

## Session 1: The Prophet Hosea

### G. The Children of the Union

#### Hosea 1:3-9

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.'

Verses 3 to 9 announce the birth of Hosea's three children, to each of which he gave prophetic names.

#### G1. Jezreel

Jeroboam, the king of Israel at the time of Hosea's call, was fourth in descent from Jehu. 100 years before, in 841 B.C. Jehu, the commander of the Israelite army, had overthrown king Joram and established a new dynasty. The coup had taken place at Jezreel. A full account of it is given in 1 Kings 9 and 10, a passage we will be studying later in the course. Hosea's message is that it is now time for Jehu's dynasty in turn to be removed. And not only the dynasty, but the whole nation.

#### G2. Lo-Ruhamah

Verse 6 says simply, "She bore a daughter," unlike verse 3, which says, "She bore him a son." Possibly, there is a hint here that Gomer had already been unfaithful to Hosea. The name means 'Not pitied'. The word 'pity' is characteristic of parental love. Perhaps there is another hint here that the child was not Hosea's. However, the meaning is that he had no intention of loving the child. The message is amplified. Yahweh says, "I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel." He is about to withdraw his parental love from Israel. Characteristic of parental love is forgiveness, the willingness to overlook childish failings. As Psalm 103 says:

#### Psalm 103:11-14

For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him;  
as far as the east is from the west,

so far he removes our transgressions from us.

As a father has compassion for his children,  
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.

For he knows how we were made;  
he remembers that we are dust.

Now Yahweh is saying there will be no more forgiveness.

### G3. Lo-Ammi

The name of Hosea's third child is the most devastating of all. Again, there is the hint that he may not have been Hosea's child. And this time, the name means, 'Not my people'.

To be Yahweh's own people was central to the identity of Israel. The opening verses of Exodus 19 are some of the most important in the whole Old Testament. God has led Israel out of Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai. There, God tells them that he has chosen them to be his own "treasured possession out of all peoples."

#### **Exodus 19:1-6**

At the third new moon after the Israelites had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day, they came into the wilderness of Sinai. They had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain. Then Moses went up to God; the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.'

This special relationship was enshrined in the covenant or solemn agreement between Yahweh and Israel. They were to be his people and he would be their God. He had rescued Israel from Egypt and was about to give them the land of Canaan. He promised to defend them from their enemies and give them peace and prosperity. In return they were to worship Yahweh exclusively and keep all the laws that he would give them through Moses.

Now, the word of the Lord through Hosea is: This covenant is at an end. You have not kept your side of the bargain. Now I am renouncing mine. "You are not my people, and I am not your God."