

“All the Prophets Testify”: Hosea Introduction & 1:1

Midweek Bible Study – 2026 July 08

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<https://www.pilgrimlc.org/bible-studies/prophets>

Invocation & Opening Prayer

Follow-up to last class: pace, depth, other comments or questions?

Hosea “Isagogics” (introductory matters prior to “exegesis”, text’s explanation or interpretation):

Who: God inspired the book through the prophet Hosea, the son of Beeri. Laetsch says plainly, “We know very little of the personal life of Hosea”, but Laetsch thinks he may have been a tiller of the soil and of the wealthier class of a rural community.

What: Hosea appears to be a collection, fourteen chapters in length, of selected oracles God gave through the prophet, organized in a debated way: Hosea’s personal issues then various oracles; chronologically; theologically; or in a cycle of weal and woe (see the outline below and *TLSB* p.1428 from where it is drawn). Keil-Delitzsch says the book is not a collection of separate addresses but a general summary of the addresses, in part because of a lack of reliable indicators, though Keil-Delitzsch finds markers for its scheme of dividing the book. Hummel and Golden also offer helpful alternatives.

When: The book of Hosea may have been written about 740-715 BC, according to *TLSB* p.1427 (for comparison, we had dated Amos about 792-740 BC, but Luther as quoted on *TLSB* p.1427 has a different chronology). More specifically, *TLSB* p.529 puts Hosea in King Hoshea’s reign (732-722 BC), but, as we note below, Hosea 1:1 suggests otherwise, listing kings of Judah that span 792-686 BC and a king of Israel that spans 793-753 BC; p.1082 says simply the 8th century BC. Of course, when the word of the Lord came to Hosea and when that word was written down do not have to be the same times (an implication of which is that things foretold earlier in the book can be “history” by the time the book is “published”). We remember that canonical order is not necessarily chronological order.

Where: *TLSB* p.529 puts Jonah in the northern kingdom of Israel; p.1456 lists the places of Israel (Ephraim; capital, Samaria), including Jezreel Valley; Bethel (Beth-aven); Judah; nations of Assyria, Egypt, Lebanon. *CSSB* notes that Hosea “was the only one of the writing prophets to come from the northern kingdom (Israel), and his prophecy is primarily directed to that kingdom. But since the prophetic activity is dated by reference to kings of Judah, the book was probably written in Judah after the fall of the northern capital, Samaria”. Keil-Delitzsch says that the nature of the prophecies leads to the conclusion regarding the location and that the reference to the kings of Judah could be because the prophets regarded only the legitimate rulers of Judah as true kings of God’s people. Hummel thinks Hosea may head the Book of the Twelve because he was from and active in the north.

Why: *TLSB* p.1427 says of the purpose of the book, “Hosea reminds Israel of the Lord’s loving faithfulness and calls them away from unfaithfulness to a new life”.

How: *TLSB* p.1427 notes the following:

Law Themes: Israel’s unfaithfulness; unfaithful priests and princes; adultery and drunkenness; unfruitfulness; idolatry; conquest of Samaria; stumbling.

Gospel Themes: The Lord's faithfulness; children of God; redemption; healing in repentance; God's fatherly love; the Lord answers and looks after His people.

Outline (the following is from *TLSB* p.1428; we are listing the major divisions and will expand/collapse them as we proceed through them [above we noted possible alternate explanations for the arrangement; confer *CSSB* p.1351, which has the same major divisions but sees the comparison between unfaithful wife/faithful husband and unfaithful nation/faithful God; confer and compare *God's Word for Today* p.3]):

- I. Superscription (1:1)
- II. Hosea's Personal Issues as Prophecies (1:2-3:5)
- III. Various Oracles (4:1-14:9)

Superscription (1:1):

1:1 *The word of the Lord that came to:* *TLSB* comments that the phrase "Refers to the total message of Hosea". In this verse, as *TLSB* notes, "The manner of God's revelation to Hosea is not given", though, for example, 1:2 mentions the Lord's speaking. Laetsch notes that the expression "came unto" is used of an evil spirit that "took possession of Saul", adding that in this case the Word took possession of him, ruled him, made him willing to speak as directed, do what he was commanded, both obligating him to obedience and working that very obedience.

Hosea, the son of Beeri: As *TLSB* notes, Hosea's name "Means 'salvation' or 'he has helped/delivered'" (Kretzmann supplies "Jehovah has redeemed"), and the meaning of the names of Hosea's children play an important role in Hosea's prophecy. Regarding Hosea's family origin, *TLSB* comments, "A prophet typically introduces himself with the name of his father", and *TLSB* notes that "Beeri" "Means 'my wellspring' or 'my well' and likely reflects the family's joy at the birth of a child." Laetsch mentions that early Jewish writers identified Beeri with Beerah, a leader of the tribe of Reuben, carried into exile by Tiglath Pileser (1 Chronicles 5:6), but Christian tradition said he was of the tribe of Isaachar.

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: a common Old Testament dating method was to give the reign of one or more king or other ruler (confer Luke 3:1-2 dating the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptizer). *CSSB* points out that the reigns of some kings within the same kingdom overlapped. As noted above, estimates of Hosea's precise dates differ, even, somewhat inexplicably, within *TLSB*. Regardless of the dates, as *TLSB* characterizes the listing, it "makes plain that Hosea had a lengthy ministry and prophesied at the same time as Isaiah, Amos, and Micah." Roehrs-Franzmann takes the longer span of reigns in Judah as indicating that Hosea's ministry extended past the time of Jeroboam.

What are you taking home from the prophecy considered tonight?

Certainly the Word of the Lord that came to Hosea continues to speak to us today.

Next time, July 15, Hosea 1:2-9

Closing Prayer & Benediction