

# RECONCILIATION

CORE PASSAGE: HOSEA 1:2-3; 2:19-20,23; 3:1-5; 14:1-4

## CONTEXT

Though he is often listed as a minor prophet in the Bible based on the length of his book, Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah for many decades. Through Hosea's life and message, God presented His case against Israel, stating, "There is no truth, no faithful love, and no knowledge of God in the land! Cursing, lying, murder, stealing, and adultery are rampant; one act of bloodshed follows another" (Hos. 4:1-2). God used Hosea's family as a picture of Israel's unfaithfulness to Himself, comparing their relationship with that of a husband and an unfaithful wife.

## KEY CONCEPT

**God in His grace reconciles with His sinful people.**

As you examine Hosea 1:2-3; 2:19-20,23; 3:1-5; 14:1-4:

- Contemplate the difficult call of God upon Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman and his willingness to obey.
- Rejoice in the example of Hosea and the greater reality of the faithful love and reconciliation found in Christ.



## TIMELINE

Elijah Performs Miracles and Prophecies to Israel (1 Kings 17–2 Kings 2)

Jonah Prophecies to Israel and Nineveh (2 Kings 14; Jonah 1–4)

Israel's Kings Persist in Doing Evil in the Lord's Sight (2 Kings 14–17)

Elisha Performs Miracles and Prophecies to Israel (2 Kings 2–13)

**SESSION STUDY: Hosea Prophecies to Israel and Judah (Hosea 1–14)**

Assyria Besieges and Conquers Israel, Deporting the People (2 Kings 17)

## Daily Readings

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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 1:</b> Hosea 1–3 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 4:</b> Hosea 8–10  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 2:</b> Hosea 4–5 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 5:</b> Hosea 11–14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 3:</b> Hosea 6–7 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 6:</b> Psalm 89    |



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

## PERSONAL PREPARATION

HOSEA 1:2-3; 2:19-20,23

### GOD'S LOVE IS BASED PURELY ON HIS COMPASSION AND CHARACTER.

*Underline each word used to describe Israel's unfaithfulness, and circle each word used to describe God's character.*

**2** When the LORD first spoke to Hosea, he said this to him: Go and marry a woman of promiscuity and have children of promiscuity, for the land is committing blatant acts of promiscuity by abandoning the LORD. **3** So he went and married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

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**19** I will take you to be my wife forever. I will take you to be my wife in righteousness, justice, love, and compassion. **20** I will take you to be my wife in faithfulness, and you will know the LORD. . . . **23** I will sow her in the land for myself, and I will have compassion on Lo-ruhamah; I will say to Lo-ammi: You are my people, and he will say, "You are my God."

#### THEOLOGY CONNECTION

**CHRIST AS RECONCILIATION:** Ever since the fall of the first man and woman in the garden of Eden, God and human beings have been estranged. Sin resulted not only in an estranged relationship with God but also in enmity between God and humanity. Sin is an infinite offense against an infinite God. Thankfully, God loves His enemies and sent Christ to be the reconciler between us and God. Through Christ's death, God provides the means whereby that broken relationship is restored and renewed (Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

Hosea's prophetic ministry was unique, to say the least. God instructed him to marry an adulterous woman and raise a family with her, symbolizing God's faithful love for His unfaithful people: the Israelites. In this way, Hosea's life showed the people a picture of their own "blatant acts of promiscuity by abandoning the LORD" (1:2).

Hosea obeyed God's command and married a woman named Gomer, who fit God's description of "a woman of promiscuity." She most likely was a prostitute, although her life may simply have been characterized by sexual activity within the community. Gomer bore Hosea three children of questionable parentage, and God gave each of their children names that symbolized Israel's unfaithfulness (vv. 3-9).

**What has been the hardest thing the Lord has called you to do?**

Hosea's broken family on account of his wife's unfaithfulness may have been cause for a declaration of divorce, but the Lord was still working through this situation. Hosea's family was a call to repentance in his generation and an opportunity for God to teach the Israelites about His compassion and mercy (1:10).

The Lord promised Israel, despite their unfaithfulness, "I will take you to be my wife forever" (2:19). To the nation He had declared "No Compassion"—"Lo-ruhamah"—He promised compassion. To the people He called "Not My People"—"Lo-ammi"—He will call them "My People" (2:23). God's love for Israel was not dependent on Israel's faithfulness; rather, His love was rooted in His compassion and character. Even though His bride—Israel—was unfaithful, God's mercy led Him to love His wife.

God has not changed (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17). Even though we were dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), God had mercy. In fact, Hosea was not the only one to marry an unfaithful wife. Ephesians 5:25-26 pictures Jesus Christ as married to the church: "Christ loved the church and gave himself for her to make her holy, cleansing her." One day the Bridegroom will come for His bride (Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2), and the church will be with Jesus forever. God loves His unfaithful people because of His unchanging compassion and character.

**Why is it important that God's love for Israel was rooted in His character and not Israel's faithfulness?**

## PERSONAL PREPARATION

HOSEA 3:1-5; 14:1-4

### GOD IS READY TO HEAL AND SAVE HIS PEOPLE WHEN THEY ARE READY TO TURN TOWARD HIM.

*Circle each instance of the words “turn” and “return.”*

**1** Then the LORD said to me, “Go again; show love to a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, just as the LORD loves the Israelites though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.” **2** So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and nine bushels of barley. **3** I said to her, “You are to live with me many days. You must not be promiscuous or belong to any man, and I will act the same way toward you.” **4** For the Israelites must live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, and without ephod or household idols. **5** Afterward, the people of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come with awe to the LORD and to his goodness in the last days.

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**1** Israel, return to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled in your iniquity. **2** Take words of repentance with you and return to the LORD. Say to him, “Forgive all our iniquity and accept what is good, so that we may repay you with praise from our lips. **3** Assyria will not save us, we will not ride on horses, and we will no longer proclaim, ‘Our gods!’ to the work of our hands. For the fatherless receives compassion in you.” **4** I will heal their apostasy; I will freely love them, for my anger will have turned from him.

**Key Concept:** God in His grace reconciles with His sinful people.

Even when we are far from God, He desires for His people to turn toward Him so they may receive healing and salvation. Israel had forsaken their covenant with God in egregious ways. They worshiped the Canaanite god Baal (2:8,13,16-17) and attributed their prosperity to false gods (2:12). Because of this, Hosea prophesied the consequences of Israel's unfaithfulness: the Lord would expose their shame (2:3,10) and take away their provision (2:9,12). Still, God desired Israel's repentance and remained faithful to her. He patiently waited for Israel to return to Him so that He may heal and free them.

**In what ways have you, like Israel, been unfaithful to the Lord?**

God's readiness to accept Israel's "repentance" (14:2) points to His character. When Israel returned to Him, He was ready to forgive their sin, save them from their enemies, and let them experience His love and compassion once more. God is ready to heal and save His people when they are ready to turn toward Him (2 Chronicles 7:14). God's readiness to accept His people's repentance is ultimately exhibited in the gospel of Jesus Christ. God is always ready to heal His people when they repent and turn to Him—this is the heart of gospel reconciliation (Romans 5:6-11).

**How have you experienced healing from your sin when you turn to God in repentance?**

God instructed Hosea to go again and love Gomer "just as the LORD loves the Israelites though they turn to other gods" (3:1). Hosea had to buy Gomer back. It is not clear why Gomer needed to be redeemed, but she did, and Hosea paid that price. Hosea's pursuit of Gomer and his desire to remain faithful to her illustrates God's covenant relationship with His people. Though God would exile His people in punishment, He would still pursue them in compassion.

#### GOSPEL CONNECTION

Though Gomer was unfaithful, God commanded Hosea to take her back in love and compassion, symbolizing God's own love and forgiveness for His people, Israel. One day, Israel will return and seek after the messianic King, Jesus (Romans 11). Through faith in Jesus, all who believe are forgiven and reconciled with God because of God's grace and mercy.

## RADICAL RECONCILIATION

*Examine the following biblical accounts of separation and reconciliation to better understand what God has done for us in Jesus.*

	ACTIONS	RESPONSE	RECONCILIATION
<b>Joseph and His Brothers</b> (Genesis 45:1-15; 50:15-21)			
<b>The Prodigal Son</b> (Luke 15:11-32)			
<b>Paul and Peter</b> (Galatians 2:6-16; 2 Peter 3:15-16)			
<b>Hosea and Gomer</b> (Hosea 3:1-5)			

What does Hosea's pursuit of Gomer teach you about God's pursuit of you?

**Key Concept:** God in His grace reconciles with His sinful people.



## HEAD

What are some specific ways you have broken God's law and need reconciliation?

### PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read and pray through Psalm 89, focusing on verses 19-37. Seeing yourself as a descendant of David through faith in Jesus, the Messiah, praise and thank the Lord for His faithful discipline and His faithful love to reconcile you to Himself.



## HEART

How does the anticipation of full reconciliation with God for eternity strengthen or comfort you today?

### PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



## HANDS

Who do you need to forgive and reconcile with, and what steps will you take to do so?

