

Hosea

Summary

In this book, the prophet Hosea brings a message of judgment and a plea for repentance to both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Hosea prophesied to both of these nations but focused mainly on the Northern Kingdom, due to their propensity to fall into Baal worship. Baal was a pagan weather god who was commonly worshipped in the surrounding culture of Israel. Baal was considered extremely significant due to the important role of agriculture in their society. God asks Hosea to marry a prostitute, whom he loved, but who would inevitably be unfaithful to him. The reason for this was so that Hosea could truly understand how desperately God wanted His unfaithful people to return to Him and love Him. The personal experience of Hosea provides a framework for understanding the way that God saw His people. Like many of the minor prophets, at the end of the book, Hosea pleads with the people to return to God.

Author

No one knows if Hosea or someone else wrote this book. The book of Hosea begins the collection of the Minor Prophets. They are called minor because they are shorter than the "Major Prophets" that are much longer.

Date

Within the book of Hosea, it states that the life and ministry of Hosea occurred during the reigns of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (in Judah), and Jeroboam II. Many scholars suggest a general date in the middle of the eighth century, around 750 B.C.

Primary Characters

Hosea (Hosea 1-14)

Gomer (Hosea 1-3)

Historical Moments

Hosea Marries and Has Children (Hosea 1)

Hosea Confronts the Northern and Southern Kingdoms (Hosea 2, 4-14)

Major Theological Themes

God Is Loyal to His People - Although the people continued to disrespect God and fall into idolatry, God continued to yearn for them and draw them back to Himself. God asked Hosea to marry an unfaithful wife so that he could understand what it is to have someone he loved continue to be unfaithful. God loved His people desperately and wanted them to return to Him, which was the reason that He sent prophets to warn them.

God Is Just - Despite the fact that God truly desires His people to abandon their idolatrous ways, He cannot force them to do so and, at the same time, still have an authentic relationship with them. God desires repentance from His people, but also cannot ignore the transgressions and a violation of their covenant relationship. The action of the people against God requires a penalty and because God is holy and just, the people will face the consequences of their actions.

Lessons Learned from Hosea

God Loves Us Even in Our Unfaithfulness - God tells Hosea to marry a woman that will continually be unfaithful to him and who will cause his reputation to be questioned. Nonetheless, He calls Hosea to be faithful. This is the story of God's love for us. Despite our continued unfaithfulness to Him and the way we misrepresent Him, God loves us deeply. Romans 5:8 says, *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Even in our darkest moments, God desires for us to return to Him. We must always remember that there is nothing we can do to be separated from God's love.

God Takes Idolatry Seriously - In the book of Hosea, one of the main reasons God brings judgment upon His people is due to their idolatrous behavior. In the most general sense, idolatry is putting anything else before God. In the book of Hosea, this was referring to the people worshipping false gods. Hosea 13:2 reads, *Now they sin more and more; they make idols for themselves from their silver cleverly fashioned images, all of them the work of craftsmen.* While we do not tend to fall into literal idol worship the way Israel did, we do often put other things before God. We must always remember that God is not just a part of our lives, but the overriding and all-consuming source that should affect everything we do.