

# The Christian Arsenal

[www.christianarsenal.com](http://www.christianarsenal.com)

## HOSEA 1:1-3:5

Today, we begin a 7-week study in the Book of Hosea. We're not going to lay much foundation for this book because the times and setting of this book are much the same as the **Book of Amos**.

Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Hosea and Amos were contemporaries.

Many prophets were proclaiming God's message at the same time. For instance, while Hosea and Amos were prophesying and preaching in the Northern Kingdom, Isaiah and Micah were prophesying and preaching in the Southern Kingdom.

Hosea's career spanned many years...maybe even as long as 60 or 70 years...and we know that by **verse 1's** list of the kings who reigned while Hosea was a prophet.

The message of **Hosea** has been called by one well-known commentator "the second greatest story in the Bible."

We all know what the greatest story is...it is the story of the birth, life, suffering, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fact that He did all that to cleanse you and me from sin...but the story of Hosea is second precisely because it **pictures** for us what Jesus did for you and me.

Do you remember when the pastor preached through the **Book of Ezekiel**? Do you remember how many strange things God had Ezekiel do to portray the judgment that would come upon Judah?

Remember when Ezekiel was commanded by God to "act out" different things? For instance, one time God told Ezekiel to build a siege wall and a ramp and a camp and battering rams and then Ezekiel was to lie down on his left side for so many days and then on his right side for so many days. **And all this was to portray to the people the siege of Jerusalem that was coming.**

Another time Ezekiel was told to take a sharp sword and use it as a barber's razor and shave off the hair from his head and also his beard. Then, he was to weigh this hair and he was to divide this hair up and burn one third of it and strike one third of it with a sword and scatter one third of it. **God told Ezekiel to do this to picture to the people the desolation of Jerusalem.**

God commanded Jeremiah to do some strange things as well. One time God told Jeremiah to get a new linen waistband, but he was not to put this waistband around his waist. Instead, God told Jeremiah to go to the River Euphrates and hide this brand new linen waistband that had never been worn in the crevice of a rock. Then, Jeremiah was to go back after many days and get the waistband and when he did, of course it was ruined and worthless. **This was to symbolize and picture the fact that God would destroy the pride of Jerusalem and Judah.**

Another time, God told Jeremiah to go to the potter's house and watch the potter as he was making something on his wheel. As Jeremiah watched, the vessel the potter was making was spoiled in the hand of the potter...so he remade it into another vessel and **this was to picture for the people the fact that God holds Israel in His hand and He can destroy it in order to build it back again.**

# The Christian Arsenal

[www.christianarsenal.com](http://www.christianarsenal.com)

There are many other examples we could use...but I said all that simply to say that God uses different methods to get His message to His people.

Sometimes it's a **sermon**...a message proclaimed by a preacher or a prophet.

Sometimes it's a **song**...such as Jeremiah's lamentations.

Sometimes it's a **drama**...such as Ezekiel's play acting with the siege mounds and such...or the ruined waistband...

Sometimes it's a **lesson** from real life...such as the potter and the clay...

And in **Hosea** we see God calling His prophet to do something very different and something that at first glance we would say is out of character for God to do...

## Verses 2-3...

It would seem that at some point early in Hosea's life, God came to him and commanded him to do a very difficult thing.

God said,

***"Hosea, I want you to marry a woman who will prove to be unfaithful to you, but to whom you are nevertheless going to be faithful. You will love her...but she will disgrace you and spurn your love."***

What a thing to ask of any man...let alone a man who loved God enough to devote his life to being God's messenger. Why would God ask Hosea to do such a thing?

Well, it's to present to us in very graphic form the love of God for an adulterous people. I believe God was telling Hosea:

***"I'm asking you to do this because we are going to present a pageant to Israel. By your marriage, we will show Israel an object lesson."***

***Hosea, you are going to play My part. You will play the part of God. Your wife is going to play the part of My people. The reason she is going to run away and be unfaithful is that this is the way My people act in the spiritual marriage I have established with them."***

***Hosea, you are going to remain faithful to your wife, because I have remained faithful to Israel even though she has been unfaithful and she has dishonored My name."***

Now, lest we look at this and think... "Well, I see how this applies to Israel. After all, they were so bad. They never obeyed God fully. Everybody knows that!"

Lest we think this doesn't apply to us, I want you to look down at **verses 19 and 20 of chapter 2** for a moment...

And let me tell you what Paul said to the Corinthian believers...

***"...I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin."***

# The Christian Arsenal

[www.christianarsenal.com](http://www.christianarsenal.com)

You and I are the church and the church is the bride of Christ and when you and I are unfaithful to the Lord, we are committing as much spiritual adultery and harlotry as the Israelites did.

And also, lest we think as some think...John Calvin, being one...that this is not real...that this is just an allegory and that it is utterly inconceivable that God would ask one of His children to marry someone who would prove to be unfaithful to him, please consider that not only is Israel portrayed by Gomer, **but so are we**.

**Let me ask you this...Did we become perfect when we got saved? I mean, when God saved us, did He save us knowing that you and I would prove at some point to be unfaithful to Him? Of course He did! He knew we would forsake Him. Still, He loved us and purchased us to Himself through the blood of His dear Son.**

**And if Hosea's story is not real, (that God could not ask a man to marry an unfaithful woman) then we have a hard time believing the story of salvation is real, because that is exactly what Christ has done for us. He has purchased us for Himself to be His bride, and He has done this even though He knew in advance we would often prove unfaithful.**

One more thing before we go any further today... There are small pictures within the large picture in Hosea. God has several messages for us in this "second greatest story of the Bible."

The first part of this story is really Gomer's story. It tells us how children were born to Gomer and how these were named to suggest a truth about her life.

## **Verses 4-5...**

Her firstborn was named **Jezreel**... "may God scatter" or "may God sow"...

**What did this name symbolize? It really has a two-fold meaning. Jezreel was not only the name God chose for Hosea and Gomer's baby, Jezreel was also a place. And to know what verse 4 means, we need to know that it was in Jezreel that God brought vengeance upon Ahab and Jezebel. God, in fact, used Jehu to make a clean sweep of Ahab, his house, and the religious system that Jezebel had brought to Israel.**

Ahab was one of the main reasons Israel had sunk so deeply into idolatry. There had always been idols in Israel, but Ahab and Jezebel made idolatry an official, sanctioned "state religion."

(This reminds me so much of our previous administration. Our country has always had homosexuality. Our country has always had abortions. But, it was under the previous administration that our government really put the "White Housekeeping stamp of approval" on these things.)

Well, King Jehu's dynasty over Israel would endure for four generations and when Hosea prophesied the third generation was on the throne. Jeroboam II was the great grandson of Jehu.

On the surface, Israel was flourishing. Israel's economy was great for some people...not so great for others. The rich were getting richer and the poor were getting poorer.

# The Christian Arsenal

[www.christianarsenal.com](http://www.christianarsenal.com)

God had been so patient with Israel, but He was reaching His limits. Remember we said the name Jezreel meant “to scatter” and also “to sow.”

Well, by telling Hosea to name his first born Jezreel, He was saying two things...the strength of the kingdom of Israel was to be broken on the battlefield of Jezreel (which by the way, is the Valley of Armageddon). And as a result, God would **scatter** the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom and **sow** them among the nations in a long, long exile.

## Verses 6-7...

Gomer had another child...a little girl. And God said to name her **Lo-ruhamah...** “not beloved” “had not obtained mercy”

This name expresses deep yearning and means “she who never knew a father’s love” or “unpitied.”

**Verse 6** doesn’t tell us Gomer bore **Hosea** a son as **verse 3** does. This indicates that by this time, Gomer had already been unfaithful and Hosea suspected this was not his child. This makes the name significant.

Symbolically for Israel, the name is significant as well. God was saying, “We are going to call this child ‘not loved’ and ‘unpitied’ because the time is coming when the sins of the people will cause Me to have no pity on them.”

Does this sound strange? I mean, doesn’t the Bible say that God loves with an everlasting love? Doesn’t the Bible tell us God’s mercies are new every morning?

YES! But when we insist on our own way and persevere in our sin, the time comes when the daily mercies of the Lord are withdrawn from us and He leaves us to our own devices, to our own folly, so that we might learn to turn back to Him.

During times like this God doesn’t **actively** show mercy. And when we think of what the nation of Israel has endured over the ages, we see this to be true, don’t we? And may I add the same can be applied to you and me?

Jude said, **“Keep yourselves in the love of God...”**

WHY? Because that’s where the **protection** and **provision** and **safety** and **security** and **blessings** are!!!

I believe this is much easier for those of us who have ever had rebellious children to understand. There came a time with our rebellious child when we had to withdraw not so much our love, but our **mercy** and our **provision** and our **grace**. And we did it because **he** had chosen to remove **himself** from our love. And we also did it not to send him away forever, but to ultimately draw him back into the family.

## Verse 8...

Well, Gomer had a third child and God said to name him **Lo-ammi** and this literally means “not my people” or “no kin of mine.”

See, Hosea **knew** he was the father of the first child, but he **doubted** he was the father of the second child and he **denied** he was the father of the third child. *He knew Gomer had been unfaithful to him and someone else had fathered this little boy.*

# The Christian Arsenal

[www.christianarsenal.com](http://www.christianarsenal.com)

Do you see what's happening here? God was symbolizing through the name of this last child that He had loved Israel so much yet Israel had thrown that love back in His face.

**They had repaid His faithfulness with unfaithfulness...**

**They had repaid His deliverance with desertion...**

**Instead of adoring God, they had abandoned God.**

You know, Hosea certainly had grounds for divorce, didn't he? In fact, under the Law of Moses, Gomer could have been stoned.

Think about it...Hosea's neighbors and friends and family must have known what was going on. They must have shaken their heads and said,

"What does he see in Gomer? Why doesn't he put her out? Why doesn't he divorce her and be done with it?"

Think about this...the angels must look on with wonder at the grace of God. They must say, "What does God see in the human race? Why doesn't He make an end of them and be done with it?"

And oh, how I've wondered so many times how God could keep on loving **me** and not cast **me** away!

Praise God for His love that suffers long and is so patient and kind. Praise God even for the fact that He chastens those whom He loves!

The Old Testament prophets preached bad news...but they also prophesied hope and that's what we see in

**Verses 10-11...**

Old Testament prophets prophesied things that would shortly take place and things that would not take place for thousands of years...and the things we see in **verses 10-11** haven't yet been fulfilled. But, one day they will be because as we said last week, God is not finished with Israel!

**Chapter 2 of Hosea** is a long condemnation of unfaithfulness. Part of it sounds like Hosea speaking of his relationship with Gomer, but most of it clearly speaks of God's relationship with Israel. It moves from **condemnation to consequences to compassion**.

**Verses 6-13;17-23...**

The nation Israel had played the harlot with the pagan gods of the surrounding nations. False religion had not been forced upon Israel...Israel had persistently run after the nature-gods and goddesses of the pagans. The people of Israel actually came to believe that Baal, Ashtoreth, and Moloch and the like could provide bountiful harvests and years of abundance.

And you might say, "But they've learned their lesson. They don't worship idols today." And you would be partially right. You'll never see a real Jew bowing down before a stone idol. They did learn **that** lesson...

But, it's really no better today. What do these folks worship today? Most Jews don't worship God...they don't know His Word...they really don't care about the things of God...

Most Jews today, especially those in Israel, worship themselves.

If you were to ask most any Jew in Israel who has kept their

# The Christian Arsenal

[www.christianarsenal.com](http://www.christianarsenal.com)

country free since it was established in 1948, they would tell you **they** have. Their **ingenuity**, and their **commitment**, their **patriotism** and their **loyalty**, their **military ability** and their **bravery**... *These are the things they worship. In these things they have put their trust!*

They don't worship God! They don't give honor and praise and glory to Almighty God! They surely don't worship Jesus, of course...

Jews in America and elsewhere also put their trust in philanthropy. They believe if they give enough money to "good causes" that their giving will garner God's favor and He will allow them into heaven. This was the same thing the Pharisees of Jesus' day believed.

So...in a very real sense, the Jews are still idol worshipers, aren't they?

But Hosea said, "One day God will remove the names of idols from their mouth. One day they will again be betrothed to God." And, God said, I will respond and I will tell those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' and they will say, 'You are My God!'"

Well, let's quickly look at **chapter 3:1-5...**

James Montgomery Boice has called this chapter "the greatest chapter in the Bible."

WHY? Well, I believe Dr. Boice calls it the greatest chapter because it so pictures what God has done for us. It is a picture of **God's work of redemption**...the work by which the Lord Jesus Christ delivered us from sin's bondage at the cost of His own life...and this redemption is portrayed in Hosea's purchase of his fallen wife from slavery.

**Hosea 3:1-3...**

Let me ask you something...

Does God love like that! YES! God loves like that!

God steps into the marketplace of sin and buys us out of sin's bondage by the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We read in **John 3:16...** "For God **so** loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."

And we ask...what does "**so**" mean? The answer is found in Hosea's story. When we see Hosea standing in the market place under orders from God to purchase his wife who was an adulteress and a slave, we recognize that **this** is the measure of God's love!

**We are Gomer...we are the slave sold on the auction block of sin. And Jesus saw us there and paid for us and the price He paid was His own precious blood.**

**Salvation is free...we don't pay a thing for it...but Jesus paid for it with His own blood!**

# The Christian Arsenal

[www.christianarsenal.com](http://www.christianarsenal.com)

In loving kindness, Jesus came  
My soul in mercy to reclaim,  
And from the depths of sin and shame  
Through grace He lifted me.

From sinking sand, He lifted me.  
With tender hand, He lifted me.  
From shades of night to plains of light.  
Oh, praise His name, He lifted me!

So, as we've just seen, this passage of Scripture can definitely be applied

## 1) to unbelievers

There is more than one application to be made by this chapter, however. Not only can it apply to the unbeliever, as we've just discussed, but... It can be applied also

## 2) to Israel

### Verses 4-5...

One day, **all** Israel will be saved...one day **all** Israel will be redeemed! One day all Jews who will survive the Tribulation Period will be saved. One day, Israel will put away all her idols and come trembling to the LORD, but it won't happen until the last days.

This can also be applied

## 3) to marriage

The standard of Hosea's love in this marriage should be the standard for us! It's not, of course. We've so lowered our standards, haven't we? I mean, we would say that such love that Hosea demonstrated toward Gomer would be impossible for us today, wouldn't we?

Lastly, this passage of Scripture can be applied...

## 4) to Christians

I believe every time we're unfaithful to Jesus, we're in danger of becoming slaves to sin again. We bear His name! We are called Christians!

But when we sin deliberately and willfully, we dishonor Him and we drag His name through the mud. We take His name in vain!!!

**As I studied this week, I saw several superlatives and near superlatives used by different commentators.**

As I've already said, this book was called the "second greatest story ever told" and **Hosea 3** was called "the greatest chapter in the Bible."

J. Vernon McGee said this book points out to us "the greatest sin in all the world." Do you know what he said the greatest sin is? Now, we're not talking about "the unpardonable sin." We talking about the greatest sin.

It wasn't adultery. It wasn't immorality. Dr. McGee believes the greatest sin in all the world is sin against love. Gomer was not only guilty of breaking the marriage vow...that was certainly bad enough...

**But Gomer was guilty of sinning against the one who loved her.**

# The Christian Arsenal

[www.christianarsenal.com](http://www.christianarsenal.com)

Israel knew the love of God as no other nation knew it.

Israel knew God's deliverance...His redemption...His protection...His forgiveness...His revelation...and His love! Israel had seen His presence in the wilderness. Israel had experienced His presence in their battles...

Yet, Israel turned to dumb idols and gave herself to them. This is sin at its worst...it's not the unpardonable sin, but it's the sin most of us sitting here have committed at one time or another.

**Sin in the life of a believer breaks God's Law, it breaks His heart, it breaks our fellowship with Him, it hinders spiritual growth and it destroys our witness.**

**What about you? Have you dishonored His name by the way you've spent your time, by the places you've gone, by the things you've done, by the compromises you made?**

If you have, and let's face it...we **all** have...we need to remember His faithfulness to us and then determine to be faithful to Him. It's never too late! Let's begin to love Him with all our heart and soul and spirit!

Let's ask Him to seal that love, to keep us and perfect us until the day when we will stand before Him at the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

**I don't believe God has allowed us to study the *Book of Hosea* to bring us down, but to lift us up! If you've been convicted today, then ask for cleansing and leave here today determined to walk a pure and holy walk before Him.**

We're not told if Gomer ever got her act together. We're not told if Gomer remained faithful to Hosea after he came and purchased her from the slave block. Did she make a new start? Did she walk in faithfulness from that day forward? We don't know about Gomer, but we can know about us, can't we? **We can do something about our own lives, can't we?**

May God help us to be faithful each day to the One who loved us enough to redeem us! I believe our study in *Hosea* will be a blessing