

Session 4: From Spoken to Written Word

D. The Editing of Hosea 1 – 3

In these first four sessions, we have given special attention to Hosea, as an example of the work of the prophets. We end this session by looking once more at the first three chapters of Hosea to study the way they have been edited.

The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beerī, in the days of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel.

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.' So he went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

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. On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.'

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. 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.'

When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said, 'Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people and I am not your God.'

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.' 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.

Say to your brother, Ammi, and to your sister, Ruhamah.

Editor's
introduction to the
whole book.

Three oracles of
salvation, reversing
the significance of
the children's
names.

Plead with your mother, plead—
for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband—
that she put away her whoring from her face,
and her adultery from between her breasts,
or I will strip her naked
and expose her as in the day she was born,
and make her like a wilderness,
and turn her into a parched land,
and kill her with thirst.
Upon her children also I will have no pity,
because they are children of whoredom.
For their mother has played the whore;
she who conceived them has acted shamefully.
For she said, 'I will go after my lovers;
they give me my bread and my water,
my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'
Therefore I will hedge her way with thorns;
and I will build a wall against her,
so that she cannot find her paths.
She shall pursue her lovers,
but not overtake them;
and she shall seek them,
but shall not find them.
Then she shall say, 'I will go
and return to my first husband,
for it was better with me than than now.'
She did not know
that it was I who gave her
the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and who lavished upon her silver
and gold that they used for Baal.
Therefore I will take back
my grain in its time,
and my wine in its season;
and I will take away my wool and my flax,
which were to cover her nakedness.
Now I will uncover her shame
in the sight of her lovers,
and no one shall rescue her out of my hand.
I will put an end to all her mirth,
her festivals, her new moons, her sabbaths,
and all her appointed festivals.
I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees,
of which she said,
'These are my pay,
which my lovers have given me.'
I will make them a forest,
and the wild animals shall devour them.

I will punish her for the festival days of the Baals,
when she offered incense to them
and decked herself with her ring and jewellery,
and went after her lovers,
and forgot me, says the Lord.

Therefore, I will now persuade her,
and bring her into the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her.
From there I will give her her vineyards,
and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.
There she shall respond as in the days of her youth,
as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.

On that day, says the Lord, you will call me, 'My husband',
and no longer will you call me, 'My Baal'. For I will remove
the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be
mentioned by name no more. I will make for you a covenant
on that day with the wild animals, the birds of the air, and
the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow,
the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie
down in safety. And I will take you for my wife for ever; I will
take you for my wife in righteousness and in justice, in
steadfast love, and in mercy. I will take you for my wife in
faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord.

On that day I will answer, says the Lord,
I will answer the heavens
and they shall answer the earth;
and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and they shall answer Jezreel;
and I will sow him for myself in the land.
And I will have pity on Lo-ruhamah,
and I will say to Lo-ammi, 'You are my people';
and he shall say, 'You are my God.'

The Lord said to me again, 'Go, love a woman who has a
lover and is an adulteress, just as the Lord loves the people
of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin
cakes.' So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a
homer of barley and a measure of wine. And I said to her,
'You must remain as mine for many days; you shall not play
the whore, you shall not have intercourse with a man, nor I
with you.' For the Israelites shall remain many days without
king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or
teraphim. Afterwards the Israelites shall return and seek the
Lord their God, and David their king; they shall come in awe
to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days