

LIVING GODS WILL

Prophet of God

HOSEA



Prophet Hosea by Duccio di Buoninsegna

Born: Samaria, Northern Israel

Died: Samaria, Northern Israel

Hosea was a prophet of **God** from 750 – 725 BC.

Hosea was the son of **Beeri**.

Hosea authored the **Book of Hosea**.

Hosea preached repentance and destruction to **Samaria**.

In the Hebrew Bible, **Hosea**, son of **Beeri**, was an 8th-century BC prophet in Israel who authored the book of prophecies bearing his name.

He is one of the Twelve Prophets of the Jewish Hebrew Bible, also known as the Minor Prophets of the Christian Old Testament. **Hosea** is often seen as a "**prophet of doom**", but underneath his message of destruction is a promise of restoration.

The Talmud claims that he was the greatest prophet of his generation. The period of **Hosea's** ministry extended to some sixty years, and he was the only prophet of Israel of his time who left any written prophecy.

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. It may be a contraction of a larger form of which the divine name (**YHWH**) or its abbreviation formed a part, so as to signify "**YHWH helps**".

According to the Bible **Numbers 13:8, 13:16** that was the original name of Joshua, son of Nun, until Moses gave him the longer, theophoric name Yehoshua, "**YHWH is 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.

In **Hosea 5:8 ff.**, there seems to be a reference to the Syro-Ephraimite War which led to the capture of the kingdom by the Assyrians (c. 734–732 BC). **Hosea's** long ministry (**ca. 750–725**) seems to have ended before the fall of Samaria in 722/721.

Little is known about the life or social status of **Hosea**. According to the **Book of Hosea**, he married **Gomer**, the daughter of Diblaim, but she proved to be unfaithful. **Hosea** knew she would be unfaithful, as **God** says this to him immediately in the opening statements of the book.

This marriage was arranged in order to serve to the prophet as a symbol of Israel's unfaithfulness to the Lord. **His marriage will dramatize the breakdown in the relationship between God and His people Israel.** Hosea's family life reflected the "adulterous" relationship which Israel had built with polytheistic gods.

Similarly, his children's names represent **God's** estrangement from Israel. They are prophetic 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 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 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. 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.

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 **Jesus** and the church:

Jesus 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's** sacrifice on the cross.

Other preachers, like Charles Spurgeon, saw **Hosea** as a striking presentation of the mercy of **God** in his sermon on **Hosea 1:7** titled The **Lord's** Own Salvation.

"But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen." – **Hosea 1:7** in his sermon NO. 2057, December 16, 1888.

A summary of Hosea's Story

First, **Hosea** was directed by **God** to marry a promiscuous woman of ill-repute, and he did so. Marriage here is symbolic of the covenantal relationship between **God** and Israel. However, Israel has been unfaithful to **God** by following other gods and breaking the commandments which are the terms of the covenant, hence Israel is symbolized by a harlot who violates the obligations of marriage to her husband.

Second, **Hosea** and his wife, Gomer, have a son. **God** commands that the son be named **Jezreel**. This name refers to a valley in which much blood had been shed in Israel's history, especially by the kings of the Northern Kingdom. (See **I Kings 21 and II Kings 9:21-35**).

The naming of this son was to stand as a prophecy against the reigning house of the Northern Kingdom, that they would pay for that bloodshed. Jezreel's name means **God Sows**.

Third, the couple have a daughter. **God** commands that she be named **Lo-ruhamah**; Unloved, or, Pity or Pitied On to show Israel that, although **God** will still have pity on the Southern Kingdom, **God** will no longer have pity on the Northern Kingdom; its destruction is imminent.

Fourth, a son is born to Gomer. It is questionable whether this child was **Hosea's**, for **God** commands that his name be **Lo-ammi**. The child bore this name of shame to show that the Northern Kingdom would also be shamed, for its people would no longer be known as **God's** People. In other words, the Northern Kingdom had been rejected by **God**.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

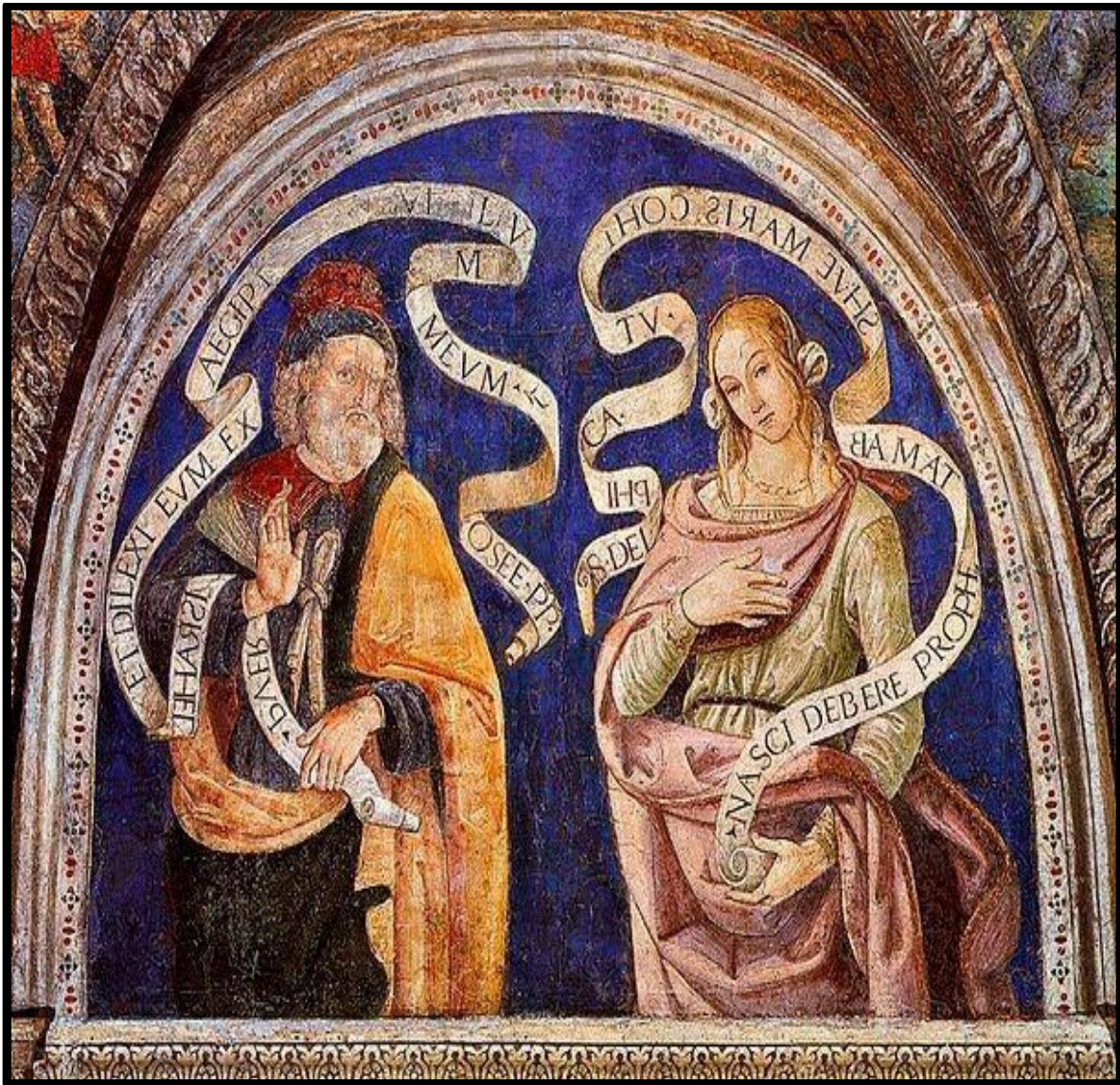
Hosea 1:1 The word of the Lord that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

Hosea 1:2 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."

Hosea 1:4 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.

Hosea 1:6 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.

Hosea 3:3 And I said to her, "You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man--so, too, will I be toward you."



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