HOSEA

*God's faithfulness to unfaithful Israel*

TIME PERIOD

Approx. 760-710 BC

KEY VERSE

*"The Lord said to me, 'Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.'"*

3:1

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Hosea was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel in the last decades before it was taken by Assyria. God tells Hosea to marry a prostitute, *"for like an adulterous wife, this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord"* (1:2) by worshiping other gods (2:5, 8; 1 Kings 18:21). Hosea marries Gomer, who symbolizes Israel's spiritual prostitution. Hosea played the role of God, and he would take her back and restore the relationship. They have three children who are given symbolic names:

1. Jezreel: Because God was going to punish Jehu's house for the bloodbath in Jezreel. It seems that Jehu went too far in carrying out God's judgment in 2 Kings 9-10.
2. Not-loved: Because God will no longer show love to the Northern Kingdom that he should forgive them.
3. Not-my-people: For they have broken the covenant and are no longer God's people.

The restorations described in 6:1-3, 11:8-11 and 14:2-10 are probably "messianic" restorations (possibly a call to the Northern Kingdom to return to God), as the Northern Kingdom never returned from exile.

There are many expressions in Hosea that point to Jesus: Judah and Israel will come together and appoint one leader (1:11), *"David, their king"* (3:5), *"the third day"* (6:2, 1 Cor 15:4), *"out of Egypt I called my son"* (11:1, Matt 2:15). The name Hosea means "salvation", while Jesus (Yehoshua) means "Yahweh is salvation". In addition, "*Not-my-people*" and *"Not-loved"* are used about the salvation of the Gentiles in the NT (e.g., Rom 9:26, 1 Pet 2:10). The Gentiles were not God's people but became God's people. They had previously not received mercy, but now they have received mercy.