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Lesson One Wednesday Hosea 1–3

Reading for Monday: Hos. 1:1–2:1

A. Background (1:1). Consult Second Kings 14:23–ch. 17 and the study guide on the divided kingdom (hereafter abbreviated DK) for help in recalling the historical conditions of the period. See the chart in DK, page 3, for dates and the chronological relations between the kings mentioned. Discussion of the kings of Hosea’s time is in DK, pages 25–30.

1. It would be helpful to make a chronological chart on the kings during Hosea’s ministry. Observe that Hezekiah began a coregency with his father in 729 B. C. It is not likely that Hosea prophesied after the fall of Samaria in 722 B. C., and the reference to Hezekiah would not require it, if the coregency is considered.
2. Summarize the reign of Jeroboam II.
3. Describe conditions in Israel after Jeroboam II.
4. Although Hosea was a prophet to the northern kingdom, after Jeroboam II he uses only southern kings to date his ministry. What in the historical circumstances of Israel would supply a probable reason for this fact?

B. Hosea’s Marriage (1:2–9).

1. *Research Assignment:* Someone may want to make a brief report of the different views of Hosea’s marriage. Discussions will be found in the commentaries on Hosea; also in Old Testament introductions and in Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias under “Hosea.”
 - 2a. What is meant by “a wife of whoredom”?
 - 2b. What was the reason for the marriage?
 - 2c. How was the marriage of Hosea and Gomer a reflection of the relation between Jehovah and Israel?

- 2d. Do you imagine that Hosea's marriage is what enabled him to understand how God felt about Israel? Explain.
3. Name the children of Gomer and explain what was represented by each.
4. See the note in DK, 21 (under H, 3) for an explanation of "the blood of Jezreel."
- 5a. Contrast the differing treatment of Israel and Judah (vv. 6–7).
- 5b. Explain verse 7 in the light of Second Kings 19:35.⁶

C. Future Restoration of Israel (1:10–2:1).

1. Explain the application of this prophecy in the light of the New Testament. Two points will be helpful: (1) The parallelism between these verses and 2:23 & 3:5. Observe how the first three chapters each cover the same ground, each ending the same. (2) The reference to these verses (with 2:23) in Romans 9:25–26 and First Peter 2:9–10.
2. After establishing the New Testament fulfillment of the prophecy, now details can be explained in a manner consistent with New Testament application. For example, how can "one head" (v. 11) be explained? See 3:5 with Luke 1:31–33.
- 3a. How are the names of Gomer's children (as applied to the Israelites) reversed? (1:11–2:1 with 2:23).
- 3b. What is the significance of this reversal?

Reading for Tuesday: Hos. 2:2–ch. 3

A. The Punishment of Israel's Harlotry (2:2–13). After the passage dealing with the distant future (1:10–2:1), the prophecy reverts to the present. Chapter 2 then goes over the same ground as chapter 1. So does chapter 3.

⁶ If you do not recall the context you will need to read Second Kings 18:13–19:35.

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1. What is the distinction between “mother” and “children” in 2:2–5?
 - 1a. Who is the mother?
 - 1b. Who are the children?
2. How had Israel acted as a harlot?
3. How had Israel responded to Jehovah’s blessings? (2:5, 8, 12).
4. List ways in which Israel would be chastised.

B. A Second Exodus (2:14–20).

1. After chastisement, now again (as in ch. 1) future blessings. How is the future deliverance like a second exodus from Egypt? (2:14–15).⁷
2. *Baali* means lord or master. Why did Jehovah not want to be called by that name any more? (2:16–17).
3. What condition is being described in 2:18?
4. What is the significance of “I will betroth thee unto me” in 2:18–19?
5. What characteristic of God is prominent in this passage?

C. Curse Changed into Blessing (2:21–23).

1. Draw a little diagram illustrating the relationship between the things linked together in 2:21–22. What is the meaning of these verses?⁸
2. How is the changed condition of Israel reflected in the names applied to Israel? (2:23 with ch. 1).

⁷ Notes: (1) Compare the reference to “the valley of Achor” (= Troubling) with Joshua 7:26. How has the situation changed? (2) Compare “she shall make answer (or sing), as in the days of her youth, etc.” with Exodus 15.

⁸ Pay attention to the dependence of these things one upon the other. Jezreel (= the name for Israel; cf. 1:11) asks for grain, wine and oil from its various plants. But these need nutriment from the earth. And so on through the chain.

D. Israel's Probation (ch. 3). Observe that Chapter 3 covers the same ground as Chapters 1 and 2, but adds some new points.

1. What is the comparison between Hosea and his wife and Jehovah and Israel?⁹
2. What has evidently happened to Gomer (for she is most likely the woman mentioned here)?
 - 3a. Hosea takes her back, but under what conditions? (3:2–3).
 - 3b. What is the purpose of these conditions?
4. How are these circumstances of Hosea's marriage then compared to the relation between Israel and God?
5. Israel had left two persons, to whom they "afterward" return.
 - 5a. Who are the two?
 - 5b. When does this return take place?
 - 5c. Explain the fulfillment, drawing upon the end of each of the first three chapters to establish your explanation. Who is meant by "David their king"?¹⁰

⁹ Observe the *two characteristics* of the woman (3:1).

¹⁰ A comparison of the use made of the name "Elijah" in Malachi 4:5 (cf. Matt. 11:11–14; 17:9–13; Luke 1:17) will perhaps help you to understand the present usage.