



## CHAPTER ONE – SCRIPTURE AND OBSERVATION

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD which came to Hosea the son of Beeri, during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel. <sup>2</sup>When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and *have* children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the LORD."

### SETTING THE SCENE

HOSEA, A PROPHET THAT WAS BELIEVED TO BE A NATIVE OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL WAS THE SON OF BEERI. HOSEA'S PROPHECY MINISTRY TOOK PLACE FROM 755–710 B.C. HE LISTS IN VERSE 1 THE REIGNS OF THE KINGS WHOM HE PROPHESED UNDER. (FOR FURTHER READINGS ON THE HISTORICAL PERIOD OF HOSEA'S MINISTRY SEE 2 KINGS 14–20 & 2 CHRONICLES 26–32.

IN VERSE 2, HOSEA TELLS US WHAT GOD COMMANDED HIM TO DO. HE WAS TO GO MARRY A PROSTITUTE AND HAVE CHILDREN WITH THIS PROSTITUTE BECAUSE "THE LAND [THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL] WERE COMMITTING BLATANT HARLOTRY AND FORSAKING THE LORD".

<sup>3</sup>So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. <sup>4</sup>And the LORD said to him, "Name him Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. <sup>5</sup>On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel." <sup>6</sup>Then she conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. And the LORD said to him, "Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel, that I would ever forgive them. <sup>7</sup>But I will have compassion on the house of Judah and deliver them by the LORD their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses or horsemen." <sup>8</sup>When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and gave birth to a son. <sup>9</sup>And the LORD said, "Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God."



## THE CHILDREN OF HOSEA & GOMER

WE SEE HERE THAT HOSEA OBEYED THE LORD'S COMMAND. HE MARRIED GOMER AND HAD 3 CHILDREN: JEZREEL, LO-RUHAMAH, & LO-AMMI. EACH CHILD'S NAME REPRESENTED THE JUDGEMENT GOD WOULD BRING AGAINST THE NATION OF ISRAEL IN HIS WRATH.

JEZEREEL – THE NAME JEZREEL WAS GIVEN TO REMIND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL OF THE RECKLESSNESS AND BETRAYAL OF THE FORMER KING OF ISRAEL, JEHU TO GOD. (THE STORY OF KING JEHU CAN BE FOUND IN 2 KINGS 9–10.) ALTHOUGH JEHU FULFILLED GOD'S COMMANDMENTS IN RIDDING THE NATION OF THE FAMILY OF AHAB AND THE WORSHIPPERS OF BAAL, HE DID IT RECKLESSLY, ARROGANTLY, AND STILL WAS NOT WALKING IN THE LAW OF THE LORD WITH ALL OF HIS HEART (2 KINGS 10:31) ← WE WILL REVISIT THIS LATER!

LO-RUHAMAH – LITERALLY MEANS NO MERCY. THE LORD IS PROCLAIMING IN HIS JUDGMENT THAT HE WILL NO LONGER HAVE MERCY ON THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL BUT THAT HE WILL HAVE MERCY ON AND DELIVER THE HOUSE OF JUDAH. NOTICE IN VERSE 7, GOD IS VOWING TO DELIVER THE HOUSE OF JUDAH BUT WILL NOT BE USING ANY MEANS OF VIOLENCE TO DO IT.

LO-AMMI – LITERALLY MEANS NOT MY PEOPLE. THE LORD IS SAYING TO THE ISRAELITES THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER HIS AND HE IS NO LONGER THEIR GOD.

## GOD'S PROMISE TO ISRAEL

<sup>10</sup> Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and in the place where it is said to them, "You are not My people," it will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God." <sup>11</sup> And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and they will appoint for themselves one leader, and they will go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

HOSEA PROPHESIES THAT ALTHOUGH GOD WILL FOR A SEASON EVOKE WRATH TOWARDS THE NATION OF ISRAEL FOR HER UNFAITHFULNESS, A DAY WILL COME WHEN THE RELATIONSHIP WILL BE RESTORED AND HE WILL TAKE HER BACK. THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WILL MULTIPLY AND WHERE THEY WERE ONCE TOLD THEY WERE NO LONGER HIS, THEY WILL BE WELCOMED WITH OPEN ARMS. RESTORATION WAS COMING –EVEN FOR



THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN KINGDOMS. THERE WOULD BE UNITY AND SOUND LEADERSHIP. WHAT ONCE WAS REMEMBERED FOR ITS RECKLESSNESS AND VIOLENCE (THE DAY OF JEZREEL) WOULD BE MADE AND REMEMBERED FOR SOMETHING GREAT.

## CHAPTER ONE – LIFE APPLICATION & DISCUSSION

IN CHAPTER ONE, WE ARE GIVEN A BASIC OVERVIEW AND SNEAK PEEK INTO THE MAIN THEME OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA. WE LEARN ABOUT A PROPHET NAMED HOSEA THAT WAS COMMANDED BY GOD TO MARRY A PROSTITUTE OR HARLOT. BUT DEEPER THAN THAT, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A FAITHFUL HUSBAND AND AN UNFAITHFUL WIFE DEPICTS THE REALITY OF GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE.

THE TWO RELATIONSHIPS HIGHLIGHTED IN HOSEA WILL TEACH US ABOUT:

1. THE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE OF A HUSBAND DESPITE THE BEHAVIOR AND BETRAYAL OF HIS WIFE.
2. THE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE OF OUR GOD, DESPITE THE BEHAVIOR AND BETRAYAL OF HIS CHILDREN.

**IMAGINE WITH ME FOR A MOMENT, (OR MAYBE YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED THIS) HOW YOU WOULD FEEL HAVING A SPOUSE WHO WAS A PROSTITUTE? WHAT WOULD LIFE BE LIKE? FEEL LIKE?**

THAT'S RIGHT. EVERY TIME YOU MIGHT LAY YOUR HEAD DOWN AFTER A HARD DAY'S WORK, THEY WOULDN'T BE THERE. YOUR MIND WOULD WANDER OFF TO A MILLION POSSIBILITIES. WHERE ARE THEY? WHO ARE THEY WITH? ARE THEY OK?

BUT THEN WE WILL TAKE IT MORE PERSONAL. ON THE NIGHT'S THEY ARE HOME, THEY'LL COME RUNNING TO YOU, WANTING YOUR LOVE AND AFFECTION THIS TIME BECAUSE NONE OF THEIR CUSTOMERS ARE INTERESTED



TONIGHT. YOU'LL FEEL USED. ONLY SECOND BEST NEXT TO THE OTHER MEN OR WOMEN THEY'VE LAID WITH EVERY OTHER NIGHT.

YOU MIGHT HAVE GOOD NIGHTS TOGETHER, GOOD TIMES OF LAUGHTER EVERY NOW AND THEN. BUT DEEP IN YOUR HEART, YOU JUST CAN'T TRUST THEM. YOU CAN'T GIVE THEM EVERYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO BECAUSE OF ALL THE MANY MANY TIMES THEY'VE GONE BACK TO BETRAYING YOU.

HOSEA DOES NOT GIVE US INSIGHT INTO ANY CONVERSATION THAT MIGHT HAVE OCCURRED BETWEEN HIS WIFE AND HIMSELF, BUT WE CAN ONLY IMAGINE THE TURMOIL THIS WOULD BRING TO A MARRIAGE AND A FAMILY.

DIGGING DEEPER:

DID ALL OF THE CHILDREN THAT GOMER GAVE BIRTH TO BELONG TO HOSEA? FIND THE WORDING IN THE TEXT THAT MIGHT SUPPORT YOUR ANSWER. WE WILL REVISIT THIS QUESTION IN THE NEXT CHAPTER!

AS MENTIONED BEFORE, EACH CHILD'S NAME REPRESENTED THE JUDGMENT THAT GOD WOULD BRING TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL. JEZREEL WAS A REMINDER OF THE ACTIONS OF KING JEHU AND THE PROMISE OF GOD'S PUNISHMENT THAT WOULD FOLLOW HIS SIN. THIS GIVES US THE FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE TYPE OF BEHAVIOR THAT THE LORD IS SO DISHEARTENED ABOUT.

KING JEHU OBEYED GOD'S COMMAND— PARTIALLY. IN THE END, HE HAD FOLLOWED THE "RULES" BUT HIS WHOLE HEART WAS NOT IN IT. HE STILL LEFT THE IDOLS, THE GOLDEN CALVES (2 KINGS 10:29) —THE SINS OF JEROBOAM WHICH HE WAS SUPPOSED TO DEPART FROM.

IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES, THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL STRUGGLED WITH THE SINS OF WORSHIPPING FALSE IDOLS. TODAY, IT WOULD SEEM PRETTY SILLY FOR SOMEONE TO STRUGGLE WITH PUTTING A GOLDEN CALF BEFORE GOD. BUT TRUTHFULLY, OUR CULTURE STRUGGLES WITH IDOLATRY DAILY.



IDOLATRY IS DEFINED AS HAVING "THE EXTREME ADMIRATION, LOVE, OR REVERENCE FOR SOMETHING OR SOMEONE". **WHAT ARE SOME THINGS IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU WOULD SAY THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE THESE TYPES OF FEELINGS FOR? WHAT ABOUT OUR CHURCHES? WHAT ABOUT OUR CULTURE?**

NOW HONESTLY LOOK OVER THIS LIST AND THE THINGS THAT YOU PUT YOUR TIME, AFFECTIONS, AND COMPASSION INTO EACH DAY. THEY CAN BE GOOD THINGS, LIKE YOUR FAMILY, YOUR JOB, OR YOUR FRIENDS. BUT IS THERE ANYTHING HERE THAT YOU POSSIBLY COULD BE PUTTING BEFORE GOD?

I GET IT. LIFE IS DEMANDING OF OUR TIME AND OUR HEART. THERE'S JUST SO MUCH TO DO AND IT SEEMS LIKE SO LITTLE TIME TO DO IT ALL. AND SOME THINGS ARE JUST DOWNRIGHT FUN AND BRING US PLEASURE. DO YOU NOT THINK OUR CREATOR KNOWS THIS THOUGH? HE CREATED US IN HIS OWN IMAGE (GENESIS 1:27), HE UNDERSTANDS THE THINGS THAT MAKE US HAPPY.

BUT WHEN WE ARE CHASING HAPPINESS TO THE EXTENT THAT IT PULLS US AWAY FROM OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS HIS CHILDREN, WE COULD BE FALLING IN TO THE TRAP OF IDOLATRY. OUR PLEASURES THEN BECOME ADDICTIONS AND WE WILL GO TO DISASTROUS EXTREMES TO FULFILL OUR DESIRES.

ISRAEL WAS THERE. THEY WERE CHASING THEIR OWN IDOLS, FORSAKING THE ONE WHO HAD LOVED THEM AND CARED FOR THEM ALL ALONG, THINKING IT WOULD SOMEHOW BE BETTER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE. JUST LIKE HAVING A PROSTITUTE FOR A SPOUSE – YOU'VE LOVED THEM ALL ALONG BUT THEY FORSAKE THAT AND CHASE ANOTHER ONE NIGHT STAND FOR ITS EMPTY AND TEMPORARY PLEASURES.

GOD COULD ONLY TAKE SO MUCH BEFORE HIS MERCY RAN OUT AND HE WOULD TURN HIS BACK ON ISRAEL. HOSEA PROPHECIES ABOUT THE WRATH THAT'S COMING FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL –A NATION THAT HAS FORGOTTEN THEIR GOD AND TURNED TO OTHERS, IT IS EVIDENT THAT GOD'S HEART WAS BROKEN. NOW HIS BROKENNESS HAD TURNED TO ANGER AND JUDGMENT.



**IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, WE ARE EITHER WHOLE-HEARTEDLY DEVOTED TO HIM OR WE ARE PLAYING THE ROLE OF A HARLOT.**

HE WANTS US —ALL OF US TO HIMSELF. EXODUS 34:14 SAYS, "FOR YOU SHALL NOT WORSHIP ANY OTHER GOD, FOR THE LORD, WHOSE NAME IS JEALOUS, IS A JEALOUS GOD. THE HEBREW WORD USED HERE IS "QANNA" WHICH IS LITERALLY TRANSLATED TO JEALOUS. BY DEFINITION, THE WORD JEALOUS WHEN PERTAINING TO GOD IS THE DEMANDING OF EXCLUSIVE FAITHFULNESS AND WORSHIP.

**WHAT ARE SOME WORDS THAT COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF JEALOUSY? DO THEY HAVE A NEGATIVE OR POSITIVE CONNOTATION?**

DESPITE THE NEGATIVE CONNOTATION THAT JEALOUSY MAY HAVE ON OUR HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, WE HAVE TO BE OKAY WITH GOD'S DIVINE JEALOUSLY FOR US. IT IS ONE OF THE MANY ASPECTS OF HIS LOVE. NOT ONLY DO WE NEED TO BE OKAY WITH IT, WE NEED TO REALIZE OUR DESPERATE NEED OF HIS DIVINE JEALOUSLY. WITH HIS JEALOUSY COMES OUR SECURITY. WITH HIS SECURITY COMES OUR HOPE. WE NEED A LOVE THAT CARES IF WE FORSAKE IT. WE NEED A LOVE THAT WILL FIGHT AND COME AFTER US IF WE LEAVE IT. WE NEED TO KNOW WE ARE SOLELY HIS AND HE IS SOLELY OURS.

AND SPEAKING OF THAT HOPE AND SECURITY, HOSEA LEAVES US ON A GOOD NOTE TO FINISH CHAPTER ONE. THE PROMISE THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WOULD BE A SEASON OF WRATH AND JUDGMENT, GOD PROMISED THAT HE WILL TAKE BACK HIS WIFE OF HARLOTRY (ISRAEL) ONE DAY. HE WOULD MAKE THE VIOLENT DAY AT JEZREEL INTO SOMETHING GREAT. HIS MERCY AND LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE WOULD RETURN. WE WILL SEE MORE OF THESE PROMISES IN THE CHAPTERS TO COME!



## P.R.A.Y. THROUGH HOSEA CHAPTER ONE

### **PRAISE:**

THANK GOD FOR HIS WORD HE SENT THROUGH HOSEA. PRAISE HIM FOR HIS MERCY AND EVEN HIS JUDGMENT. ADORE HIM FOR HIS GOODNESS AND THE FULLNESS OF HIS LOVE. THANK HIM FOR HIS GRACE AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE DESPITE OUR ACTS OF RECKLESSNESS AND UNFAITHFULNESS. THANK HIM FOR HIS PROMISE AND THE FULFILLMENT OF THAT PROMISE THAT HE WILL TAKE US BACK AND MAKE US NEW AGAIN.

### **REPENT:**

SPEND SOME TIME EVALUATING THE THINGS IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU ARE IDOLIZING AND TAKING YOUR TIME AND FOCUS AWAY FROM GOD.

### **ASK:**

ASK FOR HIS FORGIVENESS, HIS MERCY, AND GRACE. PRAY THAT HE WILL DO A MIGHTY WORK WITHIN YOU AS YOU READ HOSEA. ASK THAT HIS SPIRIT LEADS YOU AND GROWS YOU AS YOU STUDY HIS WORD. ASK FOR HIS PROTECTION OVER YOUR TIME AND AFFECTIONS SO THAT THEY STAY FOCUSED ON HIM. ASK HIM TO GIVE YOU THE FAITH NEEDED TO TRUST IN HIM ALONE TO PROVIDE YOU WITH YOUR JOY, YOUR HOPE, YOUR PLEASURES —BECAUSE EVERYTHING GOOD COMES FROM HIM.

### **YIELD:**

PRAY THAT HIS WILL BE DONE IN YOUR LIFE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN —AND THAT HE WOULD GIVE YOU PEACE NO MATTER WHAT THE OUTCOME OF YOUR REQUESTS MAY BE. SUBMIT TO WALKING IN HIS WAYS AND FOLLOW HIS COMMANDMENTS. PRAY THAT HE WOULD MAKE THE DESIRES OF YOUR HEART ALIGN WITH HIS WILL FOR YOU.

