

The word of the Lord that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

- Ministry likely occurring between 750-715 B.C.
- The focus of the subject matter is the northern Kingdom, but references and application are made to Judah as well.
- Following the reign of Jeroboam II, the political situation in Israel is in upheaval with 6 kings reigning over the course of 20 years. Four of the six were assassinated, and 1 was deposed.
 - Consider the turbulent 60's and 70's in America, but then imagine that LBJ, Ford, Carter, were all assassinated in addition to JFK being killed and Nixon resigning, all of this happening with a heavily armed and hostile Soviet Union beginning to show aggression.
- You see, the threat of an increasingly powerful and aggressive Assyria also hung over their heads.
 - When Assyria first attacked Israel, Menahem and Rezin (the king of Syria) paid tribute to stave off the aggression.
 - Four years and a couple kings later, Pekah, king of Israel and Rezin the king of Syria, decided to throw of the burden of Assyria.
 - After Judah (under Ahaz) refused to conspire with them, they decided to team up and go to war against Judah.
 - It was at this point that Ahaz called upon the king of Assyria to help, and the help he provided would eventually result in the complete overthrow of the northern kingdom of Israel.
- It is most likely during this time, from the end of the reign of Jeroboam II reign to just before the fall of Samaria that Hosea's prophecies were given.

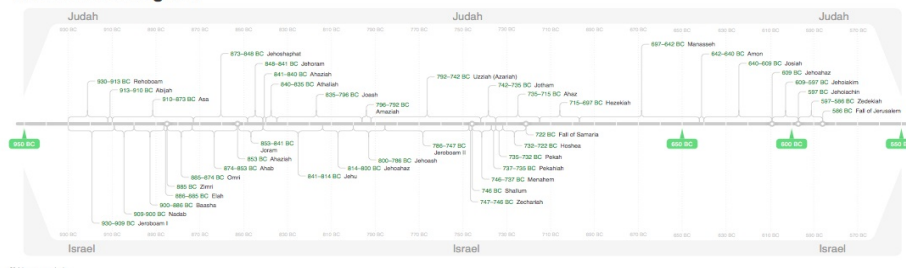
Passages to read:

2 Kings 15-17

Isaiah 7:1-8:22

2 Chronicles 28

The Divided Kingdom



The Forest: Hosea 1:2 - 3:5

Opening Narrative: Hosea's unfaithful wife and her children (1:1-11)

A Yahweh's First Punishment - no longer love her and remove the land's fertility (2:1-5)
B Yahweh's Second Punishment - keep her from lovers until she returns to him (2:5-7)
C Yahweh's Third Punishment - take back all the gifts because they worship Baal (2:8-13)
D TURNING POINT: Yahweh will woo Israel back (2:14-15)
C Yahweh's Response to Third Punishment - remove Baal from her lips (2:16-17)
B Yahweh's Response to Second Punishment - Remarry returning Israel (2:18-20)
A Yahweh's Response to First Punishment - Restore the land's fertility and love her again (2:21-23)
Closing Narrative: Hosea taking back his unfaithful wife (3:1-5)

What we'll see unfolding in Hosea is one of central motifs of the Bible, and if you have this framework in mind, you kind find your place in any biblical narrative, from the OT as a whole down to a single story.

Covenant/Creation

Sin

Exile

Restoration

Covenant

Exile

Repentance

Restoration

Covenant

Sin

Death

Resurrection

The Tree

The purpose of this section is threefold:

1. To explain the symbolic names of Hosea's children
2. To warn the people of the coming judgment upon Israel
3. To encourage the righteous about God's faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham.

The Marriage

"When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord." So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son."

What does God command Hosea to do?

The phrase here translated "wife of whoredom" - could mean:

- A prostitute
- An otherwise adulterous or otherwise promiscuous woman

It's not clear whether this command to Hosea is instructing him to go find a prostitute and marry her, or if he is to marry someone who he knows will be unfaithful afterwards, although the former is the most likely. We shouldn't think of her as a prostitute in the sense of a call-girl in Vegas, but more of an immoral girl who is dependent on gifts from her lovers.

What is your first reaction when you hear this command? Does this cause any difficulties for you?

If Gomer was a prostitute, would it have been unlawful for Hosea to marry her (cf. Lev. 21:14)?

Why does he command this?

..."For the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord."

What comparison is made in these verses?

Hosea's going and marrying a promiscuous woman (presumably knowing she will continue in infidelity), is made parallel to the Yahweh's relationship to Israel. Israel is an adulterous mother, and individual Israelites are her children.

The land is personified as whoring by forsaking the Lord. All the people have forsaken the Lord, and this is the betrayal of an unfaithful wife.

Literally - "whoring whoredom away from the Lord" with the emphasis on the act of adultery and each act that drives them away from the Lord. Every act of idolatry has driven the people further and further away from the Lord.

What happens to a relationship that is characterized by unfaithfulness?

How does this comparison strike you? How does it compare to the way you view your own sin?

"Hosea's theology raises questions with anyone who has a cavalier regard for sin. Sin is a destructive power and a deadly force that interrupts a person's relationship with God. In the eyes of God, sin is like prostitution."

While every sin is "sin" and an affront to God, are some sins more severe than others or are all equally considered "adultery" to God?

What does Hosea do?

He obeys, and in this obedience, we get a glimpse of the real and painful story in which Hosea lived. Hosea was called to live and feel the pain of being in a covenant with an unfaithful partner.

Hosea is called to walk in the footsteps of his God as a living message to the people of Israel? In what way are called to do something similar?

What was the practical fruit of this obedience for Hosea?

- Understanding God's deep hatred of sin
- Understanding of God's love for those who don't deserve it
- Wonder at God's ability to love those who reject him
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Jezreel

"And the Lord said to him, "Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

Hosea obeys the Lord, marries a prostitute, and gives birth to a son and the Lord says to name him Jezreel.

What does message does this child's name send to Israel?

It's a message of judgment to whom?

Some background here:

Jezreel was a site of much blood being spilt in Israel's history - This was where Deborah and Gideon fought their battles in Judges, where Israel was routed by the Philistines in 1 Sam 28, where Naboth had his vineyard until Jezebel killed him and took it, where Jehu killed Jezebel along with the whole house of Ahab.

Now, when we read "I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel," it raises some questions. It sounds as if the house of Jehu is being punished for the bloodshed in Jezreel. Jehu was for all intents and purposes commissioned by God to strike down the house of Ahab and clear out the prophets of Ba'al. He did just that in the bloody work at Jezreel, and when it was all complete, in 2 Ki. 10:30, the LORD commends him for it:

"And the Lord said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in carrying out what is right in

my eyes, and have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.” (2 Kings 10:30, ESV)

How can v4 be reconciled 2 Ki. 10:30? Why is the house of Jehu being punished for something that the Lord commended?

The best answer I've seen to this is in a couple commentaries I've looked at. The phrase in v. 4 literally reads, "I will visit the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu." The way this particular instance should likely be understood is in the sense of, "I will bring upon the house of Jehu the same violent end that came upon the house of Omri."

So it is punishment on the house of Jehu, not for committing the acts at Jezreel, but for not learning the lesson that Jezreel taught and turning aside from following in the footsteps of his predecessors.

Not only will the house of Jehu be brought down in this judgment - that is, the kingship and lineage of Jehu - but the entire kingdom of Israel. Both of these things were fulfilled in 2 Kings 15, with the events in Ibleam which is in the valley of Jezreel.

Lo-Ruhamah

*"She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the Lord said to him, "Call her name **No Mercy**, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen."*

The second child born to Hosea and Gomer is to be called Lo-Ruhamma, which means "Not Loved" or "No Pity"

What's the message sent to Israel by this name?

Imagine the whispers and the gossip that must have surrounded Hosea having a daughter with this name. "She must be child of one of Gomer's other lovers. He has completely rejected her." And yet, this name is actually a sermon to the house of Israel, "the Lord has rejected you for your unfaithfulness."

The God who said to Moses in Exodus 33: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," has said, "I will have no mercy to you."

The next phrase, translated "to forgive them at all" has been quite vexing for biblical interpreters. The two realistic options for translating the Hebrew here are:

"I will surely forgive them"

Or

"I will surely surely take them away" (as into exile)

The first translation probably has the strongest linguistic case, but would be the exact opposite of the previous sentence which makes it difficult (but not completely unheard of; see the reversal in the next few verses). However, the second option makes the most sense in the context and is a viable translation.

This fit is seen in the parallel language:

I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel
 But I will surely take them away.
But I will have pity on the house of Judah
 And I will deliver them

What is God's message to Judah in contrast? What is special about how this promise is to be fulfilled?

What event in the history of Judah can be considered a fulfillment of this?

See 2 Kings 19.

Lo-Ammi

*"When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. And the Lord said, "Call his name **Not My People**, for **you are not my people**, and **I am not your God**. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be **like the sand of the sea**, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, "**You are not my people**," it shall be said to them, "**Children of the living God**." And the **children of Judah** and the **children of Israel** shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel. Say to your brothers, "**You are my people**," and to your sisters, "**You have received mercy**.""*

What's the message sent to Israel by this name?

The people who's very identity is bound up in being the children of God, the people of God, are told that he has rejected them - they are not his people and he is not their God. This is a striking judgment for this people. The God who said to Moses at the Exodus: "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God," has now said, "You are not my people."

What is so striking about the next few sentences?

God says, You (Israel) are not my people, yet I will fulfill my promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea - immeasurable. Not only that, but Lo-Ammi shall become Ammi - Not my people shall become my people, sons of the Living God.

By juxtaposing these two contrasting statements, what questions are raised?

How can this be? How does one get from total reject and despair to acceptance and hope?

One way to characterize these sentences would be:

"What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?"

What do these verses tell us about the way our sin affects or doesn't affect God's promises, or our experiencing of them?

In one sense, we are told that God will remain faithful to his promises, but our unfaithfulness to his covenant could disqualify us from sharing in those promises. At the same time, it is by God's grace and compassion on sinners that he restores them from "Not My People" to "My People." They are all "not my people" to begin with.

What is "the head" Hosea is referring to?

Hosea says, "they shall go up from the land," or "they shall come up from the land" - what might this be referring to?

Vegetation (the name Jezreel means "God sows") - that is the people sprout up like fruitful vegetation, and may also indicate a restoration of fertility in the land.

Resurrection - coming up out of the earth. It is not unprecedented for the prophets to speak of a united Kingdom under a new David in the context of resurrection from the dead (cf. Ezek. 37).

Baal myth reversed - instead of the dying and rising of a god who releases fertility, we have the metaphor of fertility referring to the resurrection of Israel.

How do these verses apply to God's Plan for the entire World?

Romans 9:25-26
1 Peter 2:10
Ephesians 5:25ff

The Tree

The purpose of this section is threefold:

1. To explain the punishments coming on the House of Israel
2. To provide hope of future restoration
3. To call the present and future generations to repentance and life

First Punishment

"Say to your brothers, "You are my people," and to your sisters, "You have received mercy."

This first verse serves as a bridge connecting these two chapters. Notice how it flows from the previous in the sense of the new names coming to the children, but follows to the next by being a direct address and command.

“Plead with your mother, plead— for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband— that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts; lest I strip her naked and make her as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and make her like a parched land, and kill her with thirst. Upon her children also I will have no mercy, because they are children of whoredom. For their mother has played the whore; she who conceived them has acted shamefully.

What has happened in this first section?

The wife of adultery has been disowned - "she is not my wife, and I am not her husband." This is not a formal divorce, hence the pleading for restoration, but a response to abandonment by the wife to go after other lovers.

What is he calling on the children to do?

Renounce their mother and distance themselves from her adulteries. The word "plead" here has almost a legal sense, of "bring charges against" or "contend with."

What is God calling on individual Israelites to do?

Israel has established their identity as being the people of Yahweh, and being in covenant with him. However, Israel's status before God has become one of judgment. He is not speaking to a righteous remnant, calling them to prophetic witness, but to unrighteous and telling them to renounce the nation and culture around them that has rejected Yahweh and embraced idolatry. The children of Israel have been brought up in a perverse society and they are being called on to reject this. This is an ironic twist, as one commentator put it, "Israelites can become God's people only by renouncing Israel."

How does our current culture, including Christian subculture, stand up to scrutiny in comparison? Is it leading toward or away from God?

What is threatened if she doesn't put away her adultery?

- Strip her naked
- Make her like a wilderness
- Kill her with thirst
- Have no mercy upon her children

What are the two metaphors being used here?

Adulterous woman being stripped - Some have suggested that this language refers to a practice of removing an adulterous woman's clothes when rejecting her. Commentary: "Several documents, including wills found in the town of Nuzi, refer to this type of treatment of a wife who abandons her husband to live with another man. It is typically the children who perform this legal act. It is intended to humiliate and perhaps served as an instrument of divorce, though in cases where the husband has already died, it is related to property rights." This is not a sensual nakedness, but a humiliation and abandonment.

It is not entirely clear, however, whether this was a common practice in response to an unfaithful wife. One thing that is clear is that when a conquering nation would come into a land and take away exiles, they would often be stripped and taken away naked.

Land being deserted - The land is being stripped naked as well, devoid of fruitfulness and dried up under drought. It will be emptied and no longer inhabited.

How do these two metaphors merge?

They merge when the abandoned woman dies of thirst in the deserted land. The emphasis in the language is the nation being conquered and taken into exile. You can see a similar transition of metaphor in Ezekiel 16:37-40:

“therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved and all those you hated. I will gather them against you from every side and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness. And I will judge you as women who commit adultery and shed blood are judged, and bring upon you the blood of wrath and jealousy. And I will give you into their hands, and they shall throw down your vaulted chamber and break down your lofty places. They shall strip you of your clothes and take your beautiful jewels and leave you naked and bare. They shall bring up a crowd against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords.”
(Ezekiel 16:37–40, ESV)

Second Punishment

For she said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.’ Therefore I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths. She shall pursue her lovers but not overtake them, and she shall seek them but shall not find them. Then she shall say, ‘I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better for me then than now’

Why does the woman go after other lovers?

Some think this statement of the woman's make actually be a fragment of a hymn used in the Baal fertility cults. These agricultural benefits were often among the benefits promised by the cults. The other angle of this is the foreign nations, whom Israel entered into alliances with in order to gain the benefits listed here.

How does Yahweh respond to her pursuits?

He frustrates her plans. Try as she might, he prevents her from succeeding and fulfilling her desires. She is left lonely, empty, and wanting.

One commentator explains:

"God is actually trying to block the theological connection between worshiping Baal and the rewards of blessing from Baal. How? God will frustrate Israel's pursuit of Baal by discrediting the idol's power (Hos. 2: 7). It will appear as if Baal is not listening or has no power. This in turn will cause the Hebrew people to give up on him and decide to return to their first love —the God of Israel. God does this so that the people will realize that the God of Israel , not Baal, produces the fertility of the grain, wine, and oil (2: 8)."

What is his motivation for doing this?

His intention is to make her regret leaving her first husband and to try to return to him.

How does God still do this today?

- Removing the very things we've come to rely on
- Frustrate the fulfillment of evil desires

Third Punishment

And she did not know that *it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished on her silver and gold, which they used for Baal. Therefore I will take back my grain in its time, and my wine in its season, and I will take away my wool and my flax, which were to cover her nakedness. Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one shall rescue her out of my hand. And I will put an end to all her mirth, her feasts, her newmoons, her Sabbaths, and all her appointed feasts. And I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees, of which she said, 'These are my wages, which my lovers have given me.' I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall devour them. And I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals when she burned offerings to them and adorned herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers and forgot me, declares the Lord.*

What was the woman's mistake?

She attributed these blessings as gifts from her lover and didn't realize that Yahweh is the one who provides her all of these. He is the true fertility God, not perversely like the Baals but in the sense that all fruit of the ground and all children come from him.

What is the Yahweh's response?

He will deprive her of all of these things:

- Take back the grain and wine
- Take back the wool and flax
- Put an end to her feasts, new moons, and Sabbaths
- Lay waste to her vines and fig trees

These things - food and clothing- are the necessities of life, not the luxuries. She is being punished severely. However, this all belongs to him, and in this account, Yahweh is a husband retrieving his possessions from a wayward wife.

What is being threatened here is nothing less than the curses that were promised in the Covenant if the people were unfaithful to it:

"But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out." (Deuteronomy 28:15–19, ESV)

What is the effect of removing her wool and flax, and what does he mean by "no one shall rescue her out of my hand?"

The result is that she will be exposed and exiled. Shame and humiliation will come upon the nation, and there is no human effort that can stop it. (Cf. Ezek. 14:13-14)

What does Yahweh promise to put an end to?

It is striking that in the midst of this apostasy and wholesale idolatry, that Israel continues to participate in the feasts and holy days prescribed in the Covenant. These ritual activities are such an integral part of the culture that it almost removes their identity. It's as if he were to say to us that he is putting an end to all of our schools, churches, and media.

What lesson is there in that for us?

It is entirely possible to maintain an outward conformity to the God's covenant while completely falling into worship that is abominable to him.

What does the woman's statement in v.12 indicate?

It was clear that the woman sincerely believed that she was doing right, and was receiving the observable reward of her piety. She had drawn the connection between her prosperity and blessings and her religion.

How can we fall into the same trap?

This should make us tremble and be introspective - if we were to go back to Hosea's time, would we recognize the spiritual situation in Israel as any worse than our own day? Or perhaps might we wonder why Hosea was so outraged since it's not much different?

Now, I think it's safe to say in the West there is little danger of us falling into the trap of a fertility cult, but the danger of syncretism is just as real.

What does syncretism look like in our day?

Consider the parallels with Baalism:

- Not fully believing that God alone is sufficient to meet our needs. Looking for other means...
- Blending of cultural moral values with Biblical beliefs

Turning Point

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. And there I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.”

After reading the previous passages, what would you expect to see following a "Therefore?"

When you see "Therefore" you expect a logical consequence of the preceding to follow. In the case, the most logical consequence would be that God abandons his wife who has abandoned him.

What does Yahweh promise to do after (or as a consequence of) these punishments?

Instead, in striking and somewhat paradoxical fashion, Hosea follows his "Therefore" with a promise of restoration. This passage represents another jarring reversal, similar to what we saw in chapter 1. Hosea goes from Judgment to Restoration with no in between. He will woo her back, bringing out into the wilderness and speaking tenderly.

What does the wilderness bring to mind from a biblical perspective?

- Place of judgment
- Place of cleansing, safety, and reliance upon God

In the imagery of the wilderness, you have both judgment and salvation, cross and resurrection. Yahweh threatens to turn her into a wilderness in the first few verses, and now in verse 14, the wilderness is the place of healing and restoration. It is through this judgment that God will bring her salvation.

Does this dual purpose for the "wilderness" give us any insight in the ways that God accomplishes good through suffering?

What does the Valley of Achor allude to?

The Valley of Achor literally means "the Valley of Trouble" and there is a definitely an allusion to the sin of Achan at Ai which caused Israel to be routed in battle.

It's also worth pointing out that the Hebrew word for "hope" here (tiqwah) is also the word for "cord" found in the account of Rahab immediately before the events at Ai. By this wordplay, there may be an allusion to another prostitute who received salvation.

What does the passage as a whole allude to?

The Exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt. What is promised here is a New Exodus, a return from exile and renewal of the Covenant.

Reversal of Third

And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal.' For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more.

What is promised in this passage?

The complete and utter removal of Baal worship. The word "baal" in Hebrew, besides being the name of a Canaanite Deity, is also used in the sense of "Husband". What's being said here is that Baal worship will be so far removed from Israel that even a different word for husband will be used.

Reversal of the Second

*And I will **make for them a covenant** on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will **betroth you** to me forever. I will **betroth you** to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will **betroth you** to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord.*

What two promises are made in the first part of this passage?

1. A removal of the punishment of v.12, and peace with the animals.
2. A cessation of war.

For the nation, there is an Edenic feel to the whole thing, with reference to the "beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens and the creeping things of the ground" also hearking back to Genesis 1.

What phrase is repeated multiple times in this passage?

"I will betroth you." What is promised here is a restoration of the marriage. She had gone after other lovers, but now she is united in faithfulness to Yahweh.

What emphasis is seen in the language chosen?

This is not purely a contract established between two parties, this is love. What is pictured here is a relationship of love established in a new covenant. At the end, he says "You shall know the Lord," which is language of intimacy and a reversal of verse 13, where she forgot Yahweh.

"And in that day I will answer, declares the Lord, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth, and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel, and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God.'"

What is the progression of thought in this passage?

1. The Lord respond to the heavens
2. The heavens will respond to the earth (i.e. Send rain)
3. The earth will respond to the grain, wine, and oil (ie. Produce fruit)
4. The grain, wine, and oil respond to Jezreel (ie. Meeting their needs)

Thus the wilderness of verse 3 and the removal of verse 9 are reversed and fertility is restored to the land.

Why do you think the word "answer" is used in this passage?

God is responding to the prayers of the people in exile and their cries for help. Second, the primary emphasis is on the spoken word - restoration of fertility does not require some complicated ritual of dying and rising as was thought with other deities but simply requires the spoken word of Yahweh.

What is the significance of the name Jezreel here?

If you recall, Jezreel originally was synonymous with bloodshed, but the literal meaning of God Sows (as in v. 1:11) is what's in view here. It is God who sows in the land and provides for his people. Not only does he provide crops, but it says he will sow her in the land. He is planting a people.

And the final verse makes permanent the name change of Hosea's two sons - No Mercy becomes Mercy, and Not My People becomes My people.

This whole passage from 14-23, ending with it's grand language of heaven and earth and speaking of the cessation of war and peace with animals, hints at a cosmic renewal. The restoration of the people from exile typifies a completely new heaven and new earth.

"And the Lord said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins." So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you." For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to

his goodness in the latter days." (Hosea 3:1–5, ESV)

What does Yahweh command of Hosea?

There is some ambiguity here - is this referring to the same woman as Ch. 1 or different? Is this the same event as Ch. 1 or later? The most likely reading seems to be - "Go take Gomer back from her other lovers and love her again."

Why might Gomer be anonymous in this passage?

It seems that she has forfeited her identity through her adultery - she is no longer "wife of Hosea" just as Israel in her apostasy is "not my people."

How to does this action areflect the Yahweh's love for Israel?

Yahweh loves Israel, even though they worship other God's and love raisin cakes. The raisin cakes are not merely a dessert preference but are part of the idolatrous worship rituals of Baal.

What does Hosea do?

He goes out and purchases Gomer. The combination of money and goods would indicate that he struggled to come up with enough money to buy her. This was costly to him.

Why might he have had to buy her?

The most likely reason is that after leaving or being kicked out of Hosea's house for her unfaithfulness, she fell into slavery or prostitution.

What does he command Gomer to do?

She must come and live with Hosea, but abstain from all sexual activity for "many days." Essentially, there is a cleansing period for Gomer. Afterwards, they would resume their relationship as husband and wife.

What is the parallel in the life of Israel?

Just as Gomer must live many days without any sexual activity in response to her promiscuity and afterwards resume legitimate marital intimacy, so Israel must live many days without any of the Monarchy, Priesthood, or Idols. After this period, the Monarchy and Priesthood could resume but the idolatry could not. This is a remarkable prediction given that at the time he wrote all of these things were currently in full swing.

How does Hosea promise it all will end?

There will ultimately be a restoration for the children of Israel. The promise of "David their king" is Messianic and implies a few things:

- A reunion of the two kingdoms
- An end to the chaos of the kings
- An end to pagan alliances

This unity and peace to Israel will only come through seeking their God and his Christ.

What can we learn about God's love in this passage?