

# An Unfaithful Bride

Hosea 1:1-11

SS Lesson for 01/17/2016

**Devotional Scripture:** Heb 8:8-13

## OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

#### OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON

*Key Verse: Hosea 1:10*

*Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

- A. The symbolism of Hosea's family (1:2-2:1)
  1. HOSEA'S MARRIAGE: ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS (1:2-3A)
  2. HOSEA'S CHILDREN: ISRAEL'S JUDGMENT (1:3B-9)
    - a. Jezreel (1:3b-5)
    - b. Lo-Ruhamah: "Not loved" (1:6-7)
    - c. Lo-Ammi: "Not My people" (1:8-9)
  3. THE SYMBOLISM REVERSED (1:10-2:1)

#### LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

*From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### COMMAND TO ILLUSTRATE UNFAITHFULNESS (HOSEA 1:1-2)

*Command of marriage (1:1-2)*

- Marriage to a good wife is a favor from God (Prov 18:22)
- Marriage of a disgraceful wife is like decaying bones to the husband (Prov 12:4)
- Marriage to a prudent wife is from God (Prov 19:14)
- Marriage to a wayward wife is like a narrow well (Prov 23:27)
- Marriage to a wife of noble character is worth more than rubies (Prov 31:10)

#### PROBLEMS THAT CAUSE UNFAITHFULNESS (HOSEA 1:2-5)

*Spiritual Adultery (1:2-3)*

- Spiritual adultery through idolatry (Exodus 34:15)
- Spiritual adultery through turning to other methods of guidance (Leviticus 20:6)
- Spiritual adultery through actions that defile (Psalm 106:39)
- Spiritual adultery through mixing detestable things with the things of God (Malachi 2:11)
- Spiritual adultery through living by the temporal physical instead of the eternal faith (Matthew 12:39)
- Spiritual adultery through trying to be in fellowship with both the world and God (James 4:4)
- Spiritual adultery through trying to serve two masters (Matt 6:24)

*Disobedience (1:4-5)*

- Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it causes our own actions to recoil on us (Ps 7:15-16)
- Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it is caused by bad choices (Prov 1:29-31)
- Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because we cannot do evil and still be in the will of God (Jer 18:9-10)
- Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it proves that we don't know God (Titus 1:16)
- Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it proves we are stubborn and have forsaken God's word (Jer 9:13-14)
- Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it violates God's covenant (Deut 17:2-5)
- Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it dishonors God (Rom 2:23-24)
- Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it shows that we have forgotten all God has done for us (Heb 8:9)

#### CONSEQUENCES OF UNFAITHFULNESS (HOSEA 1:6-9)

*Wrath of God (1:6-7)*

- Wrath is a consequence because it is the punishment for the ungodliness and wickedness of man (Rom 1:18)
- Wrath is a consequence because man's stubbornness and unrepentant heart stored it up (Rom 2:5)
- Wrath is a consequence because God says that it comes on those who are disobedient (Eph 5:6)
- Wrath is a consequence because it is part of our sinful and earthly nature (Col 3:5-6)

*Loss of fellowship with God (1:8-9)*

- Loss of fellowship because of walking in darkness (1 John 1:6)

Loss of fellowship because the wicked cannot dwell with God (Ps 5:4)  
Loss of fellowship because there is no commonality between God and evil (2 Cor 6:15-16)  
Loss of fellowship because of the love of evilness and the fear of it being exposed (John 3:19-20)  
Loss of fellowship because to have fellowship, we must walk as Jesus walks (1 John 2:6)

#### **GOD'S MERCY TOWARD UNFAITHFULNESS (HOSEA 1:10-11)**

##### *Merciful Restoration (10)*

A restoration from wandering from the truth (James 5:19-20)  
A restoration from sin (1 John 5:16)  
A restoration from doubting (Jude 22-23)  
A restoration from grief caused by sin (2 Cor 2:5-8)  
A restoration from idleness and weakness (1 Thess 5:14)

##### *Merciful Future Kingdom (11)*

A future kingdom identified in God's covenant (Ps 89:34-37)  
A future kingdom that God promised (Jer 33:17)  
A future kingdom that God sets up (Dan 2:44)  
A future kingdom where God given authority never ends (Luke 1:32-33)  
A future kingdom where righteousness is supreme (Heb 1:8)

#### **CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS**

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM ARNO GAEBELEIN

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR

# Introduction

## Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson examines God's object lesson on unfaithfulness through commanding Hosea to marry **An Unfaithful Bride**. The **study's aim** is to see God's hand at work in the lives of His people and to find the way God brings blessing and good out of trying situations. The **study's application** is to order our lives before God in willingness and to surrender to His will, even when it is against all reason and common sense.

*(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)*

### Key Verse: Hosea 1:10

*Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God'.*

### Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

#### *A. The symbolism of Hosea's family (1:2-2:1)*

This opening section sets forth the major themes of the entire prophecy: Israel's unfaithfulness, the certainty of judgment, and the ultimate restoration of the nation. These ideas are introduced within the context of the Lord's command to Hosea to marry and have children.

#### *1. HOSEA'S MARRIAGE: ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS (1:2-3A)*

1:2-3a. At the outset of Hosea's ministry **the LORD** instructed him to marry **an adulterous** woman. This relationship, characterized by infidelity on the wife's part, was to portray Israel's unfaithfulness to its covenant with the Lord (cf. 2:2-23). In response to the divine command **Hosea.... married Gomer, a daughter of Diblaim**.

Much debate has centered on the circumstances of Hosea's marriage. Some have held that the marriage was only visionary or allegorical, not literal. This proposal was motivated by a desire to sidestep the supposed moral difficulty of the holy God commanding His servant to marry a woman of disreputable character. However, the account is presented as a straightforward narrative, not as a report of a vision or as a purely symbolic act (cf. chap. 3). The Lord sometimes required His prophets to carry out orders that many would consider over and above the call of duty (e.g., Isa. 20:1-4; Ezek. 4:1-5:4).

Those who hold to a literal marriage disagree over Gomer's status at the beginning of her relationship with Hosea. Some argue that Gomer was a prostitute at the time she was married. A modification of this is the view that she was a typical young Israelite woman who had participated in a Canaanite rite of sexual initiation in preparation for marriage (Wolff, *Hosea*, pp. 14-5). Others contend that Gomer was sexually pure at the time of marriage and later became an adulteress. The Book of Hosea does not provide information concerning Gomer's premarital sexual experience. The expression "adulterous wife" (lit., "wife of adultery") does not describe her condition at the time of marriage, but anticipates what she proved to be, a wife characterized by unfaithfulness. Any knowledge of Gomer's status at the time of marriage is thereby precluded.

Both the language of Hosea 1:2 and the following context support this interpretation. The expression is similar to others in Hebrew that describe a married woman's character (e.g., "wife of one's youth," "a quarrelsome wife" ["a wife of quarrelings"], "a wife of noble character"; for these and other examples see Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation, Introduction and Commentary*, p. 159). The Hebrew word *zenûnm* (trans. here "adulterous") refers elsewhere in Hosea to the activity of Israel under the figure of a married woman (cf. 2:2, 4; 4:12; 5:4). Also the emphasis in the following context (1:2b; 2:2-3:5) is on the unfaithfulness that characterized both the Lord's and Hosea's marriages, not on the brides' premarital experiences. Thus the Lord's command should be understood as follows, "Go, take to yourself a wife who will prove to be unfaithful."

The Lord also told Hosea to **take... children of unfaithfulness**. This does not refer to children born from another father before Gomer's marriage to Hosea. The Hebrew expression is elliptical with the second verb omitted. The command could be paraphrased, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and have (NASB) children of unfaithfulness." The children are those mentioned in 1:3-9. "Unfaithfulness" does not necessarily imply they were the products of Gomer's illicit relationships. The fact that Hosea is not specifically mentioned in verses 6 and 8 as the children's father need not point to their illegitimacy. In Genesis 29:32-35 the same phrase which appears in Hosea 1:6, 8 ("she conceived again and gave birth") is used with no mention of the father (Jacob) because he is identified in the preceding context (as in Hosea, v. 3; cf. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, p. 168). "Children of unfaithfulness" may simply point to their being born in the context of (but not as a direct result of) Gomer's infidelity. Also the phrase emphasizes the mother's character, not that of the children. Andersen and Freedman understand the phrase as elliptical: "children of (a wife of) promiscuity" (*Hosea*, p. 168). It is similar to other Hebrew expressions in which the descriptive term points primarily to a quality of the parent not of the offspring (cf. *benê hanne'ûrm*, lit., "sons of youth," i.e., "sons born to a youthful parent," Ps. 127:4; and *ben zeqûnm*, lit., "son of old age," i.e., "a son born to an aged parent," Gen. 37:3).

In Hosea 1:2 **the land**, which stands for those living in it (cf. 4:1), is personified as a wife who **is guilty of the vilest adultery**. This Hebrew verbal expression is emphatic, highlighting the extent to which Israel had departed **from the LORD**.

## 2. HOSEA'S CHILDREN: ISRAEL'S JUDGMENT (1:3B-9)

The divinely chosen names for Hosea's three children served as reminders of the broken relationship between the Lord and Israel and pointed ahead to judgment. Each section on the children (vv. 3b-5, 6-7, 8-9) contains a birth notice (vv. 3b, 6a, 8), a divine word of instruction concerning the child's name (vv. 4a, 6b, 9a), and an explanation of the meaning of the name (vv. 4b-5, 6b, 9b). God's words (v. 7) are unique in that they qualify the announcement of judgment given (v. 6).

### a. Jezreel (1:3b-5)

1:3b. The first child (**a son**) was named Jezreel. At this point the significance of his name was not in its meaning ("God sows"), but in its association with past and future events at the place Jezreel (cf., however, v. 11; 2:22-23). Jezreel was the site of Jehu's ruthless massacre of the house of Ahab (1:4; cf. 2 Kings 9-10). In the future it would be the scene of Israel's military demise (Hosea 1:5).

1:4. The reason for the Lord's coming punishment on Jehu's dynasty (lit., **house**) was **the massacre** (lit., "bloodshed") **at Jezreel** (ca. 841 B.C.). Jehu's slaughter of Jezebel and Ahab's descendants had been prophesied by Elijah (1 Kings 21:21-24), commanded by Elisha (2 Kings 9:6-10), and commended by the Lord Himself (2 Kings 10:30). So many think the attitude expressed by the Lord (Hosea 1:4) contradicted that in the accounts in 1 and 2 Kings. But a closer examination of the historical record suggests a resolution to the problem. **Jehu** also killed Joram (2 Kings 9:24), Ahaziah, king of Judah (2 Kings 9:27-28), 42 of Ahaziah's relatives (2 Kings 10:12-14), and several functionaries of the Baal cult (2 Kings 10:18-28). Though the execution of Baal's servants was certainly in accord with the Lord's will (cf. 1 Kings 18:40), Jehu's attack on the house of David went too far. Despite the fact that Ahaziah's assassination could be attributed to God's providence (2 Chron. 22:7), it demonstrated an underlying lack of regard for the Lord's commands. This disregard subsequently came to the surface in other ways (cf. 2 Kings 10:29-31). So Hosea 1:4 probably refers to the slaughter of Ahaziah and his relatives. Though their deaths did not actually occur in Jezreel (cf. 2 Kings 9:27; 10:12-14), they were associated with the wholesale slaughter at that place.

The fulfillment of this prophecy came in 752 B.C. when Shallum assassinated Zechariah, the fourth of Jehu's descendants to rule the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings 15:10), thereby cutting off Jehu's dynasty forever.

1:5. God told Hosea that the demise of Jehu's dynasty was to be accompanied by the downfall of the Northern Kingdom. In a display of poetic justice the Lord would **break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel**, the site of Jehu's sin. Breaking the bow refers to the destruction of the nation's military might (cf. 1 Sam. 2:4; Ps. 46:9; Jer. 49:35).

The general fulfillment of this prophecy came in 734-722 B.C. when the Assyrians overran Israel and reduced it to a province within their empire (2 Kings 15:29; 17:3-5). The Jezreel plain in particular was probably conquered in 733 B.C. by Tiglath-Pileser III. This valley, which had been the scene of a great military victory under Gideon (Judges 6:33; 7), again became a symbol of national disgrace and defeat, as it had been after Saul's death (1 Sam. 29:1, 11; 31).

*b. Lo-Ruhamah: "Not loved" (1:6-7)*

1:6. The second child received the name **Lo-Ruhamah**, which means "she is not loved." Her name indicated that the Lord's **love** for **Israel** would be cut off for a time. "Ruhamah," from the verb *rāḥam*, describes tender feelings of compassion, such as those expressed by a parent for a child (cf. 1 Kings 3:26; Ps. 103:13; Isa. 49:15) or by a man for his younger brother (cf. Gen. 43:30). At Sinai the Lord described Himself (Ex. 34:6) as "the compassionate... God" (*'ēl raḥûm*) who is willing to forgive iniquity (Ex. 34:6). However, despite His gracious character, times come when He will no longer "leave the guilty unpunished" (Ex. 34:7). Such a time had come for the Northern Kingdom.

1:7. The light of God's grace shines through the gloom of impending judgment. **Judah**, the Southern Kingdom, in contrast with Israel, would experience the Lord's **love** in the form of deliverance from the Assyrians. This would **not** be accomplished through human military might (symbolized by the **bow**, **sword**, etc.), **but by the Lord's** intervention. This promise was fulfilled in 701 B.C. when God supernaturally annihilated 185,000 soldiers in the powerful Assyrian army in one night thereby ending its campaign against Judah (2 Kings 19:32-36).

*c. Lo-Ammi: "Not My people" (1:8-9)*

1:8-9. The third child, a **son**, was named **Lo-Ammi**, which means **not My people**. In the ancient covenant formula God declared, "I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be My people" (Lev. 26:12; cf. Ex. 6:7; Deut. 26:17-18). But now that relationship was to be severed. The last clause of Hosea 1:9 (**I am not your God**) is literally, "and I [am] not I AM (*'ehyeh*) to you." The statement probably alludes to God's words to Moses, "I am (*'ehyeh*) who I am (*'ehyeh*). This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM (*'ehyeh*) has sent me to you" (Ex. 3:14). "I AM," which is closely related to the divine name Yahweh, points to God as the covenant **LORD** of Israel who watches over and delivers His people (cf. Ex. 3:16-17). However, through Lo-Ammi the Lord announced that Israel would no longer experience His special saving presence.

*3. THE SYMBOLISM REVERSED (1:10-2:1)*

In a remarkable shift of tone the Lord declared that the effects of judgment would someday be reversed. He promised a time of rich blessing accompanied by restoration of the covenant relationship and national unity.

1:10. Despite the demise of the Northern Kingdom (vv. 4-5), **the Israelites will again be like the sand on the seashore** in fulfillment of the Lord's irrevocable promise to Abraham (Gen. 22:17; 32:12). **In the same place where** Israel heard the words **not My people** (cf. Hosea 1:9) **they will be called sons of the living God**. The sonship reference points to restoration of the covenant relationship, pictured under the figure of a family setting (cf. 2:1-5). The divine title "living God" was used in Joshua 3:10 in reference to the Lord's mighty presence with Israel during the Conquest of the land. In the future Israel will again experience the benefits of a relationship with the living God as they reoccupy the Promised Land.

1:11. At the time of national restoration the two kingdoms (**Judah and... Israel**), which had divided under Solomon's son Rehoboam (1 Kings 12), **will be reunited under one Leader** (cf. Ezek. 37:22), the ideal Davidic Ruler of the Kingdom Age (cf. Hosea 3:5; Isa. 9:6-7; Amos 9:11; Micah 5:2). The promise to David of an everlasting throne will be fulfilled (cf. 2 Sam. 7:11b-16).

The united nation also **will come up out of the land**. This statement may refer to a return from exile, the "land" being Egypt (cf. Hosea 2:15), which serves as a symbol of the future place(s) of captivity (cf. 8:13; 9:3, 6; 11:5; Deut. 28:68). However, "land" (*'ereṣ*) elsewhere in the Book of Hosea refers either to the land of Israel (cf. Hosea 1:2; 2:18, 23; 4:1, 3) or to the literal surface of the ground (cf. 2:21-22; 6:3) when used with the definite article and without a qualifying geographical term. The land of Egypt is specifically

designated as such when mentioned in Hosea (2:15; 7:11, 16; 8:13; 9:3, 6; 11:1, 5, 11; 12:1, 9, 13; 13:4). So it is better to understand this as a comparison between Israel and a plant which grows up from the soil. “Land” can refer to the ground (as just noted), as “come up” (*‘ālāh*) is used elsewhere of plant life sprouting forth from the soil (cf. “grow up,” 10:8; “growing” Deut. 29:23). The following context also supports this view. According to Hosea 2:23, the Lord promised that He would “plant” (*zāra* ‘, the same word used in the name Jezreel) the nation in the land as one sows seed on the ground (cf. 2:22, where the name Jezreel, “God sows,” appears). Because the Lord Himself will be the One who sows, Israel will sprout forth and grow luxuriantly.

**The day of Jezreel** probably alludes to this time when God will plant His people in the land. If so, the literal meaning of the name Jezreel (“God sows”) takes on significance at this point. It is also likely that it alludes to Gideon’s victory over the Midianites in the Valley of Jezreel (Judges 7). The future day of restoration will be ushered in by a great military triumph like that of Gideon (cf. Isa. 9:4-7; see also Isa. 41:8-16; Amos 9:11-12; Joel 3:9-17). Those who oppose the Lord’s theocratic rule through the messianic King will be defeated (cf. Rev. 19:11-21). The greatness of this eschatological “day of Jezreel” will reverse the shame and defeat which Israel experienced there at the hands of the Assyrians (cf. Hosea 1:5).

2:1. These words were spoken to a segment of the restored nation of the future (cf. v. 23), viewed as a group of children (**say** and **your** are pl. in Heb.). They were told to proclaim to their **brothers** and **sisters** (other Israelites) that the nation’s relationship with the Lord had been reestablished. The Lord then addressed them as **My people** (*‘amm*; cf. 1:9) and **My loved one** (*rūhāmāh*; cf. 1:6). Long before Hosea, Moses had predicted such a change in the Lord’s attitude (Deut. 30:1-9). After describing the nation’s future exile (Deut. 30:1), Moses promised that their repentance would result in a renewal of the Lord’s compassion (Deut. 30:2-3, *rāham*) and a return to the land (Deut. 30:4-9). Long after Hosea, the Apostle Paul also foresaw this time of Israel’s restoration (Rom. 11:25-32).

In summary, Hosea 1:10-2:1 contains a marvelous prophecy of Israel’s future restoration, in which the effects of the Lord’s judgment will be totally reversed. The nation that suffered defeat at Jezreel and was called “not loved” and “not My people” will take part in the great “day of Jezreel” and hear the Lord say, “My people” and “[My] loved one.” The covenant promises to Abraham (of numerous descendants) and David (of eternal kingship) will be fulfilled when the covenant ideal predicted by Moses will be realized.

## **Lesson Introduction and Background**

### **From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Some reports claim that the divorce rate among evangelical Christians is the same as the rest of the population (or perhaps even higher). Other analysis claims, however, that the divorce rate for active, churchgoing Christians is significantly lower than that of the general population. Either way, we should agree that the divorce statistics are too high, for Christians or anyone else. The reasons cited for divorce are familiar: money problems, infidelity, meddling in-laws, personal tragedies, constant fighting—the list goes on and on. Operating under the maxim “Well begun is half done,” the best way to minimize these potential obstacles is in-depth premarital counseling. Today’s lesson begins with a startling account of premarital counseling by the ultimate counselor: God. His directive counsel to Hosea was for that prophet to take a wife from among the local prostitutes! Could such a marriage possibly succeed?

The opening verse of the book of Hosea dates that prophet’s ministry as beginning during the reign of King Uzziah and ending during the reign of King Hezekiah, both of Judah. The date range is thus about 767-687 BC. Hosea is also mentioned in conjunction with King Jeroboam of Israel. He is the second king of that name in the Bible; he is the “son of Jehoash” (2 Kings 14:23-29; Hosea 1:1), not Jeroboam the “son of Nebat,” an earlier king (compare 1 Kings 11:26-14:20). Jeroboam II reigned 793-753 BC, a particularly prosperous time in the northern kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 14:25-27). Hosea does not mention other kings of Israel who followed him, although Hosea surely ministered during their reigns since Hezekiah of Judah did not begin to rule until at least 24 years after the death of Jeroboam II. Hosea also does not mention the invasion of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in 722 BC. That catastrophic event ended Israel’s existence as a nation, so Hosea’s ministry to that kingdom ended before then. A general timeline for Hosea’s ministry

therefore is 755-725 BC, with its primary focus being the northern kingdom of Israel and its capital city of Samaria. This made Hosea a contemporary with Isaiah, Micah, and Amos. Hosea's name means "salvation" or "he will save."

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Command to Illustrate Unfaithfulness (Hosea 1:1-2)**

1 The word of the Lord that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

2 When the Lord began to speak by Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea: "Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry, For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the Lord."

### **Command of marriage (1:1-2)**

*Marriage to a good wife is a favor from God (Prov 18:22)*

22 He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.

*Marriage of a disgraceful wife is like decaying bones to the husband (Prov 12:4)*

4 A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.

*Marriage to a prudent wife is from God (Prov 19:14)*

14 Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.

*Marriage to a wayward wife is like a narrow well (Prov 23:27)*

27 for a prostitute is a deep pit and a wayward wife is a narrow well.

*Marriage to a wife of noble character is worth more than rubies (Prov 31:10)*

10 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

### **Problems that Cause Unfaithfulness (Hosea 1:2-5)**

2 When the Lord began to speak by Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea: "Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry, For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the Lord."

3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4 Then the Lord said to him: "Call his name Jezreel, For in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, And bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.

5 It shall come to pass in that day That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

### **Spiritual Adultery (1:2-3)**

*Spiritual adultery through idolatry (Exodus 34:15)*

"Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices.

*Spiritual adultery through turning to other methods of guidance (Leviticus 20:6)*

" I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.

*Spiritual adultery through actions that defile (Psalm 106:39)*

They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves.

*Spiritual adultery through mixing detestable things with the things of God (Malachi 2:11)*

Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god.

*Spiritual adultery through living by the temporal physical instead of the eternal faith (Matthew 12:39)*

He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

*Spiritual adultery through trying to be in fellowship with both the world and God (James 4:4)*

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

*Spiritual adultery through trying to serve two masters (Matt 6:24)*

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

## **Disobedience (1:4-5)**

*Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it causes our own actions to recoil on us (Ps 7:15-16)*

15 He who digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit he has made. 16 The trouble he causes recoils on himself; his violence comes down on his own head.

*Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it is caused by bad choices (Prov 1:29-31)*

29 Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, 30 since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, 31 they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.

*Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because we cannot do evil and still be in the will of God (Jer 18:9-10)*

9 And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, 10 and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

*Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it proves that we don't know God (Titus 1:16)*

They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

*Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it proves we are stubborn and have forsaken God's word (Jer 9:13-14)*

13 The LORD said, "It is because they have forsaken my law, which I set before them; they have not obeyed me or followed my law. 14 Instead, they have followed the stubbornness of their hearts; they have followed the Baals, as their fathers taught them.

*Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it violates God's covenant (Deut 17:2-5)*

2 If a man or woman living among you in one of the towns the LORD gives you is found doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God in violation of his covenant, 3 and contrary to my command has worshiped other gods, bowing down to them or to the sun or the moon or the stars of the sky, 4 and this has been brought to your attention, then you must investigate it thoroughly. If it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, 5 take the man or woman who has done this evil deed to your city gate and stone that person to death.

*Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it dishonors God (Rom 2:23-24)*

23 You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? 24 As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

*Unfaithfulness comes from disobedience because it shows that we have forgotten all God has done for us (Heb 8:9)*

It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

### **Consequences of Unfaithfulness (Hosea 1:6-9)**

6 And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: "Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, But I will utterly take them away.

7 Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, Will save them by the Lord their God, And will not save them by bow, Nor by sword or battle, By horses or horsemen."

8 Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son.

9 Then God said: "Call his name Lo-Ammi, For you are not My people, And I will not be your God.

### **Wrath of God (1:6-7)**

*Wrath is a consequence because it is the punishment for the ungodliness and wickedness of man (Rom 1:18)*

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

*Wrath is a consequence because man's stubbornness and unrepentant heart stored it up (Rom 2:5)*

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

*Wrath is a consequence because God says that it comes on those who are disobedient (Eph 5:6)*

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

*Wrath is a consequence because it is part of our sinful and earthly nature (Col 3:5-6)*

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

### **Loss of fellowship with God (1:8-9)**

*Loss of fellowship because of walking in darkness (1 John 1:6)*

If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

*Loss of fellowship because the wicked cannot dwell with God (Ps 5:4)*

You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell.

*Loss of fellowship because there is no commonality between God and evil (2 Cor 6:15-16)*

15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

*Loss of fellowship because of the love of evilness and the fear of it being exposed (John 3:19-20)*

19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

*Loss of fellowship because to have fellowship, we must walk as Jesus walks (1 John 2:6)*

Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

### **God's Mercy Toward Unfaithfulness (Hosea 1:10-11)**

10 "Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God.'

11 Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel Shall be gathered together, And appoint for themselves one head; And they shall come up out of the land, For great will be the day of Jezreel!

### **Merciful Restoration (10)**

*A restoration from wandering from the truth (James 5:19-20)*

19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

*A restoration from sin (1 John 5:16)*

16 If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.

*A restoration from doubting (Jude 22-23)*

22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

*A restoration from grief caused by sin (2 Cor 2:5-8)*

5 If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent not to put it too severely. 6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. 7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

*A restoration from idleness and weakness (1 Thess 5:14)*

14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

## **Merciful Future Kingdom (11)**

*A future kingdom identified in God's covenant (Ps 89:34-37)*

34 I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. 35 Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness and I will not lie to David — 36 that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; 37 it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky." Selah

*A future kingdom that God promised (Jer 33:17)*

17 For this is what the Lord says: 'David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel,

*A future kingdom that God sets up (Dan 2:44)*

44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

*A future kingdom where God given authority never ends (Luke 1:32-33)*

32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

*A future kingdom where righteousness is supreme (Heb 1:8)*

8 But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### ***Commentary Thoughts from Arno Gaebelein***

*Hosea 1:1.* This superscription gives the period of Hosea's ministry. First stands the statement that the word of the Lord came to him. Hosea means salvation; his father's name, Beeri, means "my well." Both are typical names. Critics have pointed out that Hosea was undoubtedly a resident of the northern kingdom of Israel, yet he mentions but one of the kings of Israel, Jeroboam, while four kings of Judah are given in this introduction. Inasmuch as Hosea long survived Jeroboam, the king of Israel, and the Judaic kings extend far beyond the time of the one Israelitish king, it has been alleged that the second part of the superscription does not harmonize with the first. Such is not the case. The superscription is made in this manner for some purpose. Hosea marks his Prophecy by the names of the kings of Judah, because in Judah the theocracy remained. He mentions Jeroboam (the Second), whose reign ended in the fourteenth year of Uzziah, because he was the last king of Israel through whom God acted and vouchsafed help to the rival kingdom. All the other kings of Israel who came after Jeroboam, by whom the Lord sent deliverance to the ten tribes 2 Kings 14:27 were therefore recognized by the prophets of God; the kings which followed were robbers and murderers, whose names the Spirit of God finds unfit to mention in the prophetic ministry of Hosea.

*Hosea 1:2-5.* In the beginning of his ministry, when Hosea was a young man, the Lord commanded him to take unto him a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms, and that for the reason, because the land hath committed great whoredoms, departing from the Lord. This command was at once executed by the prophet; he took to wife Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim.

We are confronted with an interesting question. What is the nature of these transactions? Were they real events, that Hosea literally took this woman and had children by her, or were they nothing but pictorial, visionary illustrations of the spiritual adultery and unfaithfulness of Israel? Did the prophet actually and literally enter into such an impure relationship, or, is it wholly an allegory? Luther supposed that the prophet called his lawful wife and children by these names at a certain time to perform a kind of drama before the people and thus remind them of their apostasy. The objectors to the literalness of this incident, and defenders of the allegorical explanation, have pointed out that it would be unworthy of God to command and sanction such an unchaste union. The allegorical meaning is entirely excluded by the text, which speaks of a literal transaction. All is related as real history, the marriage and the birth of the children. We quote first Dr. Pusey's words in support of the literal meaning of this command by the Lord.

“We must not imagine things to be unworthy of God, because they do not commend themselves to us. God does not dispense with the moral law, because the moral law has its source in the mind of God Himself. To dispense with it would mean to contradict Himself. But God, who is absolute Lord of all things which He made, may, at His sovereign will, dispose of the lives or things which He created. Thus, as sovereign judge, He commanded the lives of the Canaanites to be taken by Israel, as, in His ordinary providence, He has ordained that the magistrate should not bear the sword in vain, but has made him His minister, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. So, again, He, whose are all things, willed to repay to the Israelites their hard and unjust servitude by commanding them to spoil the Egyptians. He, who created marriage, commanded to Hosea whom he should marry. The prophet was not defiled by taking as his lawful wife, at God's bidding, one defiled, however hard a thing this was.”

This is the strongest defense of the literal interpretation of this incident. But there is another interpretation possible, which we believe is the correct one. As the context shows the symbolical meaning of Hosea's marriage is to illustrate Israel's unfaithfulness. But Israel was not always unfaithful; she played not always the harlot. Of necessity this had to be symbolized in the case of the prophet's marriage. The question then arises, was Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim an impure woman when Hosea married her, or did she become unchaste after her marriage to the prophet? We believe the latter was the case. The Hebrew does not require the meaning that she was impure at the time of the marriage; in fact, as already indicated, the supposition that Gomer lived the life of a harlot before her marriage to the godly prophet, destroys the parallelism, which the prophet's message embodies, with the relation of God to Israel. The expression “a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms” simply intimated to Hosea what the woman he married was going to be. If not taken in this sense it would mean that Gomer had already children when Hosea married her.

Gomer was called “a wife of whoredoms” by the omniscient Lord, in anticipation of her future conduct. She fell and became immoral after her union with Hosea, and not before. In this way she became a symbol of Israel, married unto the Lord, but afterwards became the unfaithful wife. With this view, the entire prophetic message of Hosea in the beginning of this book harmonizes. The name of the woman is likewise suggestive. Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, means “Completion--a double cake of figs.” Israel's wickedness is symbolized as complete and the double cake of figs is symbolical of sensual pleasures. And the prophet in spite of her unfaithfulness still loved her and did not abandon her. This illustrates Jehovah's love for Israel.

Then she bore him a son. Expositors have stated, “The children were not the prophet's own, but born of adultery and presented to him as his.” But that can not be the meaning in view of the plain statement “she conceived and bare him a son.”

The Lord commands him to call this son “Jezeel.” Jezeel has likewise a symbolical meaning. It means “God shall scatter” Jeremiah 31:10; but it also means “God shall sow” Zechariah 10:9. Thus Israel was to be scattered and sown among the nations. Jezeel was the valley in which Jehu executed his bloody deeds. On account of his hypocritical zeal, the blood of Jezeel is now to be avenged, and the kingdom of the house of Israel would cease. Thus the name Jezeel (resembling in sound and form “Israel”) indicates the speedy end of Israel, scattered and sown among the nations, on account of their whoredoms (see Ezekiel 23:1-49).

*Hosea 1:6-7.* Next a daughter is born. Here “bare him” as found in verse 3 is omitted. The prophet receives a name for her--Lo-ruhamah, which means “not having obtained mercy.” Interesting are the two renderings of the Holy Spirit of this passage in the New Testament. In Romans 9:25 it is rendered “not beloved” and in 1 Peter 2:10, “hath not obtained mercy.” Love and mercy were now to be withdrawn from Israel and they were to be taken away utterly.

Then the house of Judah is mentioned. They shall be saved by the Lord their God, because He has mercy on them. Their salvation was not by bow, by sword, or by battle, horses and horsemen. It was only a little while later when the Assyrian, who was God’s instrument in the execution of judgment upon Israel, came before the gates of Jerusalem, but Jerusalem was saved in the manner as predicted here, not by bow or sword, but the angel of the Lord smote the army of 185,000 in one night. And later Judah was saved and a remnant brought back from Babylon. Then there is a future salvation for Judah in the end of the age.

*Hosea 1:8-9.* Another son is born and “God said, Call his name Lo-ammi, for ye are not my people and I am not your God.” Lo-ammi means “not my people.” Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi are symbolical of Israel’s rejection and the withdrawal of God’s mercy. That this is not to be permanent the next two verses make this clear.

*Hosea 1:10-11.* Abruptly we are transported from the present into the distant future, and a prophetic utterance of great depth follows. The tenth verse is quoted by the Holy Spirit in Romans 9:1-33 and gives full light on the meaning of the passage here. God’s sovereignty is the theme of the ninth chapter of Romans: “And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He has afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As He saith also in Osee (Greek form of Hosea), I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there shall they be called the children of the living God” Romans 9:23-33. Here is the commentary of Hosea 1:10. It means first that Israel shall be reinstated; but it also means the call and salvation of the Gentiles, and Gentiles called in sovereign grace are to be constituted “the sons of the living God.” It is a prophetic hint on the blessing to come to the Gentiles, and that blessing is greater than Israel’s.

The eleventh verse is a great prophecy and remains still unfulfilled. Some expositors claim that it was fulfilled in the return of the remnant of Jews under Zerubbabel. But the Babylonian captivity is not in view here at all. The great day of Jezreel will come, when King Messiah, our Lord returns. Then shall Judah and Israel be gathered together under one head, and gather once more to their national feasts in the land.

*(Adapted from URL:<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/gab/view.cgi?bk=ho&ch=1>)*

### **Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Marriages between Christians are not immune from trouble and even failure. Divorce is a reality, and there is little to be gained from making divorced persons outcasts or fueling their feelings of guilt. They feel guilty enough already. On the other hand, the restoration of a damaged marriage should not be considered to be beyond the will or power of God. Hosea’s marriage was clouded by sexual unfaithfulness and the undoubted tension arising from the scandalous naming of his children. The thing that saved the marriage was the prophet’s willingness to heed God’s commands to love Gomer again no matter how much she had hurt Hosea. This is symbolic of the way the Lord loves his people, despite their spiritual adultery.

### **Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

1. When God's people are unfaithful, the consequences of their unfaithfulness extend to the faithful as well (Hos. 1:1-2)
2. Sometimes God tells us to do the unthinkable without explaining His purposes
3. Obedience and faithfulness to God usually have broad influence and a long-lasting impact (vs. 3)

4. Those who are called Christians, believers, disciples, and followers of God must live up to their names (vss. 4-7)
5. For God's people to divorce themselves from Him by bad behavior is a tragedy (vss. 8-9)
6. God determines the recipients and the timing of His mercy (vss. 10-11)