

# ***International Bible Lessons Commentary***

## ***Hosea 1:1-11***

**New Revised Standard Version**

***International Bible Lessons***

**Sunday, January 17, 2016**

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The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, January 17, 2016**, is from **Hosea 1:1-11**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. If you are a Bible student or teacher, you can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

## ***International Bible Lesson Commentary***

### **Hosea 1:1-11**

**(Hosea 1:1) The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beerli, in the days of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel.**

Hosea was one of the minor prophets (one of those who wrote the shorter prophetic books). He was from Israel and a contemporary of Isaiah. He was active for between 40 to 60 years, during portions of the reigns of four Judean kings and Jeroboam of Israel. He prophesied the fall of Israel, which occurred in 722 BC and led to the dispersion of the Israelites among the nations and the end of the kingdom of Israel. We know little about him other than what he wrote about himself in the Bible. The name Hosea means "Salvation," the same as Joshua and Jesus.

**(Hosea 1:2) When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take for yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD."**

The first words of the LORD to Hosea were a command to marry a promiscuous woman or prostitute. Commentators differ as to "when" she became promiscuous (before or after their marriage?). In their marriage relationship, Hosea symbolically represented the LORD and Gomer symbolically represented unfaithful Israel. In keeping with the history of Israel, I believe she was spiritually unfaithful to the LORD when Hosea married her and then her spiritual unfaithfulness led her into sexual immorality similar

to most of the Israelites who turned from God and worshiped fertility gods in Canaan. Sometimes people will invent or seek to find a theology or religion that they can use to “justify” or excuse their immorality.

**(Hosea 1:3) So he went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.**

In obedience to the LORD and to fulfill the prophetic words Hosea received from the LORD, Hosea married Gomer and through Hosea she conceived and bore a son. Just as we know little about Hosea outside of the Bible, we know little about Gomer. We only know the names of their fathers and what Hosea wrote about them. Soon after their marriage, Gomer bore Hosea a son.

**(Hosea 1:4) And the LORD said to him, “Name him Jezreel; for in a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.**

The LORD told Hosea the names He wanted him to give to the children Gomer bore. Jezreel means “to sow.” The name may mean that Israel would reap what they had sown. Jehu was told to execute King Ahab and Jezebel, but he massacred far more in Jezreel. He was violent and remained idolatrous as did his descendants, and Israel became increasingly unfaithful to the LORD. Jehu put an end to Ahab and Jezebel, and through Hosea God warned that He would put an end to the kingdom of Israel and punish the royal house of Jehu (see 2 Kings 9:1-37; 10:1-36).

**(Hosea 1:5) On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.”**

To break the bow meant to defeat or destroy the army of an enemy. By her open rebellion and idolatry, Israel had become increasingly the enemy of the LORD. Jehu killed many prophets of Baal, but he did not turn from idolatry or try to lead the Israelites back to faithfulness to the LORD during his twenty-eight years as king over Israel. Therefore, God would use the Assyrians to destroy the kingdom of Israel, and Jezreel would once again be a battleground.

**(Hosea 1:6) She conceived again and bore a daughter. Then the LORD said to him, “Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them.**

Most believe this daughter was conceived through Gomer’s adultery, even as Israel was committing spiritual adultery and sexual immorality during their idol worship. Gomer’s spiritual sins led her into sexual sins. Lo-Ruhamah means “not loved” or “no mercy,” for she was not the daughter of Hosea. She symbolized the fact that Israel had departed so far from true faith in the LORD that the LORD could no longer show Israel love and forgiveness. Ignoring Israel’s sins without appropriate discipline would not be just and loving. Hosea warned that the time for just punishment would soon come. Israelite and Canaanite idol worship included child sacrifices, and since Israel would not repent, God

would bring an end to this idolatrous and violent behavior by bringing the kingdom of Israel to an end before they killed or corrupted more of their children and their neighbors – even leading the kingdom of Judah and her neighbors into sin.

**(Hosea 1:7) But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God; I will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by horsemen.”**

God did save Judah from the Assyrians, and He would have saved Israel if the leaders and people had repented. King Hezekiah of Judah prayed and led the kingdom of Judah to repent. The LORD saved the kingdom of Judah just as Hosea declared (see 2 Kings 19). God saved them without needing to use bow, sword, battle, horses, or horsemen.

**(Hosea 1:8) When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son.**

Since Hosea does not record that he and Gomer had a second son, most believe that after she weaned her daughter that she had another adulterous relationship and conceived again. Usually a child was weaned within 2 to 3 years. Perhaps Gomer remained adulterous throughout her marriage to Hosea, just as the Kingdom of Israel refused to return to the LORD in love and faithfulness.

**(Hosea 1:9) Then the LORD said, “Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people and I am not your God.”**

Again, the LORD named Gomer’s children. The fact that the son is symbolically named “not my people” may also indicate that he was not Hosea’s son. The Israelites had so departed from the LORD that they had broken the covenant the LORD had made with the Israelites. They murdered their children as part of worshiping their idols. Those they did not murder they raised apart from faith in God; these children would then turn to idol worship, gross immorality, and violence toward their children. God acted in behalf of future generations, and God’s just judgment of Israel served as a warning to others. The Israelites and their descendants were no longer the spiritual children of God. How heartbreaking that our almighty and holy God would need to declare that His people had so persistently rebelled against Him for so long that He would need to declare that they were “not my people” or “not my children.” Later, Jesus declared of some He spoke to in Judea: “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). Hosea said God would someday show love to “not my loved one” and “not my people,” and say to them “you are my people” and they would say “You are my God” (see Hosea 2:16-23). This will happen after Jesus the Messiah returns.

**(Hosea 1:10) Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered; and in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.”**

Hosea chapter 1 ends with a message of hope, which will take place after the second coming of Jesus the Messiah. Recalling God's promise to Abraham, the LORD spoke through Hosea that the Israelites would be called "children of the living God" once again, and there would be so many of them that people would not be able to count them. This would include the land once known as the Kingdom of Israel that Assyria conquered.

**(Hosea 1:11) The people of Judah and the people of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head; and they shall take possession of the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.**

Again, after Jesus the Messiah returns the descendants of the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel will be reunited. They will appoint or recognize the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and unite under His rule and authority. The day of Jezreel may indicate the defeat of all of God's enemies when Jesus returns as Lord of lords and King of Kings. Believers will be reunited in the Kingdom of God (or kingdom of heaven) as children of God.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. How did the LORD want Hosea to express His word to the people of Israel and their leaders?
2. How did Gomer's behavior illustrate the sins of the Israelites?
3. What did God say He would do when He justly judged Israel for their sins and unrepentance?
4. What names did God tell Hosea to give to the children Gomer conceived and bore and what did these names mean?
5. What hope did God give to the Israelites?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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