

HOOK: Marriage in God's Story



Notes

Discussion Preparation

Read the article [“Marriage in God’s Story”](#) by Phil Smidt at [theresurgence.com](#).

Class Discussion

Discuss as a group the following quote from today’s article:

“God’s love for his people has always been steadfast and sure, and he holds fast to them in a permanent, exclusive, intimate, covenantal relationship.

“Vows and promises are the basis for a covenant. On a wedding day, the bride and groom make vows to one another, promising to love each other solely for a lifetime, regardless of circumstances.”

Discussion Questions

What vows would a loving husband make to his wife?

In our culture, what might be his reaction if his bride committed adultery against him?

How does this compare to how our loving God has treated us in our adultery toward Him?

BOOK: Hosea 1–3

Notes

Theme for Hosea¹

Hosea depicts Israel's unfaithfulness with a number of images from family and nature. Israel is like: a promiscuous wife, an indifferent mother, an illegitimate child, an ungrateful son, a stubborn heifer, a silly dove, a luxuriant vine, and grapes in the wilderness. Yet Israel's unfaithfulness and obstinacy are not enough to exhaust God's redeeming love that outstrips the human capacity to comprehend.

ESV Study Bible Summary of Hosea 1–3

1:1 Introduction. **The word of the LORD that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri.** The name "Hosea" comes from the same verb as "Joshua" and "Jesus," meaning "to save or deliver" (Heb. *yasha'*).

1:2 Command to Marry. God instructs Hosea to marry, but foretells that his wife's unfaithfulness will be an image for Israel's unfaithfulness. **take to yourself a wife of whoredom.** Some have supposed that God commands Hosea to marry a prostitute, but this does not suit the words. The word translated "whoredom" throughout the book is a broad term for various kinds of sexual misconduct, and only in certain contexts does it refer to prostitution.

1:3–9 Birth of Children. Hosea's wife bears children, and God gives them prophetic names.

1:4 Call his name Jezreel. Hosea, like Isaiah, uses children as signs and symbols for prophetic pronouncements (cf. Isa. 7:3; 8:1–3, 18). **the house of Jehu.** Jeroboam II (Hos. 1:1) was the fourth king of the dynasty begun by Jehu in 841 B.C. This dynasty was the longest in the history of the northern kingdom. Many suppose that **the blood of Jezreel** refers to the shedding of blood of the house of Ahab and Ahaziah when Jehu usurped the throne (2 Kings 9:21–28), but this proposal suffers from serious difficulties.

¹ Taken from the *ESV® Study Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®)*, copyright ©2008 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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1:10–11 Covenant Renewal at Jezreel. God does not intend repudiation to be the end of the story for his ancient people.

2:1–13 Legal Proceedings against the Wayward Wife. Hosea uses the legal process of an offended husband against his wife as an image for God's plans to deal with Israel.

2:4–5 they are children of whoredom. For their mother has played the whore; she who conceived them ... shamefully. Here is a clear disclaimer of fatherhood. The Lord, like Hosea, proceeds as a husband not only wronged, but injured, by infidelity. **For she said, "I will go after my lovers."** This suggests that it was Gomer/Israel who pursued the lovers, rather than the other way around (cf. Jer. 2:23–24). Israel's "lovers" are other gods.

2:14–23 Covenant Relationship Reestablished. Hosea indicates God's plan to restore his "marriage" with Israel.

2:16–17 And in that day. This is not a reference to a particular time but a description of what the day will be like when God lures Israel back. The act of changing names continues: **you will call me "My Husband," and no longer will you call me "My Baal."** The Israelites had fused the name of the Lord with Baal as though doing so made no difference. In earlier times the Hebrew for "my husband" sounded like "my Baal" (cf. Ex. 21:22; 24:4; 2 Sam. 11:26; Prov. 12:4; 30:23; 31:11, 23, 28), but now Israel must use a different word in order to make clear her exclusive devotion to the Lord, and not to Baal.

3:1–5 Command to Remarry, with the Expectation of a King Like David. Hosea returns to his own marriage situation, which is still an image for God and Israel. Israel's hope, like Judah's, lies with the house of David.

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History of Salvation Summary for Hosea

The Lord has yoked himself to Israel and will not give up on her, even in the face of the rampant unfaithfulness of the northern kingdom. He must purify Israel from her unfaithfulness through terrible punishments. For the northern kingdom to return to the Lord, the people must return to the house of David (3:5), which they will do in the “latter days” (the time of the Messiah).

So What? Applying Hosea to Our Lives Today

Romans 5: 8 states that “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” The story of Hosea paints a powerful picture of the depths of God’s love. Even if we have been like an unfaithful and wayward spouse toward God, abandoning our relationship with him to pursue our own desires, oblivious to his constant love for us, he 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, loving relationship that puts us under his powerful care.²

Thoughts from Warren Wiersbe

... no prophet preached a more painful “action sermon” than Hosea. He was instructed to marry a prostitute named Gomer who subsequently bore him three children, and he wasn’t even sure the last two children were fathered by him. Then Gomer left him for another man, and Hosea had the humiliating responsibility of buying back his own wife.

What was this all about? It was a vivid picture of what the people of Israel had done to their God by prostituting themselves to idols and committing “spiritual adultery.” Since God’s people today face the same temptation (James 4:4), we need to heed what Hosea wrote for his people. Each of the persons in this drama—Hosea, Gomer, and the three children—teach us important spiritual lessons about the God whom Israel was disobeying and grieving.³

² Duvall, J. Scott; Hays, J. Daniel (2011-09-01). *Baker Illustrated Bible Handbook*, (p. 389). Baker Book Group.

³ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Amazed*, 11-12 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996).

Notes

Insights from *The Holman Old Testament Commentary*

Love represents the intense Hebrew term *chesed*, which describes God's faithfulness in love to his covenant and thus to his covenant people. The term occurs 246 times in the Old Testament, the great majority referring to "the disposition and beneficent actions of God toward the faithful, Israel his people, and humanity in general" (D. A. Baer and R. P. Gordon, NIDOTTE 2, 211). Such faithful love is based on mutual loyalty to a relationship and mutual commitment to one another. God's steadfast commitment to his people in his *chesed* protects them in time of danger and preserves life when it is threatened.

Such *chesed* is not fleeting and ephemeral as human loyalty is (Hos. 6:4). Rather, God's faithful love is everlasting (Jer. 31:3). Israel testifies to the eternal nature of God's *chesed* (Ps. 100:5). It is God's decision, made because of his loyal character, which determines that he will restore the righteous order through justice.⁴

⁴ Anders, Max; Butler, Trent (2005-10-01). *Holman Old Testament Commentary - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah* (p. 28). B&H Publishing.

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Discussion Preparation

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Class Discussion

Discuss as a group the following quote from today’s article:

“The Bible ends with a wedding ceremony. In Revelation 19:6–9, the story of God culminates in Jesus bringing his Bride, the Church, home to live with Him permanently. Those who have trusted in Christ for salvation throughout history, whether anticipating His coming or looking back to when He came, will live with Him forever.

“The Marriage Supper of the Lamb proves that the covenant-keeping God honors His promises. That is your hope, and will always be the hope of the Bride of Christ.”

Discussion Questions

So far in Hosea 1–3, how has our covenant-keeping God honored His promise?

What conviction and hope does Hosea 1–3 give us today in our adulterous lifestyles toward Christ?