

(75) Adult Sunday School Class

Hosea, chpts. 1-14

Prophets, pp. 19-39



Hosea

Hosea is a prophet living in the northern nation of Israel during its final two decades before the Assyrian invaders destroy the cities in 722 BC and exile many of the Jewish survivors.

Hosea is a rather shocking book. While other prophets frequently compare Israel to an unfaithful wife as an analogy, for Hosea this is actually played out in his life. God tells Hosea to marry a prostitute named Gomer to illustrate the similarities of this troubled marriage to Israel's unfaithfulness to God. Just like Gomer leaves her loyal, loving husband to become a harlot, so Israel abandons the Lord her God and turns to idol worship. But the story does not end here... After Gomer leaves Hosea, God tells him to buy her back, love her, and take her back as his wife (*again*), thus illustrating in Gomer's life the love and forgiveness that God has for His people, even after they have sinned against God.

The basic message of the book of Hosea is similar to that of the other prophets: 1) You have broken the covenant; 2) Repent or there will be judgment; and 3) There is still hope for future restoration.

Regrettably, Israel does not repent and continues to commit spiritual adultery by worshiping foreign gods. God levies His punishment on Israel by allowing the Assyrians to invade. While in exile, the Jews eventually recognize their sins and repent. God never severed the relationship completely and promises, "I will heal you from your faithlessness; my love will know no bounds, for my anger will be gone forever... My people will again live under my shade. They will flourish like grain and blossom like grapevines" (Hosea 14:4, 7).

The story of Hosea paints a powerful picture of God's love. Even if we have been like an unfaithful spouse toward God, abandoning our relationship with Him to pursue our own desires, God still loves us with a deep and abiding love that continually calls us to return to Him. If we return to Him, He forgives us and restores us to a wonderful and loving relationship. Amazing love God has for us!