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# THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

**OLD TESTAMENT**

**BOOK 28**

**HOSEA**



**The Prophet Hosea and the Delphic Sibyl by Pinturicchio**

## SUMMARY

**Chapter 1:** The word of the Lord comes to Hosea in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Judah) and Jeroboam (Israel). God commands Hosea to marry a prostitute to illustrate that the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the Lord.

Hosea dutifully marries Gomer. Hosea is commanded to call his son Jezreel – referring to the valley where Jehu murdered all the descendants of Ahab. God says he will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu.

Hosea also has a daughter, called Lo-Ruhamah (no mercy). There will be no mercy for Israel, and mercy on the house of Judah. A second son is called Lo-Ammi (not my people). Judah and Israel will finally be reunified, however.

**Chapter 2:** Israel is an adulterous wife, and her children the children of harlotry. The Lord will hedge up her way with thorns, taking away His grain, wine, wool and linen. Her feast days will cease, and her vines and fig trees be destroyed.

Restoration is promised, however: the valley of Achor (the valley of ‘trouble’, where Achan’s sin was discovered and judged in Joshau 7:26) will become the door of hope. The Lord will be referred to as husband, not as master. The animals will be submissive to men. The people of God will be restored, and the land will be fruitful.

**Chapter 3:** Hosea is commanded to go back and love Gomer. Hosea buys Gomer with fifteen shekels. The children of Israel will be deprived of their cultic practices, but then return to seek the Lord and David.

**Chapter 4:** The land will mourn, and all who dwell there shall waste away. The priests are corrupt and ineffective. The Lord condemns idolatry and harlotry, sometimes conjoined in ritual harlotry. Do not come up to Gilgal, nor go up to Beth Aven. Israel is like a stubborn calf, which will be left to forage in open country.

**Chapter 5:** Ephraim is defiled. Judah is little better. Ephraim shall be desolate on the day of rebuke. The princes of Judah are like those that remove a landmark (change property boundaries to their advantage). The Lord will be to Ephraim like a moth, and to Judah like rotteness.

King Jareb of Assyria will not be able to save Ephraim. (Jareb occurs nowhere else in scripture – it means ‘warrior’, and is probably a generic name.) The Lord will be like a lion to Judah and Ephraim, tearing them away until they seek the Lord’s face in their affliction.

**Chapter 6:** Let us return to the Lord. He has stricken, but he will bind us up. He will come to us like rain. Ephraim’s faithlessness is like a morning cloud, or the dew that disappears. The Lord wants his people to know Him rather than merely sacrifice to Him. The priests of Shechem are like a band of robbers that lie in wait for a man. Lewdness and harlotry is committed in Ephraim.

**Chapter 7:** Israel thinks the Lord has forgotten their wickedness. Israel’s heart is inflamed after idols, like a baker’s oven. Israel has mixed itself with other peoples. Israel is like a silly dove, calling to Egypt and flying to Assyria. Woe to them, for they have fled from me!

## SUMMARY Continued

**Chapter 8:** The Lord's anger is aroused because of idols, such as Samaria's calf. They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. Israel like a wild donkey that has wandered to Assyria. Israel considers God's law a strange thing. Because Israel has forgotten its maker, fire shall be sent against its cities.

**Chapter 9:** Israel has played the harlot against God. Ephraim shall return to Egypt and eat unclean things in Assyria. Sacrifices will become like the bread of mourning, defiling all who eat it.

Egypt shall punish Israel, as corrupt now as in the days of Gibeah. God will send barrenness and bereavement to Israel. The root of Ephraim is dried up; they shall be wanderers among the nations.

**Chapter 10:** Israel has emptied its vine and has an empty throne. Israel's high places will be destroyed, and thorn and thistle grow on their altars. The altars shall say to the mountains, 'Cover us!' and to the hills, 'Fall on us!'

Like unruly farm animals, God will control and guide Israel and Judah, even if they kick against Him. Sow righteousness and reap mercy. Sustained agricultural metaphors – you have eaten the fruit of lies.

**Chapter 11:** Ephraim is represented as an ungrateful child, responding to God's loving care with ingratitude. Assyria shall be Ephraim's king. However, God takes no pleasure in chastening. The roar of the Lord will recall Israel.

**Chapter 12:** Ephraim feeds on the wind. Ancient Jacob is an example of Israel's present deceit. Though Israel is confident in its wealth, God will bring them low. The idols at Gilead and Gilgal are vanity.

A connection is made between the coming exile of Israel and the exile of Jacob when he fled from Esau to his uncle Laban in Syria. Prophets delivered and preserved Israel, and therefore Israel's rejection of the prophets will incur the Lord's wrath.

**Chapter 13:** God never blessed Israel when they worshipped Baal, but that didn't stop them. They shall be as the morning cloud and the early dew that passes away. Like a lion, the Lord will tear Israel apart.

The Lord is Israel's king – where is any other? The sorrows of a woman in childbirth shall come upon Ephraim. Dryness and barrenness is prophesied.

**Chapter 14:** Israel should turn in repentance to the Lord, acknowledging that Assyria cannot save them. The Lord will heal their backsliding, and be as a dew to them, causing them to grow like a lily or a vine.

The beauty of Israel shall be like an olive tree. Renewed Israel turns away from idols. The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.



## NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 10:12** Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the Lord, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.
- 12:10** I have also spoken by the prophets, And have multiplied visions; I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets.
- 13:4** Yet I am the Lord your God Ever since the land of Egypt, And you shall know no God but Me; For there is no Savior besides Me.

## CHARACTER Definitions

**HOSEA** - The name "Hosea", meaning "salvation", or "He saves", or "He helps", seems to have been not uncommon, being derived from the auspicious verb from which we have the frequently recurring word "salvation".

Although it is not expressly stated in the Book of Hosea, it is apparent from the level of detail and familiarity focused on northern geography, that Hosea conducted his prophetic ministries in the Northern Israel (Samaria) of which he was a native.

Little is known about the life or social status of Hosea. According to the Book of Hosea, he married the prostitute Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, at God's command. In Hosea 5:8, there is a reference to the wars which led to the capture of the kingdom by the Assyrians (c. 734–732 BC).

Hosea's family life reflected the "adulterous" relationship which Israel had built with polytheistic gods. The relationship between Hosea and Gomer parallels the relationship between God and Israel.

Even though Gomer runs away from Hosea and sleeps with another man, he loves her anyway and forgives her. Likewise, even though the people of Israel worshipped false gods, God continued to love them and did not abandon his covenant with them.

Similarly, his children's names made them like walking prophecies of the fall of the ruling dynasty and the severed covenant with God – much like the prophet Isaiah a generation later.

The name of Hosea's daughter, Lo-Ruhamah, which translates as "not pitied", is chosen by God as a sign of displeasure with the people of Israel for following false gods. (In Hosea 2:23 she is redeemed, shown mercy with the term Ruhamah.)

The name of Hosea's son, Lo-Ammi, which translates as "not my people", is chosen by the Lord as a sign of the Lord's displeasure with the people of Israel for following those false gods (see Hosea 1:8–9).

One of the early writing prophets, Hosea used his own experience as a symbolic representation of God and Israel: God the husband, Israel the wife. Hosea's wife left him to go with other men; Israel left the Lord to go with false gods.

## CHARACTERS Continued

Hosea searched for his wife, found her and brought her back; God would not abandon Israel and brought them back even though they had forsaken him.

The Book of Hosea was a severe warning to the northern kingdom against the growing idolatry being practiced there; the book was a dramatic call to repentance. Christians extend the analogy of Hosea to Christ and the church: Christ the husband, his church the bride.

Christians see in this book a comparable call to the church not to forsake the Lord Jesus Christ. Christians also take the buying back of Gomer as the redemptive qualities of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

**GOMER** – was the wife of the prophet Hosea, mentioned in the Hebrew Bible's Book of Hosea. Hosea 1:2 refers to her alternatively as a "promiscuous woman", a "harlot", and a "whore" but Hosea is told to marry her according to Divine appointment. She is also described as the daughter of Diblaim.

Hosea 1 relates how Hosea has three children, a son called Jezreel, a daughter Lo-Ruhamah and another son Lo-Ammi. All the names are described in the text as having symbolic meaning, reflecting the relationship between God and Israel.

Jezreel is named after the valley of that name. Lo-Ruhamah is named to denote the ruined condition of the kingdom of Israel and Lo-Ammi is named in token of God's rejection of his people.

In 3:1, however, it says that she is "loved by another man and is an adulteress". Hosea is told to buy her back, and he does so for 15 shekels and a quantity of barley. Exodus 21:32 establishes the value of a maidservant at 30 shekels so Gomer's value is diminished. She is not mentioned again in the book.

The relationship between Hosea and Gomer has been posited to be a parallel to the relationship between God and Israel. Even though Gomer runs away from Hosea and sleeps with another man, he loves her anyway and forgives her.

Likewise, even though the people of Israel worshiped other gods, God continued to love them and did not abandon his covenant with them.

## BIBLE TIMELINE

753 BC

Hosea's Prophecies

Hosea 1 - 14

MAP REFERENCES

