

Preaching of Prophets II

Hoshea, a northern prophet; the message of spiritual unfaithfulness

Hosea 1–14.

Hosea

- **Hoshaiah → Hosea: “YHWH has saved”**
 - His family a type of Israel (more below)
- **A northern prophet, son of Beeri, probably working in Samaria**
- **Israel in Hosea’s time**
 - Religious pluralism, especially Baalism; outward devotion to YHWH, political revolutions in Israel’s final years
 - Ephraim = Israel; Judah also condemned
- **A man of learning and rhetoric**
- **Preached in the last half of eighth century B.C.**
 - Preached “in the days of **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah**” (c. 783–687/6 B.C.) and “**Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel**” (Jeroboam’s reign: c. 786–746 B.C.)
 - Saw the revival of Israel as a regional power under Jeroboam II
 - Does not mention Jeroboam II’s successors and does not describe the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C., but if he was still active by the time of Hezekiah, he would have witnessed the fall of Israel

The Book of Hosea

- Overview
 - Title (1:1)
 - The Prodigal Wife (1:2–3:5)
 - The Prodigal People (4:1–14:9)
 - The Message of Judgment (4:1–10:15)
 - The Message of Restoration (11:1–14:9)
- Different narrative voices
 - Third person narrator (later editor?)
 - Second person declarations and oracles of YHWH
 - First person autobiographical descriptions
- Theme: “Yet I *am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for *there is* no saviour beside me.” (13:4)
 - The overarching issue is spiritual unfaithfulness
 - In the northern tradition, Hosea focuses again and again on the Exodus story and the Mosaic covenant (cf. “E” in Torah; contrast with Deuteronomic and Davidic covenants of “J” and DH)

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The Question of Gomer

- The story is allegorical and perhaps not literal
 - NRSV HarperCollins note: “Perhaps for wife and children, the term means simply that they belong to a people who were religiously promiscuous
- Gomer was a prostitute and/or an idolater before her marriage
- Gomer became unfaithful and/or an idolater after her marriage to Hosea
- Hosea’s response
 - Heartbreak
 - Enraged rejection
 - Efforts and reconciliation

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The Prodigal Wife (1:2–3:5)

- Hosea's Family as Signs to Israel (1:2–11)
 - The sign of **her unfaithfulness** (1:2b–3a)
 - Note “the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing from the Lord*”
 - The sign of **Jezebel** (1:3b–5): recalls the violent overthrow of the house of Ahab, foresaw the overthrow of Israel
 - The sign of **Lo-ruhamah** (1:6–7): no more mercy
 - The sign of **Lo-ammi** (1:8–9): not my people
 - **The prophesied restoration of Israel and Judah** (1:10–11)
- Her Punishment (2:1–13)
 - “Their mother hath played the harlot”—*were they illegitimate or, perhaps, had she prayed to Baal and/or Asherah for children?*
 - **Israel thought that corn, wine, oil, and precious metals came from Baal, but the Lord, who actually gave them, will take them all away!**
- Her Restoration and Israel's (2:14–23)
 - They will have mercy and be his people again . . .
- Her Redemption (3:1–5)

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The Message of Judgment (4:1–10:15)

The Prodigal People (4:1–14:9)

- The indictment (4:1–19)
 - **KJV “controversy” in 4:1 sets up a legal charge or indictment**
 - *Israel's unfaithfulness resulted from their seeking after Baal and Asherah for fertility for their fields, flocks, and wives (like Gomer might have with Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi?); see 4:10–12*
- The verdict (5:1–15)
- The plea of Israel (6:1–3)
 - **Israel will return to the Lord and ask him to “raise them up” in the third day (6:1–2, looking forward to 13:14)**
- The reply of the Lord (6:4–11)
 - **The Lord wants a moral change of heart, not just outward observance:** “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.” (6:6)
- The crimes of Israel (7:1–16)
- The prophecy of judgment (8:1–10:15)
 - **False kings, idolatry, and foreign dependence bring destruction (8:1–14)**
 - **Violence and idolatry bring death and exile (9:1–17)**
- Israel to lose king and calf (10:1–15)

The Message of Restoration (11:1–14:9)

The Prodigal People (4:1–14:9)

- God's love for the prodigal people (11:1–11)
 - "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love . . ." (11:1–4)
- God's chastisement of the prodigal people (11:12–13:16)
 - Despite God's goodness to Jacob and Moses, Ephraim has provoked him (11:12–12:14)
 - Social and economic injustice as well as idolatry are Israel's sins > see 12:7
 - The Lord will devour them like a lion for idolatry (13:1–8)
 - Nevertheless he will be their king and ransom them from death (13:9–14)
 - Samaria will be destroyed for rebellion (13: 15–16)

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The Image of Resurrection (13:14)

- **"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."**
 - Exegesis: **the "dead" kingdom of Israel will be revived after a time, the Lord will not "repent" or change his mind on this**
 - Exposition: **the "revival" of the people of God as a group reminds us of the bodily resurrection of each of us as individuals**
 - Note Jacob's similar connection between the gathering of Israel and the resurrection of the body in 2 Nephi 9:1–4

God's Restoration of the Prodigal People (14:1–9)

- The prophet's call (14:1–3)
 - "O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive *us* graciously . . ." (14:1–2a)
- The Lord's declaration (14:4–9)
 - "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel . . . the ways of the LORD *are* right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein." (14:4–5, 9)