

Hosea:
God's Enduring Love
Lesson 9

Key Verse

As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people;
and her beloved, which was not beloved.

—Romans 9:25

Key Verse Thought: After reading the key verse, understand that *Osee* in today's memory verse is "Hosea." As we will learn in our lesson today, God revealed to Hosea that one day the Gentiles would be included as His people. Understand that Gentiles are any peoples who are not Jews (Israelites.) This verse is in reference to Hosea 2:23: "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to *them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.*" Today, we can be the beloved of God. The word *beloved* in this verse means "to love or delight in."

Emphasis: In today's lesson, we are to recognize the call of the Lord and respond. "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Isaiah 55:6).

Lesson Summary: In today's lesson as we study the book of Hosea, we will learn that he suffered personal tragedy that God paralleled to Israel's sin against God. But even with the great tragedy in his own life, we find that he understood God's message to Israel — and he was willing to preach that truth.

The book of Hosea begins with "The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea ... in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel" (Hosea 1:1). We will find that God gave Hosea a very unusual command — to go and take a wife of the land, knowing she would be unfaithful to him. The wife he took and the relationship (including his children) that ensued was a perfect picture of the relationship that Israel had become to God — unfaithful at best. Hosea's wife, Gomer, bore three children. The first was definitely Hosea's child. We are not sure if the second child born to Gomer belonged to Hosea. The third child born was definitely not Hosea's son. This

was to be a picture of the gradual desertion of God's people from the God who had chosen and set them apart as His own.

When Hosea understood that Israel had turned from God, he cried for the people to return to the Lord. Hosea's life was a message for God's people. In that message was a revealing of the nation's sin. It continued with a promise of punishment of that sin. However, God never left His people without hope. If they would only seek God, and reject the idolatrous practices they had established, God would return to them. Once it is revealed that Israel will not return, Hosea tells of the judgment that will fall. Nevertheless, God did not leave His people without one final invitation to return to Him. It was man's choice whether to receive correction, or reject God's Word.

Suggested Bible Reading to Prepare for This Lesson

- Monday: Hosea 1-3
- Tuesday: Hosea 4-6
- Wednesday: Hosea 7-8
- Thursday: Hosea 9-10
- Friday: Hosea 11-12
- Saturday: Hosea 13-14

Hosea: God's Enduring Love

1. Hosea's Call: Hosea 1-3
 - A son, Jezreel
 - A daughter, Loruhamah
 - Another son, Loammi
2. Hosea Speaks of God's Controversy with Israel: Hosea 4-7
 - Hear God's Word
 - Acknowledge sin and return to God
3. The Punishment of Israel is Foretold: Hosea 8-10
 - Israel refused to repent
4. The Restoration of Israel Called For: Hosea 11-14
 - God's love for His people
 - God's invitation

Note: As we have been studying the history of Israel, we have heard words from God through His prophets warning the Israelites to return to God and His commands. Although we have seen a few reformations in Israel (as in the destruction of Baal worship), the people continued in the sin of King Jeroboam I which was the worship of the golden calves in Dan and Bethel — not the worship of the one true God. As we progress through Israel’s history, we come to another prophet of God with words of warning to God’s people in Israel. However, God required a very unusual thing from the prophet we will study today.

1. Hosea’s Call: Hosea 1

Hosea was a prophet at about the same time as Amos we studied in lesson seven. He, too, spoke to Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II of whom we learned about in our last lesson. Remember that although Jeroboam II made great advances in the coasts of Israel by recapturing land lost to their enemies, he still did not lead the people back to the true worship of God by putting away the golden calves in Dan and Bethel.

In this lesson, we begin with the call of Hosea as a prophet of the Lord. “**The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea ... in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel**” (Hosea 1:1). God told Hosea, “... **Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD**” (Hosea 1:2). It would be helpful to understand the word *whoredoms* means “fornication (adultery); idolatry (a forsaking of the true God, and worshiping of idols).” This word is pivotal in understanding the sin of the nation Israel.

God wanted to show to His people the apostasy of Israel by a living example in Hosea’s life. It would also be good to understand that the word *apostasy* means “an abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion or departure from one’s faith.” We have been learning that each king of Israel, even some with great reformations, had not turned from the sin of Jeroboam I, the worship of the golden calves. For they “... **departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan**” (2 Kings 10:29), and the king “... **took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin**” (2 Kings 10:31). This was (and still is) apostasy or “whoredoms” in God’s eyes. In spite of continual warnings to His people through the prophets,

the people continued in their sin against God. Understanding these truths is important to perceive why God asked Hosea to do what we will learn about in our lesson today.

We read in Hosea 1:2 that God told Hosea to "... [g]o, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms" We read next that Hosea "... went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son" (Hosea 1:3). Gomer had three children: Jezreel, Loruhamah, and Loammi.

A son, Jezreel:

Jezreel is the only son we are sure actually belonged to Hosea. "And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little *while*, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel" (Hosea 1:4). To understand this, we must remember back. God told Jehu to kill all of wicked King Ahab's family. Remember King Ahab and his wife Jezebel propagated Baal worship in Israel. Jezreel was where the kings lived. Remember that Jezebel was in Jezreel when Jehu told the men to throw her down from the window, killing her. Jehu not only killed Ahab's family but utterly destroyed Baal worship out of Israel. However, he did not turn from the sin of King Jeroboam I in that he continued to worship the golden calves at Dan and Bethel. For that, God was angry. He would avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu for this disregard and refusal to walk in God's law (see 2 Kings 10:29–31). Remember also that Jehu and his descendants were promised the throne for four generations (2 Kings 10:30). We read last week that promise was fulfilled (2 Kings 15:12). In our lesson next week, we will see the kingdom of the nation of Israel cease.

A daughter, Loruhamah:

Loruhamah was a daughter that we are not really sure belonged to Hosea (because Gomer, Hosea's wife, was a harlot). As you read the following verse, notice it does not say that Gomer "bare him" a daughter as it did in verse 3 about Jezreel, Hosea's son. "And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And *God* said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away" (Hosea 1:6). As we studied our last lesson, remember that we recognized the great mercy God had showed His people in His forgiveness and patience as He sent prophets to warn them to seek God and return to Him. As we will learn in this lesson, Hosea was to reveal to Israel that God would no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; for Israel had forfeited God's mercy.

Another son, Loammi:

Loammi was definitely not Hosea's son. He was without doubt a son of harlotry. "8b.... she conceived, and bare a son. 9. Then said *God*, Call his name Loammi: for ye *are* not my people, and I will not be your *God*" (Hosea 1:8b–9). God was revealing through this child born to Hosea's wife, not Hosea, that the Israelites were no longer God's people. They had turned so far from God and His commands, that they were no longer recognized as God's people — just as Loammi was not Hosea's son. We can see the progression of the sin of Israel portrayed in the children born to Hosea. If God's people had not forsaken God and His commands but returned to Him, God would not have taken His mercies away from them.

Yet even with this great rejection of Israel for their continual apostasy, we can continue on to read that God would not forsake them forever — for they were His people just as He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people, *there* it shall be said unto them, Ye *are* the sons of the living God" (Hosea 1:10).

God wanted His people to recognize who it was that provided for them. "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, *which* they prepared for Baal" (Hosea 2:8). Instead of using the things God had given them properly, they offered them to Baal. However, God would remove that desire they had toward Baal. "14. Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.... 17. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name" (Hosea 2:14, 17). God warned that He would remove them from their land until their desire was no longer to Baal and other idols. One day, they would truly know God. "I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD" (Hosea 2:20). In addition, it would extend beyond the Israelites even to the Gentiles who, too, would one day believe. "... [A]nd I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to *them which were* not my people, Thou *art* my people; and they shall say, *Thou art* my God" (Hosea 2:23b).

Finally, in Hosea chapter three, we see that God told Hosea to purchase his wife for a price and bring her back unto him. Although there would be a time she must remain set apart without the privileges of a wife, one day she would be restored. This was to be a picture of God

purchasing his people for a price (Jesus' death upon the cross) and allowing His people to be brought back to Him. But for the Israelites, there would be a time they must remain set apart without the privileges that a wife has. It is during this time frame that the Gentile people are allowed the privilege of being included as a part of the "bride, which is the church." Nevertheless, according to Hosea 3:5, one day, the Israelites will seek the Lord. "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3:5).

A Deeper Path: Remember today's Key verse. "As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved" (Romans 9:25). That is a message we can be encouraged by today. God has made salvation known to all men. "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6).

2. Hosea Speaks of God's Controversy with Israel: Hosea 4-7

"Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because *there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.*" (Hosea 4:1). God revealed the problem to the Israelites through the voice, and life example, of Hosea. What had they done wrong? "By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery ..." (Hosea 4:2). Their breaking of God's commands was innumerable. It was everyone's fault (see Hosea 4:4.)

God was disappointed that His people would reject Him. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." (Hosea 4:6). They must be disciplined. "... I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings" (Hosea 4:9b).

We now read a very sad statement in Hosea 5:6: "They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find *him*; he hath withdrawn himself from them." When they finally would decide to seek after God, He would not be found of them. Once they finally recognize their failures in turning from God, they would try to seek an answer. They would look in all of the wrong places. And once they finally endured their punishment and acknowledged their offence and turned to seek God's face, read what would happen. "I will go

and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early” (Hosea 5:15). The words *acknowledge their offence* in this verse means “to be or become guilty.” It would not be until they acknowledged their sin that God would make Himself available to them.

We can understand by reading Hosea 6 that some would acknowledge their sin and try to return to God, but the majority of the nation would continue in their sin. God was concerned about the attitude of the heart — not so much in outward actions. “*For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings*” (Hosea 6:6). The word *mercy* in this verse means “the reciprocation of the mercy (kindness, love, or mercy shown. Even when men may prove unfaithful to this relationship, God’s mercy to His people is everlasting.) that God had showed his people.” God wanted to see that reciprocation (a mutual giving and returning) of the kindness and love that God had shown his people — the reciprocation that God required. But that is not what He saw. “*I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel: there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled*” (Hosea 6:10). This thought is continued in Hosea 7:1: “*When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood*” Because the nation would not truly repent and turn back to God, the people were leaving God no choice. We can read what they were still guilty of in Hosea 7:2–9. See what God reveals to us. “*And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this*” (Hosea 7:10). They told on themselves — they did not return to the Lord, nor seek His forgiveness for their sin. What would become of them for this failure? “*Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me ...*” (Hosea 7:13a).

A Deeper Path: Read something very important to remember. “*But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out*” (Numbers 32:23). Nothing is hidden from God. Be sure your sin will find you out. Israel’s sin found them out.

3. The Punishment of Israel Foretold: Hosea 8-10

Israel did not repent when God’s prophets warned. However, God knew that when the punishment came, they would cry out. “*Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee*” (Hosea

8:2). But when the punishment falls, it is too late. Why? “Israel hath cast off *the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him*” (Hosea 8:3). God had given ample warning and opportunity to repent and turn back to God, but they had chosen to indulge themselves in their sin. God’s judgment would come. “For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof” (Hosea 8:14).

Hosea chapter nine tells of all the worldly pleasures that would be forfeited from them because of their sin. God then told of their utter ruin and desolation. Even their children would be visited by the pending doom and destruction.

The corruption of their worship and even in their government is revealed in Hosea chapter ten. Yet we read that God still called His people. “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for *it is* time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you” (Hosea 10:12).

4. The Restoration of Israel is Called For: Hosea 11-14

As we continue into Hosea chapter eleven, we are reminded of the great love God had for His people. “When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt” (Hosea 11:1). Nevertheless, as we continue, we find where God’s people failed. “As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images” (Hosea 11:2). The further we read in this chapter, we understand the ungratefulness of God’s people as they rejected what he had taught them and entered into idol worship. In spite of the warnings of God’s wrath (see Hosea 11:5–6), God revealed the mercy He was really bestowing upon His people because he loved them.

8. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I deliver thee, Israel? ...
mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. 9. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I *am* God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city. (Hosea 11:8–9)

God still loved them and would not utterly destroy them; but one day He would deliver them (see Hosea 11:10–11).

God had a word for both Israel and Judah. God used the example of Jacob’s life (see Hosea 12:2–6). Just as Jacob fought with the angel all night desiring God’s blessing (Genesis 32:24–30), Israel should have done the same thing. If they would only turn back to God from their sin, in true repentance, God would bless them just as He had blessed Jacob.

God also reminded them that He had sent His Word to His people. “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets” (Hosea 12:10).

As we read Hosea chapter thirteen, notice some things. The Israelites caused the separation from God. “When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died” (Hosea 13:1). God called for their return — to give them salvation. “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*” (Hosea 13:4). When they decided to take care of themselves, instead of fully relying upon God, “... they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me” (Hosea 13:6b). What did God let them know? “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me *is* thine help” (Hosea 13:9). However, because they refused to return and seek God, “Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up” (Hosea 13:16).

Most of the book of Hosea, thus far, we have seen all of the areas the Israelites were failing God, and the consequences that would come because of that failure to return to God. As we come to the final chapter, we can almost read a time of invitation. When Hosea was speaking to Israel, it was not too late. Through Hosea, God told the people what they needed to do.

1. O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. 2. Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive *us* graciously ... (Hosea 14:1–2)

Continuing in Hosea 14:3, we can read that they were told that they must forsake the idols. Next, read what God said He would do. “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them

freely: for mine anger is turned away from him” (Hosea 14:4). Then God would bless His people once again (see Hosea 14:5–8). If Israel would only return to God, forsaking the idols, God would heal and love them, turning away His anger. God’s blessings would fall. Who would receive these benefits? “Who *is* wise, and he shall understand these *things*? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD *are* right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein” (Hosea 14:9). Did you notice who would miss? Only those who would be content in their rebellion against God (transgressors).

A Deeper Path: Just as the Israelites were told of their sin and called to repentance, the same call is extended to us today. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). All are guilty of sin, and there is a penalty to pay. “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). In addition, God provided one who paid the penalty for us — if only we would receive. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Just as God extended a call to the Israelites, warning them before judgment would fall, God warns us today. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). What response does God require? “8. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:8–10). What are we to do with that information? “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near” (Isaiah 55:6).

Hosea 1-14 at a Glance:

Chapter 1: God told Hosea to take Gomer, a “wife of whoredoms”, for his wife in the days of Jeroboam (II); Gomer had a son, Jezreel; a daughter, Loruhamah; another son, Loammi; each child represented a relationship between God and His people

Chapter 2: A warning given; God reveals His love for His people in the taking away then restoring their necessities – in doing that, He will remove their allegiance to Baal, restoring them as His people

Chapter 3: Hosea was to love his wife, buying her back, displaying the love God had for His people

Chapter 4: Hosea tells the people why God will allow troubles (because of their apostasy)

Chapter 5: Judgment will fall upon the priests, house of Israel, & the house of the king; when they seek God, they will not find Him, for He will withdraw from His people – God’s wrath will be poured out upon them; “till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face:”

Chapter 6: Encouragement to return to the Lord; the failings of man’s ability to keep their part of the covenant with God

Chapter 7: ALL of the people had turned from God & none had returned; God would send destruction

Chapter 8: “For Israel hath forgotten his Maker”; a listing of the sins & punishments and reasons for punishment

Chapter 9: Utter rejection of God’s people described during the time of discipline; “My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him”

Chapter 10: “Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity;”; “break up your fallow ground: for *it is* time to seek the LORD”

Chapter 11: “When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him”; “my people are bent to backsliding from me:”

Chapter 12: God reminds them from which they came, yet in spite of their faithless behavior, God still calls for their return to Him

Chapter 13: “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me *is* thine help.”

Chapter 14: “O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.”; “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.”

Reinforcement: As we looked at Hosea’s personal life knowing the problems that God allowed, recognize that he was still faithful to obey God’s call upon his life. He willingly married an unfaithful wife, just as God willingly chose a people He knew would be unfaithful to Him. Remember the progression we saw in the departure of God’s people from Him. Slow, yet ending in complete separation from Him. Even with the continual cry to seek God, repent, and turn back to avoid discipline, we found God knew that His people would refuse and continue in their path

of sin — directly away from God and his mercy. However, we found that because of the rejection of God by Israel, God then allowed the Gentile people to have an opportunity to belong to Him. If we will only seek Him, repent, and turn our lives completely over to Him. The process is the same, and the eternal salvation is yet to be seen. Nevertheless, we know that God told us to seek Him, while He may be found.

Closing: It would be good to close with a short prayer reinforcing today's lesson. Always include any prayer requests you may have. *Today pray that we will recognize God's call upon our lives. We must respond not only to the call for salvation, but in service to Him — just as Hosea responded to God's call. Pray that God will help us remember to seek Him first in our lives.*