

The Prophetic Wisdom of Hosea

Lesson 1

An Introduction to Hosea

Lesson Guide



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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or manuscript versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**

- **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
- **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.

- **While you are watching the lesson**

- **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
- **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
- **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.

- **After you watch the lesson**

- **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
- **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:20)

II. Background (1:33)

The book of Hosea represents two interconnected historical settings:

- “that world” – the decades in which Hosea received and delivered revelations from God
- “their world” – a time later in Hosea’s life when he selected and wrote down some of his prophecies to impact those who first received his book

A. Prophet (2:57)

In 930 B.C., the united kingdom of David and Solomon divided into two kingdoms:

- kingdom of Israel (north)
- kingdom of Judah (south)

Hosea primarily focused his ministry on events involving God’s people and the Assyrian Empire.

Hosea’s ministry began in the northern kingdom of Israel, nearly two hundred years after Israel had separated from Judah.

As God's prophet, Hosea witnessed how Israel's leaders and priests had:

- turned their kingdom away from the Lord
- trusted in alliances with other nations and their false gods
- mixed the worship of God with fertility rituals associated with idolatry

Hosea prophesied that God was about to pour out curses on the kingdom of Israel through the Assyrian Empire.

1. Time (5:29)

Hosea's service began in the days of Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel (1:1).

- Uzziah (Azariah) ruled in Judah around 792-740 B.C.
- Jeroboam II reigned around 793-753 B.C.

Hosea's ministry began sometime near 760 B.C.

Hosea ministered throughout the reigns of Judah's kings Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz, and ended his ministry during the reign of Hezekiah (1:1).

It's likely that the end of Hosea's ministry occurred sometime before 686 B.C.

2. Location (8:36)

The mention of Jeroboam II reveals two factors about where Hosea served as God's prophet (1:1):

- Hosea's ministry began in the kingdom of Israel, rather than in Judah.
 - The Hebrew dialect in the book strongly suggests that Hosea was a native of the northern kingdom.
 - The majority of Hosea's prophecies focus on Israel rather than on Judah.
- Hosea 1:1 only mentions Jeroboam II and omits six other kings of northern Israel who reigned within Hosea's lifetime.

It's likely that Hosea migrated to Judah near the end of Jeroboam II's reign in 753 B.C.

3. Circumstances (13:11)

During Hosea's early ministry, the king, priests and wealthy nobles of Israel:

- worshiped the false gods of other nations
- filled the country with violence
- forced the sons of the poor to serve their misguided military campaigns
- pressured the wives and daughters of the poor to practice prostitution at their fertility worship centers

The leaders still claimed that they were faithful to God and that God approved of their actions.

Moses had warned that God would not tolerate Israel's rebellion forever and would raise up cruel Gentile nations to discipline them.

Hosea faced similar circumstances later on in the southern kingdom of Judah. Judah's leaders:

- formed alliances with other nations
- treated others unjustly
- compelled their young men to fight foolish wars
- encouraged idolatry (even in Jerusalem)

God revealed to Hosea that the people of Judah would also be brought to their knees.

The "Assyrian judgment":

- the period of troubles that Hosea predicted
- the time when God's primary instrument of discipline was the Assyrian empire (from around 744-612 B.C.)

The content of Hosea's book orients his prophetic ministry toward three major events during the Assyrian judgment:

- 744 B.C. – Tiglath-Pileser III became king of Assyria and asserted his authority over Israel and Judah
 - In Israel:
 - Jeroboam II brought great prosperity to Israel, but he and the leaders and priests were disloyal to God by promoting idolatry and injustice.
 - Hosea warned of God's curses that would come through the Assyrian Empire.
 - In Judah:
 - King Uzziah was a righteous king and worshiped only the Lord.
 - God revealed no accusations or warnings of curses against Judah at this time.
- 732 B.C. – Assyria's first major invasion of Israel

Earlier Prophecies:

- In Israel:
 - Kings Menahem and Pekahiah:
 - promoted idolatry and injustice
 - trusted in their alliance with Assyria for security
 - acknowledged Assyria's gods
 - Hosea warned that God would pour out curses on Israel through Assyrian aggression.

- In Judah:
 - Uzziah and his son Jotham ruled as righteous kings, neither practicing nor endorsing idolatry.
 - Hosea still offered no warnings of curses against Judah.

Later Prophecies:

- In Israel:
 - King Pekah:
 - continued in idolatry and injustice
 - tried to free himself from paying heavy tributes to Assyria by forming an alliance with Syria (the “Syrian-Israelite Coalition”)
 - invaded Judah and attempted to make Judah join the rebellion against Assyria
 - Hosea prophesied that God would bring curses against Israel for this aggression.

In 732 B.C., Tiglath-Pileser III destroyed the kingdom of Syria and subjugated the kingdom of Israel.

- In Judah:
 - Ahaz rose to the throne before the Syrian-Israelite coalition attacked. He:
 - rejected God and promoted idolatry and injustice
 - would not turn to the Lord for help
 - sought an alliance with the Assyrians and their gods
 - Hosea prophesied that God’s curses were coming against Judah as well.

- 722 B.C. – Assyria’s second major invasion of the kingdom of Israel that led to Israel’s destruction

Earlier Prophecies:

- In Israel:
 - Hoshea perpetuated idolatry and injustice and remained faithful to the Assyrians and their gods.
 - Hosea warned that new curses were coming to Israel through a second major Assyrian invasion.
- In Judah:
 - Ahaz continued to violate God’s covenant by:
 - promoting idolatry and injustice
 - refusing to rely on the Lord
 - trusting in his alliance with Assyria and Assyria’s gods
 - Hosea warned again that great curses from God were also coming against Judah.

Later Prophecies:

- In Israel:
 - King Hoshea:
 - promoted idolatry and injustice
 - made an alliance with Egypt and Egypt’s gods instead of turning to God for protection
 - Hosea predicted that these sins would soon bring God’s curses.

Tiglath-Pileser’s son, Shalmaneser V, took control of Samaria and forced Hoshea to pay heavy tributes.

In 722 B.C., the Assyrian king Sargon II destroyed Samaria and drove most of Israel's population into exile.

- In Judah:
 - After Ahaz and his son Hezekiah ruled as co-regents, Hezekiah:
 - continued his father's alliance with Assyria
 - broke with Assyria, but relied on his army, fortified cities and alliance with Egypt, rather than trusting in the Lord
 - Hosea warned, once again, that God would bring curses on Judah.

Curses came to Judah many years later through Assyrian aggression.

4. Purpose (26:44)

God called Hosea to spread God's kingdom to the ends of the earth.

God had already ratified his kingdom policies in five major covenants:

- with all nations (Adam and Noah)
- with a special people (Abraham, Moses, David)

Every successive covenant incorporated and built on the policies of the previous covenants.

Hosea served as God's emissary or ambassador who announced how God was going to implement these covenant policies.

Three basic dynamics of God's covenants with his people:

- divine benevolence
- requirement of human loyalty
- consequences – blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience

Hosea's purpose was to declare how God intended to implement his covenant dynamics in relation to Assyria's rise in 744 B.C., and in relation to the Assyrian invasions of 732 and 722 B.C.

B. Book (30:21)

Hosea composed his book *after* the kingdom of Israel was destroyed in 722 B.C.

Hosea wrote down prophecies from throughout his ministry to give Judah's leaders wisdom as they faced Assyria's invasion of 701 B.C.

1. Time (32:06)

Critical scholars:

- believe the book of Hosea went through several redactions ending either late into, or even after, the Babylonian exile.
- believe only some portions of the book came from Hosea himself.
- argue that editors added their own material long after Hosea's death.
- deny that Hosea received supernatural revelations from God about the future.

Evangelicals:

- believe in the supernatural inspiration of Hosea's prophecy.
- affirm that the entire book represents what Hosea himself received from God.
- usually settle on a much earlier date for the book's completion.

Hosea 1:1 establishes the earliest possible date for the completion of the book when it mentions Hezekiah, king of Judah.

The earliest possible date for the completion of the book was sometime during Hezekiah's sole regency from 715-686 B.C.

The latest possible date for the final composition of the book was before Hosea's death, most likely late in Hezekiah's reign.

Hosea probably employed his disciples to help compose his book:

- 1:2-9 – biographical (Hosea is referred to in the third person, e.g., "*Hosea* said this").
- 3:1-3 – autobiographical (Hosea's actions are described in the first person, e.g., "The Lord said to *me*").

There's no positive evidence in the Scriptures that disciples edited Hosea's words or added new materials after his death.

The book of Hosea was likely completed sometime before 686 B.C. or so, when Hosea had almost certainly died.

2. Location (37:41)

Hosea likely migrated to Judah sometime near the end of Jeroboam II's reign and wrote his book there.

Hosea listed the kings of Judah before Jeroboam II of Israel, indicating that he wrote under the authority of David's dynasty in Judah (1:1).

3. Circumstances (38:51)

Judah was under threat from Assyria when Hosea composed his book.

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah during the reign of Hezekiah in 701 B.C.

Events surrounding Sennacherib's invasion:

- Hezekiah led reforms and fortified Judah.
- Hezekiah refused to pay tribute to Sennacherib.
- Hezekiah failed to rely on God but sought protection through an alliance with Egypt and Egypt's gods.
- Sennacherib invaded Judah, destroying many cities, towns and villages, and laid siege to Jerusalem.
- Hezekiah prayed to the Lord, and the prophet Isaiah reassured him of God's deliverance (2 Kings 19:33-34).
- God miraculously delivered Jerusalem from Sennacherib.

After God delivered Jerusalem:

- Hezekiah sought an alliance with the kingdom of Babylon.
- Hezekiah displayed profound disloyalty to God.
- The prophet Isaiah threatened that the royal treasures of Judah would be taken to Babylon (2 Kings 20:17-18).
- Hezekiah did not repent and only responded with relief that this judgment would not come in his own day.

Hezekiah's failures to be loyal to God likely motivated Hosea to compose his book.

It's possible that Hosea wrote his book:

- sometime before Jerusalem's deliverance from Sennacherib.
- soon after Jerusalem's deliverance.

Hosea may have written his book to address the crisis before or after Jerusalem's deliverance from Sennacherib.

4. Purpose (45:22)

Hosea wanted Judah to understand that "the upright walk in [the Lord's ways], but transgressors stumble in them" (14:9).

Hosea's closing call for wisdom may have appealed directly to Hezekiah and the wise men of his court.

The book of Hosea called the leaders of Judah to gain wisdom from what God had revealed throughout Hosea's ministry as they faced the challenges of Sennacherib's invasion.

The book of Hosea was not designed to make specific predictions, but to call Judah's leaders to follow the path of wisdom in Hezekiah's day.

III. Content & Structure (48:43)

Hosea received revelations from God for more than sixty years.

God didn't reveal all of Hosea's prophecies at the same time, but gave Hosea revelations as Israel faced Assyria's rise in 744 B.C., Assyria's invasion in 732 B.C., and Assyria's invasion in 722 B.C.

Hosea's prophetic outlooks changed over time because he addressed changing circumstances.

Hosea arranged his prophecies topically between two bookends:

- 1:1 – title that introduces the full timeline of Hosea's ministry
- 14:9 – closure that summarizes Hosea's overarching purpose

The main body of Hosea consists of three large divisions with topical emphases:

- Judgment and Hope (1:2–3:5)

Early prophecies Hosea received during the reign of Jeroboam II:

- revelations addressing Assyria's rise to power in 744 B.C.
- presented balanced outlooks of curses God had determined to pour out on his people and blessings they would receive in the future.

- Unfolding Judgment (4:1–9:9)

Prophecies from later stages of Hosea's ministry:

- revelations about Assyria's invasions of 732 B.C. and 722 B.C.
- highlighted how God's judgments increased in severity throughout these phases of Hosea's ministry.

- Unfolding Hope (9:10–14:8)

Prophecies from later stages of Hosea's ministry:

- revelations received in anticipation of Assyria's invasions in 732 B.C. and 722 B.C.
- gave special attention to the hope that God revealed for the future of his people.

These historical and topical arrangements are the keys that unlock the wisdom Hosea sought to impart to those who first received his book.

A. Judgment and Hope, 1:2–3:5 (54:12)

These early chapters:

- carefully balance a focus on the curses coming to God's people with the blessings of God that will follow.
- represent Hosea's ministry in the days of Jeroboam II, when Hosea received prophecies about Assyria's rise in 744 B.C.

Facts consistent with the earliest phase of Hosea's ministry:

- the time "when the Lord first spoke through Hosea" (1:2)
- attention to the fact that, as Israel enjoyed a time of great prosperity, they had fallen into idolatry and injustice
- indication that God had determined to bring curses through Assyrian dominance over Israel
- favorable view of Judah, consistent with the time Uzziah ruled as a righteous king in Judah (1:6-7, 11; 3:5)

1. Earlier Family Experiences, 1:2–2:1 (57:55)

- Family narrative (1:2-9)

God commanded Hosea to marry Gomer, who practiced worship prostitution.

Hosea was told to give their children names that symbolized God's impending judgments against Israel.

- Hopeful reflections (1:10–2:1)

There was still going to be a future of blessings for the descendants of the tribes of Israel (1:10).

2. **God's Lawsuit, 2:2-23 (59:34)**

This section relays an inspired account of legal proceedings in the court of heaven.

Some prophetic revelations are called “lawsuits” because they give descriptions of the proceedings of God’s court. These revelations:

- portray God on his throne
- describe his summons of participants to court
- report accusations against and interactions with the guilty
- declare pronouncements of judgment

God summoned Israel to enter a heavenly lawsuit against their leaders in Samaria, over which God himself would preside.

Throughout this lawsuit, God alluded to ways that Israel behaved like Hosea’s wife Gomer:

- Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea and brought trials on her children.
- The leaders of Israel were unfaithful to God and brought trials to the kingdom of Israel.

God sentenced Israel to suffer the curses of his covenant.

After a time of judgment, God would restore Israel and have mercy on them.

3. Later Family Experiences, 3:1-5 (1:03:35)

- Family narrative (3:1-3)

Gomer had returned to worship prostitution.

God commanded Hosea to show love to her again, and Hosea brought Gomer home.

- Hopeful reflections (3:4, 5)

Israel would endure troubles for a time, but God would later bless Israel.

At the time the book of Hosea was written, the northern kingdom had already fallen, but this judgment would lead to future blessings from God.

B. Unfolding Judgment, 4:1–9:9 (1:06:48)

These revelations were received over a long period of time and focus on the ways God directed his covenant curses against Israel and Judah.

1. God's Lawsuits, 4:1–5:7 (1:07:27)

- Earlier Lawsuit (4:1-19)

God revealed his plans to Hosea by granting him knowledge of legal deliberations in the heavenly court.

This was likely one of Hosea's earlier prophecies about Assyria's invasion in 732 B.C.

In Israel:

- Kings Menahem and Pekahiah, promoted idolatry and injustice, and reaffirmed their alliance with Assyria and its gods.
- God announced curses on Israel in the form of severe Assyrian aggression.

In Judah:

- God drew a sharp contrast between conditions in Israel and conditions in Judah (4:15).
- Uzziah and Jotham ruled Judah as righteous kings, and God declared no curses against Judah.

- Later Lawsuit (5:1-7)

God summoned the guilty to court and announced that the purpose of the summons was “judgment” (*mishpat*) (5:1).

This lawsuit originated when Hosea received and delivered prophecies as Assyria's invasion of 732 B.C. grew closer.

In Israel:

- Israel's nobles oppressed the people at “Mizpah and Tabor” (sites under Israel's control until 732 B.C.) (5:1).

- Israel vainly appealed for help from Tiglath-Pileser III – “the great king” (5:13).
- King Pekah of Israel formed the Syrian-Israelite coalition.
- God warned that curses against Israel were coming through a decimating Assyrian attack.

In Judah:

- King Ahaz promoted idolatry and injustice, and made an alliance with Assyria and its gods.
- God threatened curses against Judah for the first time (5:5).

2. God’s Calls for Alarm, 5:8–9:9 (1:14:51)

God announced battles by referring to the practice of blowing a hollowed ram’s horn (*shophar*) or a silver trumpet (*chatsotsrah*).

- First Call for Alarm (5:8–7:16)

This call for alarm originated with Hosea’s earlier prophecies about Assyria’s invasion in 722 B.C.

In Israel:

- The Assyrians had already “oppressed” and “crushed” Israel (5:11).
- Israel had been “torn” and “struck” (6:1).
- God accused Israel of “calling to Egypt, going to Assyria” (7:11).

- Assyria established Hoshea as Israel's king after their victory over Israel in 732 B.C. King Hoshea:
 - continued in idolatry and injustice
 - maintained his alliance with Assyria
 - later sought freedom from Assyria by turning to Egypt for protection
- Hosea warned that more curses were coming from God in Assyria's devastating invasion of 722 B.C.

In Judah:

- King Ahaz:
 - led Judah into idolatry and injustice
 - sought protection through an alliance with Assyria
- God cursed Judah with devastation at the hands of Assyria (5:10-14, 6:4, 11).

- Second Call for Alarm (8:1–9:9)

This call strongly suggests it was among Hosea's later prophecies as Assyria's invasion in 722 B.C. drew near.

In Israel:

- King Hoshea continued to promote idolatry and injustice and relied on his alliance with Egypt.
- Hosea warned of God's impending curses (9:3).
- Assyria's new king, Sargon II, destroyed Samaria and brought an end to the kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.

In Judah:

- Ahaz and Hezekiah were co-regents in Judah during the last years of Israel's existence.
- Hezekiah began to turn Judah away from Ahaz' idolatry and injustice but also:
 - trusted in his own strength to resist Assyria
 - sought an alliance with Egypt and its gods
- God announced that Judah was going to face even more curses through Assyria (8:14).
- In 701 B.C., Sennacherib invaded Judah, destroying most of its cities and laying siege to Jerusalem.

These prophecies not only explained why God had destroyed the kingdom of Israel, but also why God had sent Assyria against Judah as well.

C. Unfolding Hope, 9:10–14:8 (1:24:36)

This division emphasizes how God's people could hope for his blessings even after they'd suffered under his judgment.

Each main section is introduced by a comparison God made with Israel:

- Fruit (9:10-12)
- Planted palm (9:13-17)
- Luxuriant vine (10:1-10)
- Trained calf (10:11-15)
- Beloved child (11:1–14:8)

1. **Fruit, 9:10-12 (1:26:33)**

This section was likely revealed to Hosea with other earlier prophecies about Assyria's invasion in 732 B.C.

In Israel:

- God was about to remove Israel's glory (9:11).
- God had predicted this same devastation in Hosea's earlier prophecies associated with the 732 B.C. invasion (4:7).

In Judah:

- Uzziah and Jotham ruled as righteous kings, and God pronounced no curses on Judah during this time.

God spoke of Israel's sins, but his positive comparison of Israel with grapes and figs, reassured his people that there was still hope for them to return to his blessings in the future (9:10).

2. **Planted Palm, 9:13-17 (1:29:00)**

Hosea's description of Israel here fits with the conditions when Hosea received prophecies about Assyria's invasion in 732 B.C.

In Judah:

- This prophecy does not mention Judah, so it most likely came to Hosea before Ahaz turned Judah away from God.

In Israel:

- God threatened Israel with slaughter but also remembered how he cherished them "like a young palm planted in a meadow" (9:13).

God's fond memory of Israel revealed that there was still hope for God's blessings to come to Israel in the future.

3. **Luxuriant Vine, 10:1-10 (1:30:20)**

This section likely originated when Hosea received prophecies about Assyria's invasion in 732 B.C.

In Israel:

- The wealth of Israel's worship centers would be carried off as "tribute to the great king" (10:6)
- The "great king" — Tiglath-Pileser III — led the devastating invasion of 732 B.C.

In Judah:

- Judah is not mentioned in this section, which may indicate that Ahaz had not yet led Judah into corruption.

Even in judgment, God remembered Israel as a delightful, luxuriant vine, offering hope for God's blessings in the future.

4. **Trained Calf, 10:11-15 (1:31:58)**

This section may have originated when Hosea received his earlier prophecies about Assyria's invasion in 722 B.C.

In Israel:

- King Hoshea led Israel into idolatry and injustice and relied on his alliance with Assyria and its gods for his security.
- God warned that curses were coming to Israel.

In Judah:

- Ahaz promoted idolatry and injustice and sought an alliance with Assyria.
- God briefly threatened curses against Judah (10:11, 12).

Despite the judgment that was coming, God's positive remembrance of Israel as "a trained calf that loved to thresh" served as the basis of hope for the future.

5. Beloved Child, 11:1–14:8 (1:33:49)

This section represents revelations Hosea received when he delivered his prophecies about Assyria's invasion in 722 B.C.

In Israel:

- King Hoshea continued in idolatry and injustice and attempted to break free of Assyria by seeking an alliance with Egypt.
- God specifically addressed this alliance saying Israel will "not return to the land of Egypt, but Assyria shall be their king" (11:5).

In Judah:

- Hezekiah relied on his own strength and turned to an alliance with Egypt rather than to the Lord (11:12, 12:2-6).
- Judah suffered the judgment of God through Sennacherib's invasion in 701 B.C.

Even as God pronounced judgment, he still thought of Israel as his beloved son, and his love was the basis of hope for Israel's future blessings (11:1).

Hosea wrote this division to give wisdom to Judah's leaders after Israel had fallen to Assyria and its citizens had been taken into exile.

Judgment was not the end of Israel's story because God had never forgotten how much he cherished them.

IV. Conclusion (1:38:10)

Review Questions

1. What conclusions can we draw from Hosea 1:1 about the time when the prophet Hosea began and ended his ministry?
2. List and explain the factors revealed in Hosea 1:1 that help us identify the location of Hosea's ministry.

3. Describe the general circumstances in Israel, and later in Judah, that prompted Hosea to deliver his prophecies from God.
4. Draw a timeline showing the three main dates of the Assyrian judgment that we touched on in this lesson. Briefly describe the circumstances surrounding each event on the timeline.

5. What dynamics do we find consistent in all of God's covenants with his people? As a prophetic emissary of God's covenants, what was the main purpose of the prophet Hosea's ministry?
6. What are the earliest and latest possible dates of composition of the book of Hosea? What evidence do we have to support these dates?

7. What does Hosea 1:1 tell us about the location where Hosea wrote his book?
8. Describe the circumstances in Judah under King Hezekiah when the book of Hosea was written. Make sure to include the events surrounding Sennacherib's invasion in 701 B.C. in your answer.

9. What was Hosea's purpose for composing his book during Hezekiah's reign?
10. In the first division of the book of Hosea (Hosea 1:2–3:5), Hosea presented prophecies that focused on both judgment and hope. When did Hosea first receive and deliver these prophecies? How do we know that this is when Hosea received these revelations?

11. In the second division of the book of Hosea (Hosea 4:1–9:9), Hosea presented prophecies concerning God’s unfolding judgment. Explain the circumstances prompting God’s earlier and later lawsuits in this section. How did the kings of Israel and Judah provoke God’s first and second calls for alarm?
12. In the third division of the book of Hosea (Hosea 9:10–14:8), Hosea presented prophecies about unfolding hope from God. What are the five comparisons God made with Israel in this section? Describe the simple pattern of hope that appears with each comparison, and explain how each comparison gave Israel hope for the future.

Application Questions

1. Israel and Judah's sinful actions directly led to severe punishment from God. How can God be loving and still allow the destruction of his people?
2. Hosea's prophecies warned that God would not tolerate his people's blatant disloyalty as they made alliances with pagan nations. In what ways are believers today disloyal to God? How are these disloyalties similar to the foreign alliances made in the book of Hosea?
3. What kinds of idolatry are tolerated today in your culture or even in your church community? How might your ministry expose this idolatry and offer freedom from it?
4. Is the office of prophet still active today? If so, in what way? If not, why not?
5. What prophetic roles might the church still perform in the world today?
6. The leaders in Israel and Judah were responsible for the corporate sins of their people. What does this suggest about the kinds of accountability leaders have in the church today? As a leader of God's people, does this added responsibility concern you? Why or why not?
7. Why do you suppose God used living parables (e.g., Hosea's marriage to Gomer and the names of their children) to communicate with his people? What are some of the ways we can communicate today that are analogous to these living parables?
8. What do God's lawsuits in the heavenly court tell us about how God dispenses justice? How does the legal system in your culture today compare with these standards of justice?
9. From Hosea's account, we know that God warns his people repeatedly before he brings judgment on them. What does this tell you about God's character?
10. How does every Christian today benefit from God's legal declaration of innocence as a result of Christ's death and resurrection?
11. Does the fact that God used a cruel and wicked pagan nation to punish his people seem right to you? Explain your answer.
12. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

Glossary

930 B.C. – Year that the nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms

744 B.C. – Year that Tiglath-Pileser III rose to power in Assyria

732 B.C. – Year of Assyria's first major invasion into the northern kingdom of Israel

722 B.C. – Year that Israel, or the “northern kingdom” was conquered by Assyria and taken into exile

Ahaz – Son of Jotham and king of Judah from 741-726 B.C.; known for his wickedness and refusal to trust God

Assyria – Empire located in northern Mesopotamia in the ancient Near East that invaded and conquered the northern kingdom of Israel around 722 B.C.

Assyrian judgment – Divine judgment on God's people from approximately 734-701 B.C. when God sent the Assyrians against his people in response to Israel's flagrant violation of his covenant

Babylonia – Empire located in southern Mesopotamia in the ancient Near East that invaded and conquered Judah and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 B.C.; capital city was Babylon

chatsotsrah – Hebrew term (transliteration) for a silver trumpet used to call armies into battle

covenant – A binding legal agreement made between two people or groups of people, or between God and a person or group of people

David – Second Old Testament king of Israel who received the promise that his descendant would sit on the throne and reign forever

Gomer – Unfaithful wife of the prophet Hosea

Hezekiah – Son of Ahaz and king of Judah from approximately 715-686 B.C., known for his religious reforms and miraculous deliverance from Assyrian aggression in 701 B.C.

Hosea – Prophet during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and Jeroboam, king of Israel

Hoshea – Last king of northern Israel from approximately 732 B.C. until Samaria fell in 722 B.C.

Isaiah – Prophet from Judah who ministered from approximately 740-701 B.C. during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah

Jeroboam II – King of northern Israel from approximately 793-753 B.C.

Jerusalem – City where David established his throne and Solomon built the temple during the united monarchy; capital of the southern kingdom of Judah that was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. and later destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70; city where the early church began

Jotham – Son of Uzziah and king of Judah from approximately 750-735 B.C.; known as a righteous king

mishpat – Hebrew term (transliteration) for “judgment”; refers to legal deliberations in a court of law

Pekah – King of northern Israel who assassinated King Pekahiah and took the throne in approximately 757; formed the Syrian-Israelite coalition

Phoenician – West-Semitic dialect spoken primarily in the northern coastal regions along the Mediterranean Sea; similar to the Hebrew dialect spoken in ancient northern Israel

prophecy – Divinely-inspired proclamation or revelation

prophet – God's emissary who proclaims and applies God's word, especially to warn of judgment against sin and to encourage loyal service to God that leads to blessings

rib – Hebrew word (transliteration) meaning “to contend” or “to strive”; technical term for a legal proceeding or lawsuit

Samaria – Capital city of the ten northern tribes of Israel that fell to Assyria in 722 B.C.; also, central region of ancient Palestine located between Judea and Galilee

Sargon II – Assyrian King and son of Tiglath-Pileser III; reigned from 722-705 B.C.; destroyed Samaria and conquered the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.

Sennacherib – King of Assyria and son of Sargon II; reigned from approximately 705-681 B.C.; destroyed much of Judah and laid siege to Jerusalem in 701 B.C.

Sennacherib invasion – An attack on the southern kingdom of Judah by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, around 701 B.C. in response to Judah's rebellion against Assyria; Jerusalem was miraculously spared from this invasion after Hezekiah turned to Yahweh for help

Shalmaneser V – King of Assyria and son of Tiglath-Pileser III; reigned from approximately 727-722 B.C.; subjugated Samaria prior to the city's total destruction in 722 B.C.

shophar – Hebrew term (transliteration) for a hollowed ram's horn used to call armies into battle

Syrian-Israelite coalition – Partnership formed between Syria and Israel's northern kingdom around 734 B.C. in order to resist Assyria

that world – The world that biblical authors wrote about

their world – The world of Scripture's original audience

Tiglath-Pileser III – Prominent emperor of Assyria from around 744-727 B.C.

Uzziah – King of Judah from approximately 792-740 B.C. (also called "Azariah"); known as a righteous king