

HOSEA - A STUDY GUIDE

THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
 - b. Why did he record it for our study?
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1. What picture of God would you have if you had only Hosea? Only the Old Testament so far? What were the circumstances of Hosea's writing? What relationship is there between the first three chapters and the rest of the book? (Compare Ezekiel 16) How many children did Hosea have? (Hosea 1:3-4) How many did his wife have? (Hosea 1:3-9) Why would God go to such lengths to represent Himself to the people? What was your general reaction to Hosea? If you had been Hosea's neighbor, would you try to pretend you didn't know him? Would you be embarrassed to discuss his story with your children? If you had only the book of Hosea to tell you about God, could you anticipate what God would do with His rebellious people?
2. Do you think that God would ever ask a human being to marry a prostitute? Are we as Christians only allowed to marry perfect saints? Did God ask Hosea to violate the seventh commandment? Was it any worse than God asking Abraham to kill his son? (Genesis 22) Peter refused to "rise and eat" saying, "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." (Acts 10:9-16) Should Hosea have done the same thing and refused to marry such a woman? Should God have abandoned Israel while they were still slaves in Egypt? Was God wrong in adopting Israel, considering how they were behaving?
3. Would God ever ask a human being to participate with Him in a "lived out" parable? (Job; Isaiah 7 & 8; Jeremiah 27 & 32; Ezekiel 5; Eze. 24:15-27) If this was an actual "lived out" parable, was it fair to the children involved? What about Job's children? Is it fair to talk about God's relationship with us as comparable to this marriage? This woman took Hosea's name and "blackened it." What about us, when we take God's name, what do we do to it? God takes all the risk here, we don't take any risk!
4. If this had been your story would you have followed through with the experience in Hosea 3? What if you saw your pastor wandering around in the "red light" district, entering brothel after brothel "looking for his wife?" What would you think? What if Hosea's wife had refused to go home? Do you think Hosea should then have grabbed her by her hair and dragged her home against her will, and chained her to the bedpost? As you understand God's character, is that what He would do?
5. Did God ask Hosea to indulge himself in an irresponsible way? Do you think Hosea was a man of God and recognized as such in the community? Did people look up to him? In Christian marriages today, if people followed Hosea's example, would they be better off or worse off? Was Hosea living a life of scandalous self-indulgence and inviting other people to follow his example? What about Salmon marrying Rahab? (Joshua 2:1; 1 Chronicles 2:11; Ruth 4:21-22; Matthew 1:4-5; Luke 3:32)
6. When Hosea's wife left him, did he say, "now I have church grounds for divorce, let me go and find another wife?" What do you think his wife thought when Hosea appeared "downtown" there to ask her to come home? Was she "owned" by a pimp and sold to Hosea who then had a right to "demand" that she come home with him? Is this the way that God relates to us?
7. Which picture of God do you see in Hosea? (a) Jilted lover? (b) Angry bully? (c) Jealous husband? (d) Determined "dad?" (e) Frustrated father?
8. Compare Revelation 13 & 14 with the book of Hosea. Had the children of Israel become irreligious at this time? (See 2 Kings 17; 2 Chronicles 36:14-16) Is the whole world going to become irreligious at

the end or is it rather a question of what kind of God they will worship? Does calling God by the right name guarantee that you are truly worshipping him?

9. Do you think we should read Hosea 4 literally or figuratively? Do you think the references to immorality throughout the book are literal or spiritual?
10. What if God had turned to the universe and said, "Do you see how much evil there is down on planet earth? It is not safe for Me to go down and associate with those people! I'm just going to leave them to the consequences of their own behavior!" Would the universe have understood and agreed with such an action? (*RH*, 07-17-1900 par. 4-7; *ST*, 08-27-1902, par. 3-4; cf. *DA* 37) What would be the best illustration God could give to the universe about how he was trying to bring back his people?
11. How do you relate this story to the later story of Ezra and Nehemiah who forcibly separated such marriages and sent the women and their children away? (Ezra 9 & 10; Nehemiah 13:1-3) Why were they doing such a thing? Can you imagine the enormous risk that God ran in associating with us—even coming, being born and living as one of us? Could you think of a more dramatic way for God to illustrate how he has related to the entire human race than this story? Haven't we humans left him, not just once, but many times?
12. Notice what is missing in the land because they don't know God very well—Hosea 4:1 and Hosea 6:6. What would the universe say about our world today?
13. **Do you understand clearly what God's wrath is? What does God do when He "pours out His wrath and anger"? (Compare Revelation 14:10) What happens to people on whom it is poured? Where would you look in the Bible to get a clear definition of God's wrath? As a suggestion read through Romans 1 carefully and try to notice how Paul discusses God's wrath. What does God's wrath (vs. 18) have to do with the "Good News" of which Paul is so proud? (vs. 16) What does God actually do when "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven"? (Romans 1:18) What is implied by Rom. 1: 24- 28? (Compare Hosea 4:16-17; 11:1-12) Then you must ask yourself, "Has God ever fully and finally given anyone up?" What would that mean? How would God "do" such a thing? What about the story of Adam and Eve and the original sin? God said, "If you eat of the tree (sin) you will die." (Genesis 2:17) **Does this suggest that if God gives someone up, they will die? (Compare Romans 6:23) If God is the source of life, and someone is "separated" from that source what is the result? Is there any verse in the Bible that specifically states what happens when someone is given up by God? Hasn't God stated what would happen, but in His usual consummate way, hasn't He also fully demonstrated it? See Romans 4:25. Compare Matthew 27:46. How was God involved in the death of His Son? What was the actual cause of Jesus' death?****
14. Was God's statement to Adam and Eve the equivalent of "either love and obey Me, or I'll kill you?" Has God **ever** said such a thing?
15. What about the sad names of the three children of Hosea, how must those children have felt, with names like those? (Hosea 1:3-9)
16. What happens to people who worship idols? What does God do to people who insist on ignoring Him? (Hosea 7:14; 8:13; **9:10; 4:17**; Compare 2 Chronicles 36:16) What does He do with people who are very religious, take God's name, but never really get to "know Him"? (Matthew 7:21-23)

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