), it too had forgotten its source of life. Jacob, who even in the womb had "wrestled" with Esau for the blessing of the firstborn (see [Genesis 25:26](#)) and had later more literally wrestled a blessing from God (see [Genesis 32:22-32](#)), had found at Bethel the place of true worship and blessing (see [Genesis 28:10-22](#)). God implied that his people should return to Bethel for a face-to-face encounter with him.

In calling them back to Bethel, God had in view Bethel as it had been in Jacob's time, not Bethel as it had become—a place of idolatry (see [Hosea 5:8-15](#); [Hosea 10:15](#); [Amos 4:4](#); [Amos 5:5](#)).

Hosea 12:7-14 *But they prefer gold to God!* Israel was interested only in getting rich through trade with its pagan neighbors ([Hosea 12:7-8](#)). God had shown Israel his love and faithfulness by sending his prophets time and again to call them back to himself ([Hosea 12:9-10](#)). But instead of being thankful to

God for his protection, Israel had provoked him by pursuing materialism and idolatry. Therefore God must punish them; they will reap the harvest of the sin they have sown.

Hosea 13:1-3 *Once like champions, now like chaff.* When Israel ("Ephraim") had been obedient to God, the whole world respected them ([Hosea 13:1](#)). But as they descended into idolatry, they had lost that influence and were now no more powerful than dew or chaff. Though Israel may still have appeared to be prosperous, its days were numbered and it would pass away.

Hosea 13:4-14 *From rejection, to rejection, to restoration.* God had saved Israel from Egypt only to find that, once they were secure, they rejected him ([Hosea 13:4-6](#)). Therefore God must reject them (see [Hosea 14:4-7](#)), but eventually he will restore them (see [Hosea 14:4-7](#)). Ultimately, Israel's defection will result not in the death of the nation but in the death of death itself ([Hosea 13:14](#); compare [1 Cor. 15:55](#))!

Hosea 13:15-16 *Judgment like the desert wind.* Again using the figure of the hot east wind, Hosea warned of Israel's imminent judgment. It would be a time of unspeakable suffering.

Hosea 14:1-8 *"Return, and he will redeem!"* One last time Hosea urged his nation to repent and humbly return to God ([Hosea 14:1-3](#)) and noted God's words of welcome to his repentant people ([Hosea 14:4-8](#)). Even though Israel's sin would bring about its downfall, it was not beyond the scope of God's redeeming grace. No matter how serious had been their sin-sickness, their healing and restoration would be complete. Their sin had made them the targets of God's wrath and judgment. Their repentance would make them the objects of his love ([Hosea 14:4](#)). Restoration would be possible because they would have dealt with their sin and idolatry ([Hosea 14:8](#)). Because their sin had been dealt with, their fruit would be pleasing to God ([Hosea 14:8](#)).

Hosea 14:9 *The wise will walk in his path!* Those in fellowship with God would understand what Hosea had written. Those who resisted God would not understand and would be judged.

HOSEA

(PEOPLE TO REMEMBER FROM HOSEA)

Key Facts: Prophet, told by God to marry a prostitute ([Hosea 1:2](#))

Father: Beeri ([Hosea 1:1](#))

Wife: Gomer ([Hosea 1:2-3](#))

Sons: Jezreel, Lo-ammi ([Hosea 1:4, 9](#))

Daughter: Lo-ruhamah ([Hosea 1:6](#))

Total Bible References: 4

Key References: [Hosea 1-14](#); [Romans 9:25](#)

Hosea Speaks

She's gone again! In spite of the pleading from Jezreel, she's gone! In spite of all my attempts to keep her home, she's gone again! Why, oh, why did he order me to marry a prostitute? As I could have predicted, she's been nothing but unfaithful ever since the wedding. ([Hosea 1:2](#); [Hosea 2:5-6](#))

But even more disturbing was his command just yesterday: "Go and get your wife again. Bring her back to you and love her, even though she loves adultery." ([Hosea 3:1](#))

I reminded the Lord that this was a violation of his own Word, but he told me to find her anyway. Of course I did what he ordered. I found Gomer in the slave market, where she had been dumped by her lovers. I was able to redeem her for 15 shekels of silver and five bushels of barley and some wine—not much of a price for a human being, however sinful! ([Hosea 3:2](#))

Time and again I have asked the reason for all this, but of course the answer is obvious: My miserable marriage has served as a sensational illustration of the marriage between God and his unfaithful wife, Israel. His wife, like mine, is notorious for sharing her bed with pagan idols. So in some small way I can sympathize with him. Jehovah's hurt is my hurt. My pain is his pain. ([Hosea 4:12](#))

Well, whatever my suffering, I count it an honor to serve as his prophet, for ours is the privilege of knowing the future. I know how God's troubled marriage will end. His wife will repent and be fully restored. As he has said, "I will heal you of your idolatry and faithlessness, and my love will know no bounds, for my anger will be gone forever!" ([Hosea 14:4](#))

That's what the future holds for his marriage. I'm not so sure about mine.

Spiritual Lessons from Hosea

- Though God's calling Hosea to marry a prostitute was very unusual and was for a specific prophetic purpose, he may sometimes call us to do things that seem illogical or unproductive by human standards. When so called, we should readily obey. Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac is another example of such obedience (see [Genesis 22:1-2](#)).
- In a day of easy divorce, Hosea's efforts to win back his unfaithful wife provide a much-needed good example. The law provided for divorce (see [Deut. 24:1](#)) but only "as a concession to [Israel's] hard-hearted wickedness" ([Matthew 19:8](#)). Divorce is never the best option, even in cases of sexual infidelity.
- Though God disciplines us, he is also eager to forgive. God ordered Hosea to give his children names with meanings suggesting judgment ([Hosea 1:4, 6, 9](#)) but later gave a redeeming interpretation to those names ([Hosea 1:10-2:1, 23](#)). (See also [Psalm 103:9](#); [Romans 9:25](#).)

Key Verse

"Go and marry a prostitute, so some of her children will be born to you from other men. This will illustrate the way my people have been untrue to me, openly committing adultery against the LORD by worshiping other gods" ([Hosea 1:2](#)).