











## 9 studies on the book of Hosea – 1<sup>st</sup> draft

In choosing to study Hosea you have ventured into a turbulent place of love and justice, promise and pain, close to the heart of God. You are also in scriptural territory unfamiliar to many Christians.

The Minor Prophets, the twelve short books crowded at the end of the Old Testament, are often skipped even by dedicated Bible readers. The word *minor* makes them sound unimportant – although it means only that they are the shortest books of prophecy – and they are sprinkled with strange geographical and historical references. But their power and emotion grab us as soon as we look into the first of the Minor Prophets: the book of Hosea.

From Hosea God's Persistent Love a Lifeguide Bible Study by Dale & Sandy Larsen p 8.

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In preparing these studies I've used the following sources: The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner, Hosea by G. A. F. Knight (Torch), the Bible Brief on Hosea from The Briefing magazine # 295 April 2003 by Jane Tooher, Hosea a series of 5 Bible studies written by St Andrews, Roseville, 2016, Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone 9 studies for Pathway Bible Guides, Hosea God's Persistent Love a Lifeguide Bible Study by Dale & Sandy Larsen, Two Cities Isaiah by Andrew Reid and Karen Morris, a Matthias Media Interactive Bible Study booklet, The Message of Ezekiel by Christopher J. H. Wright, Old Testament Theology for Christians by John Walton, Gospel and Kingdom by Graeme Goldsworthy, New Bible Commentary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, New Bible Dictionary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, New Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Student's Atlas of the Bible Paternoster Press, The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood, A Fresh Start by John Chapman, article from The Briefing #357, June 2008, "The stinger of death", the 2012 sermon series, the Fifth Gospel, at St Andrews, Roseville by John Dickson, sermon by John Dickson on Mark ch 11 at St Andrews, Roseville, 15/3/2015, sermons on Hosea by Rico Tice and Mark Meynell at All Souls, Langham Place, England, Gospel Conversations talks from [www.gospelconversations.com](http://www.gospelconversations.com): Ron Winestock on Tzim Tzum 2013-14, "Hebrews part 4: Jesus and the reverse incarnation" 7/8/2015 by Tony Golsby-Smith, Andrew Bartz at a Q and A session on "Hope and Hell", 7/9/2018, Nooma video, #5, Noise, by Rob Bell, Peter Rollins talk "Parables and Pints" and various websites.

## Study 1, Introduction to the Old Testament

The book of Hosea is in the Old Testament. To refresh our thinking on the Old Testament I thought it would be fun to read some quotes and listen to some sound bites. Your job is to say where the quote is from and its context in the Bible. I've given the answers but you will need to cut these out before giving the studies to the group so that they can try to work out the answers for themselves.



### 1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Where? Gen 1:1

Context? creation

### 2. "The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Where? Gen 12:1-3

Context? God promises Abram that he will become a great nation and lead them to the Promised Land.

### 3. Play Highway61Short.mp3

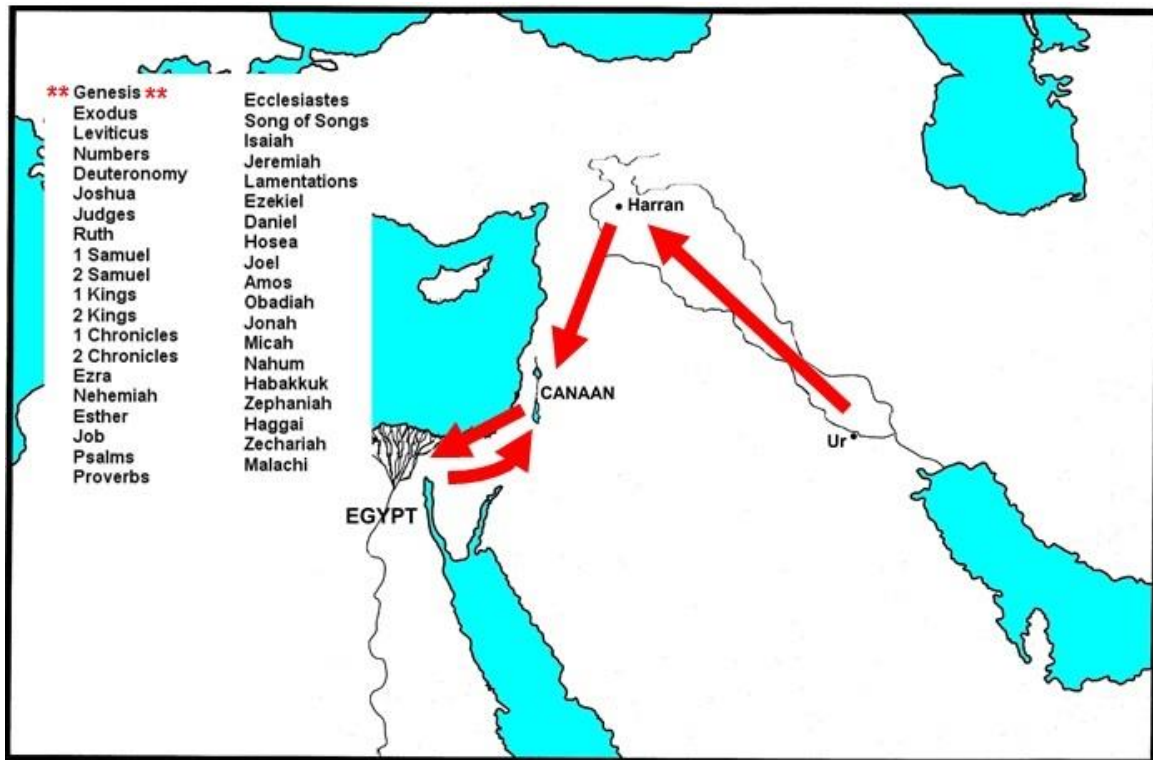
Translation: God said to Abraham "Kill me a son."  
 Abe said "Man, you must be putting me on."  
 God said "No."  
 Abe said "What?"  
 God said "You can do what you want to but, the next time you see me coming you better run."  
 Well Abe said "Where do you want this killing done?"  
 God said "Out on Highway 61."

Bible: Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"  
 "Here I am," he replied.  
 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

Where? Gen 22:1-2

Context? Bible: Abraham & Sarah finally have a son in their old age but God tells Abraham to sacrifice his only son as a test of Abraham's faith.  
 Bob Dylan: You can get away with anything in America, out on Highway 61.

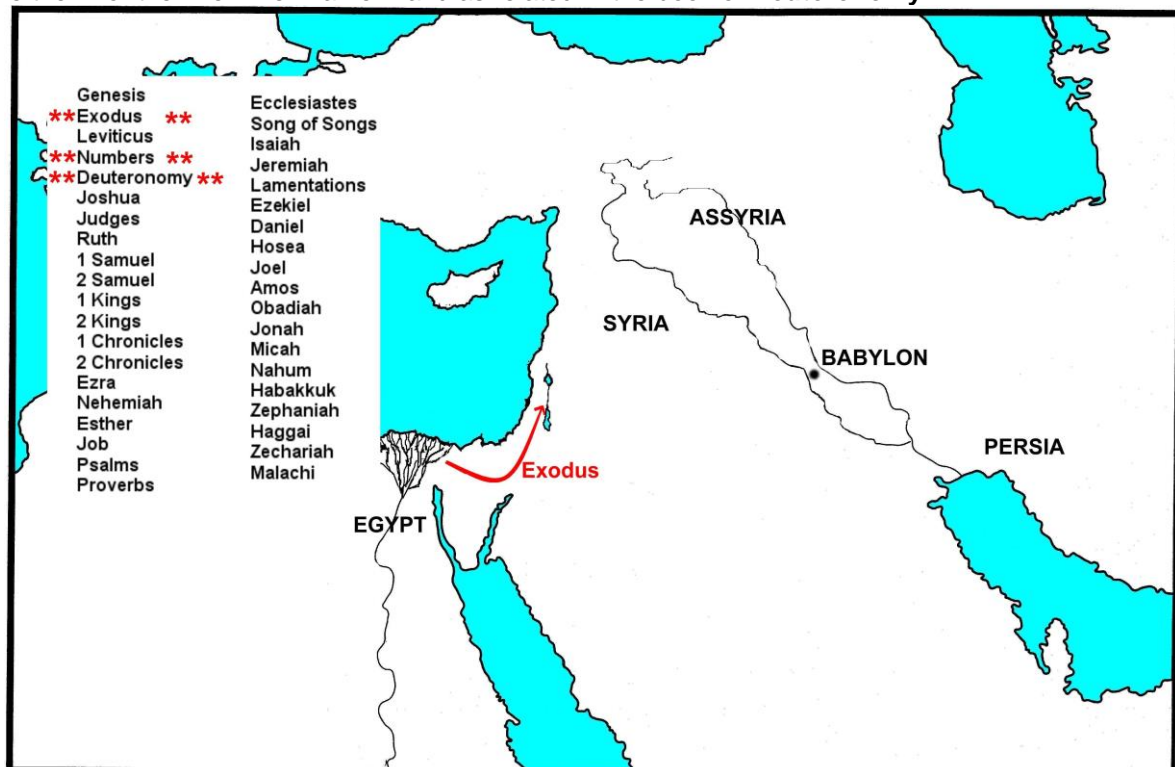
Beginning at roughly 1900 BC, God called Abraham to be a father of a great nation (Gen 12). Genesis relates the story of his travels and eventual settling in the Promised Land, Canaan.



Famine forced God's people to Egypt and they spent more than 400 years in bondage to the Pharaohs. God worked to release them from slavery and, under Moses' leadership, they escaped (the Exodus, roughly 1300 BC) and travelled back to the land God had promised them.

The Egyptians were the major world power from 3000 BC to 1000 BC (these dates are very approximate). The Great Pyramid of Giza was completed in 2600 BC.

The escape from Egypt is described in the book of **Exodus**. The trip of 40 yrs. wandering in the desert before getting to Israel is described in **Numbers**. On the verge of Palestine, Moses lectures his people to prepare them for their new life in a new land as related in the book of **Deuteronomy**.

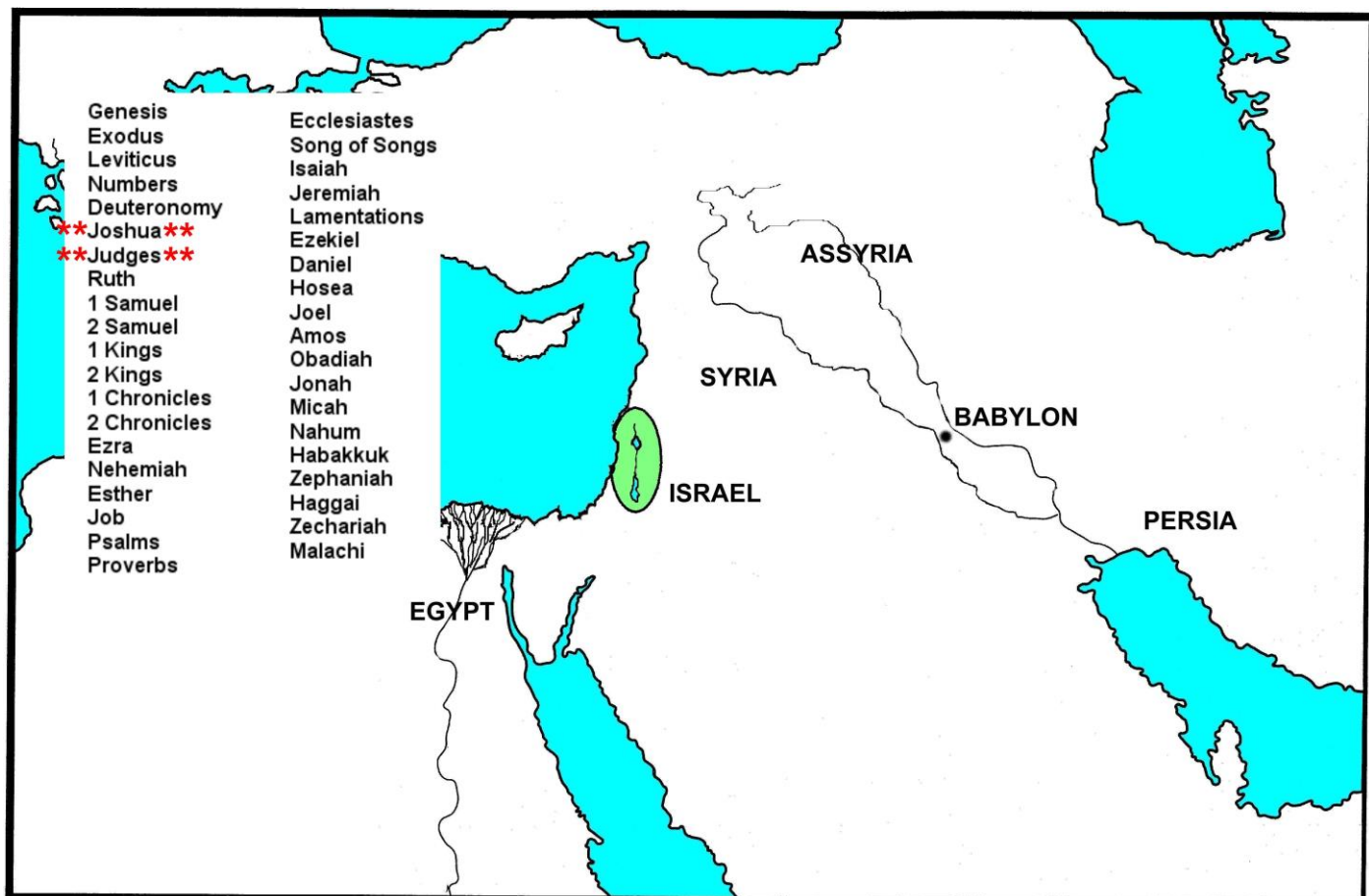


4. "Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour."

Where? Ex 20:12-17

Context? 10 Commandments made at Mt Sinai while God's people were on their way to the Promised Land.

In Israel, God fights for his people to conquer the indigenous peoples. These battles are described in **Joshua** and **Judges**.



Samuel led God's people after the Judges. After Samuel came the kings with Saul as Israel's first king and David as Israel's second and greatest king until Jesus. David began his reign at about 1000 BC. The history of Samuel and Saul is written in **1 Samuel**.

David was a warrior king and expanded Israel's borders (represented by the green area below). David's story begins at 1 Samuel 16 and continues through **1 and 2 Samuel** and **1 Chronicles**, ending with his death in 1 Kings 2. David was also a singer and musician and he wrote many **psalms** describing his feelings, experiences and prayers.

5. As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

Where? 1 Sam 17:48-49

Context? David kills Goliath, the Philistine champion. Israel has a king, Saul, but David will be the next and greatest king besides Jesus.



## 6. "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want."

Where? Ps 23:1

Context? Psalm of David. Even in the most difficult of circumstances David trusts God to rescue him and bring him goodness and mercy.

**7. When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.**

Where? 2 Sam 7:12-16

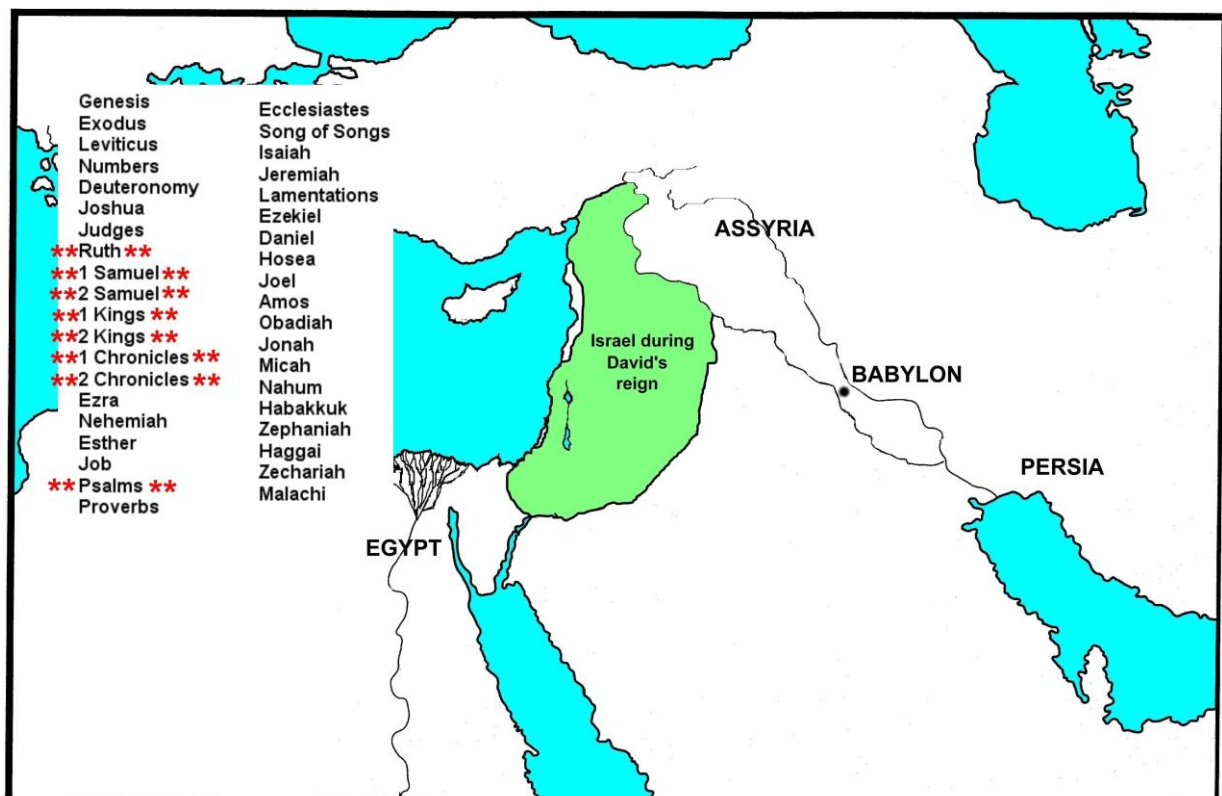
Context? God's line of kings, through David, will be established forever.

Solomon, David and Bathsheba's second son (2 Sam 12), became king in 961 BC. After Solomon Israel was split in two in 922 BC with the northern kingdom called Israel and the southern kingdom called Judah. This division into two kingdoms weakened them both and it wasn't long before other nations threatened them.

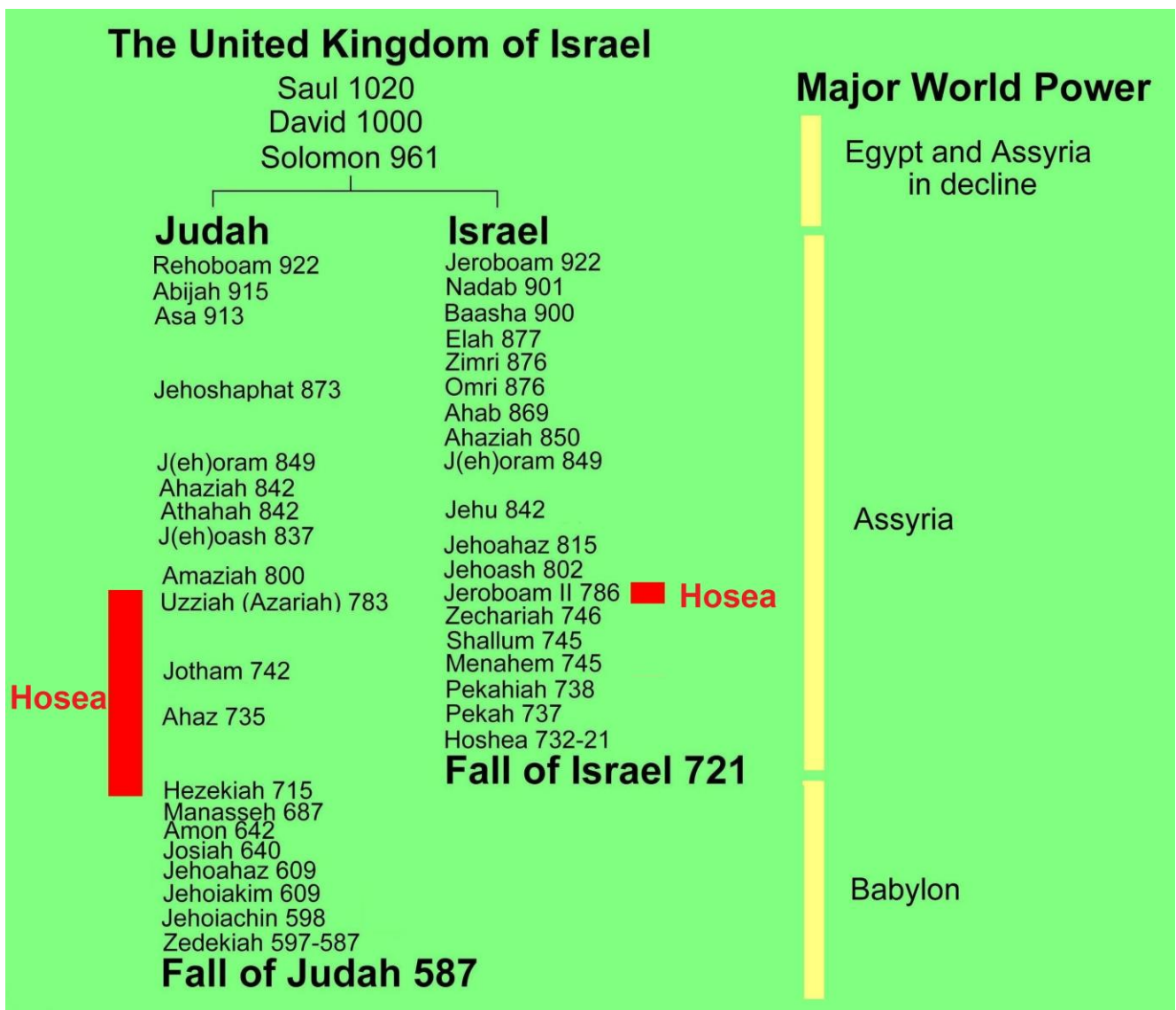
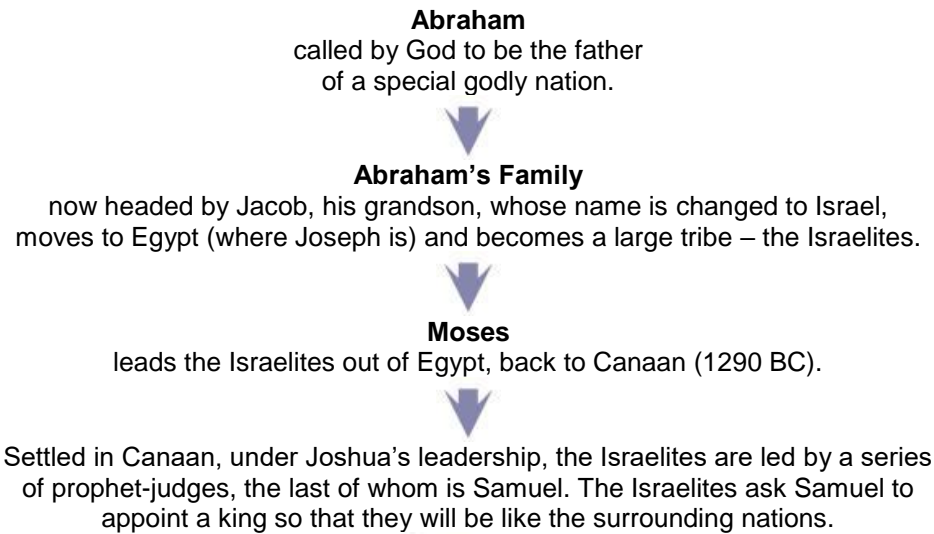
**1 and 2 Kings** account for four centuries of Israel's history with a succession of kings from both the northern and southern kingdoms, ending in exile. 1 and 2 Kings were written as one book from the viewpoint of an Israelite living in exile in Babylon.

**1 and 2 Chronicles** follow the kings from the line of David, ignoring the northern kings. The Chronicler wrote from the viewpoint of an Israelite who had returned from exile with Ezra and Nehemiah.

In contrast, **Ruth** is a quiet tale of ordinary life where a mother, Naomi, and her daughter-in-law, Ruth, move from Moab to Bethlehem and are treated kindly by Boaz. Boaz and Ruth get married and their great grandson is King David.



To recap:



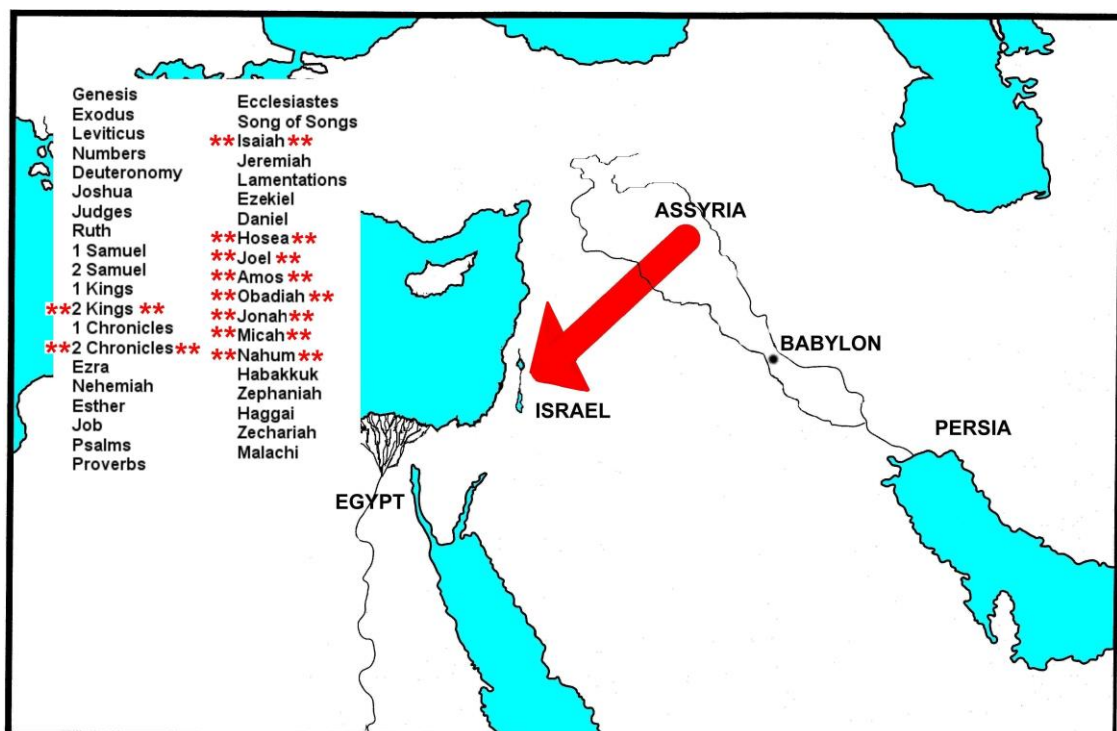
## 8. Play Redeemer livethShort.mp3

Translation:	I know that my Redeemer liveth, and he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.
Bible:	I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes - I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!
Where?	Job 19:25-27
Context?	Bible: Job defends himself against accusations that he has deserved the terrible things that have happened to him. His innocence will ultimately bring him to see God in the flesh.  Handel's Messiah: Comes immediately after the Hallelujah Chorus

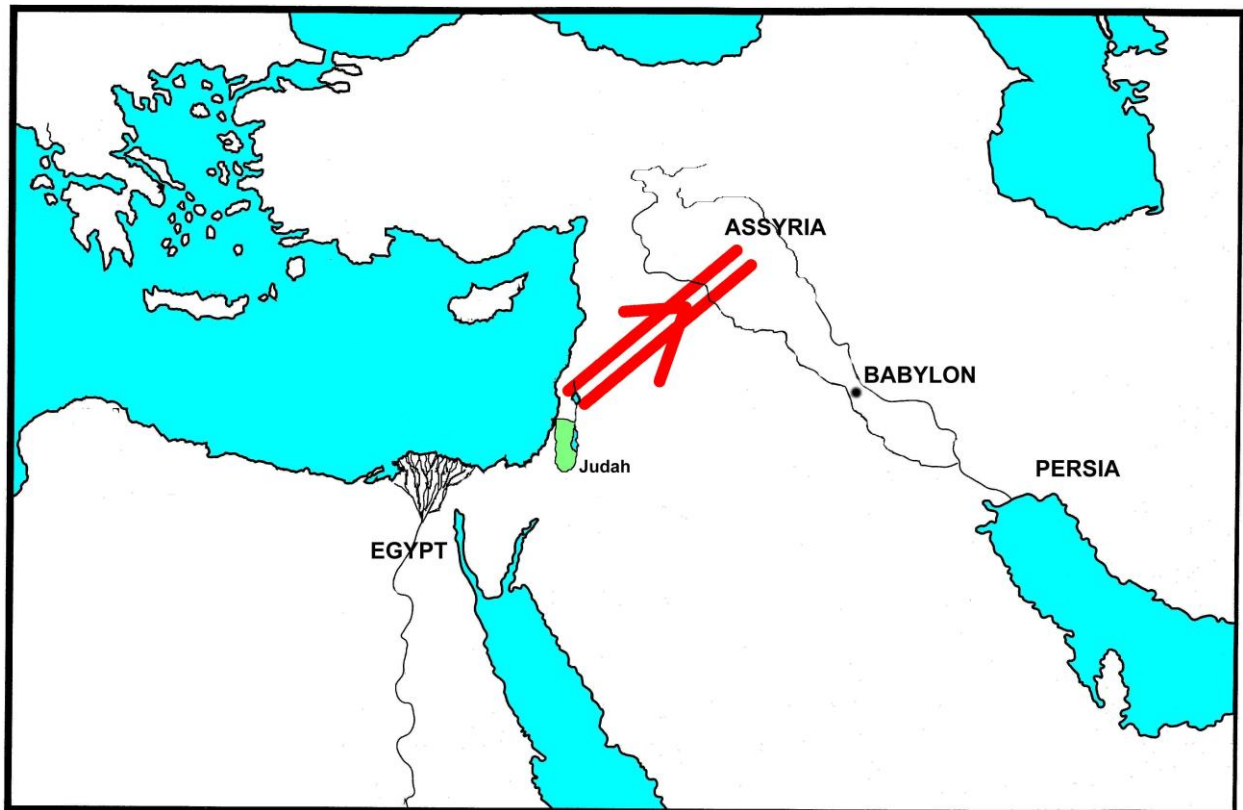
## 9. Play HisBannerOverMelsLoveSHORT.mps

Bible:	He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.
Where?	Song of Songs 2:4
Context?	Multiple meanings have been suggested for Song of Songs. The 2 main ones are that it is an allegory for God's love for Israel/the church OR a poem about the love of a man and a woman.

Assyria became the major world power from about 900 BC to 612 BC. **Jonah** preached God's message of repentance to Nineveh, Assyria's capital, at about 800 BC. They did repent and avoided God's judgement for a time only to re-commit their sins bringing on God's warning through **Nahum**. Israel also needed to repent and a number of prophets warned that God's instrument of judgement would be Assyria. **Isaiah**, **Joel** and **Obadiah** warned Judah (the southern kingdom), **Amos** warned Israel (the northern kingdom) and **Micah** and **Hosea** addressed both kingdoms.

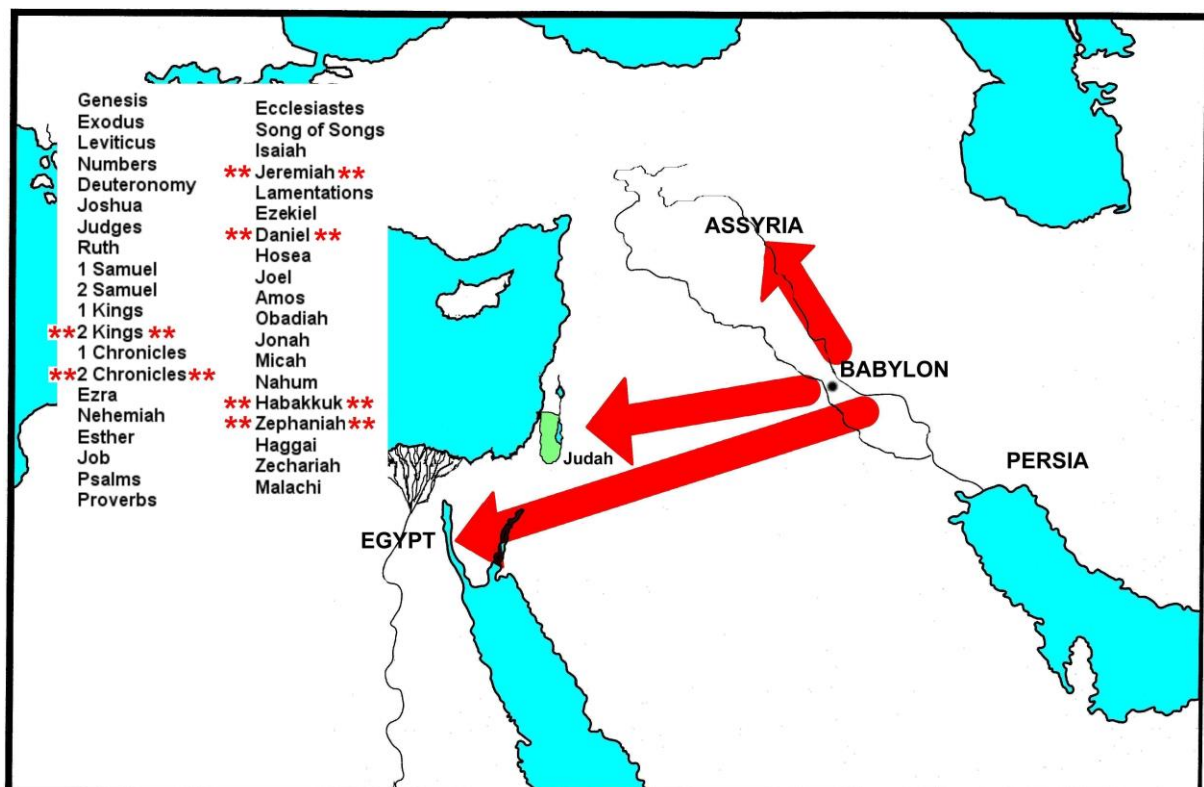


Tiglath-Pileser III became king of Assyria in 745 BC. In 721 BC he defeated Israel (the northern kingdom) and took the people into exile. In 612 BC Nineveh, the capital, was destroyed bringing about the fall of Assyria.



Babylon was the next major world power from 612 BC to 539 BC. They attacked and defeated nearly everybody. **Jeremiah** and **Zephaniah** warned Judah and **Habakkuk** said that, even worse than Assyria, Babylon would be God's instrument of judgement.

Babylon battled with Judah and took people like **Daniel** into exile in 605 BC.





Eventually in 587 BC, Babylon took Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple and drove most of the people to Babylon leaving only the poorest behind. This was known as the Exile.

Some **psalms** were written during the exile.

**Jeremiah** was offered a comfortable life in Babylon but chose to remain in Judah.

**Lamentations** was written, probably by Jeremiah, about the suffering of the people in exile.

**Ezekiel** and **Daniel** had already been taken into exile.

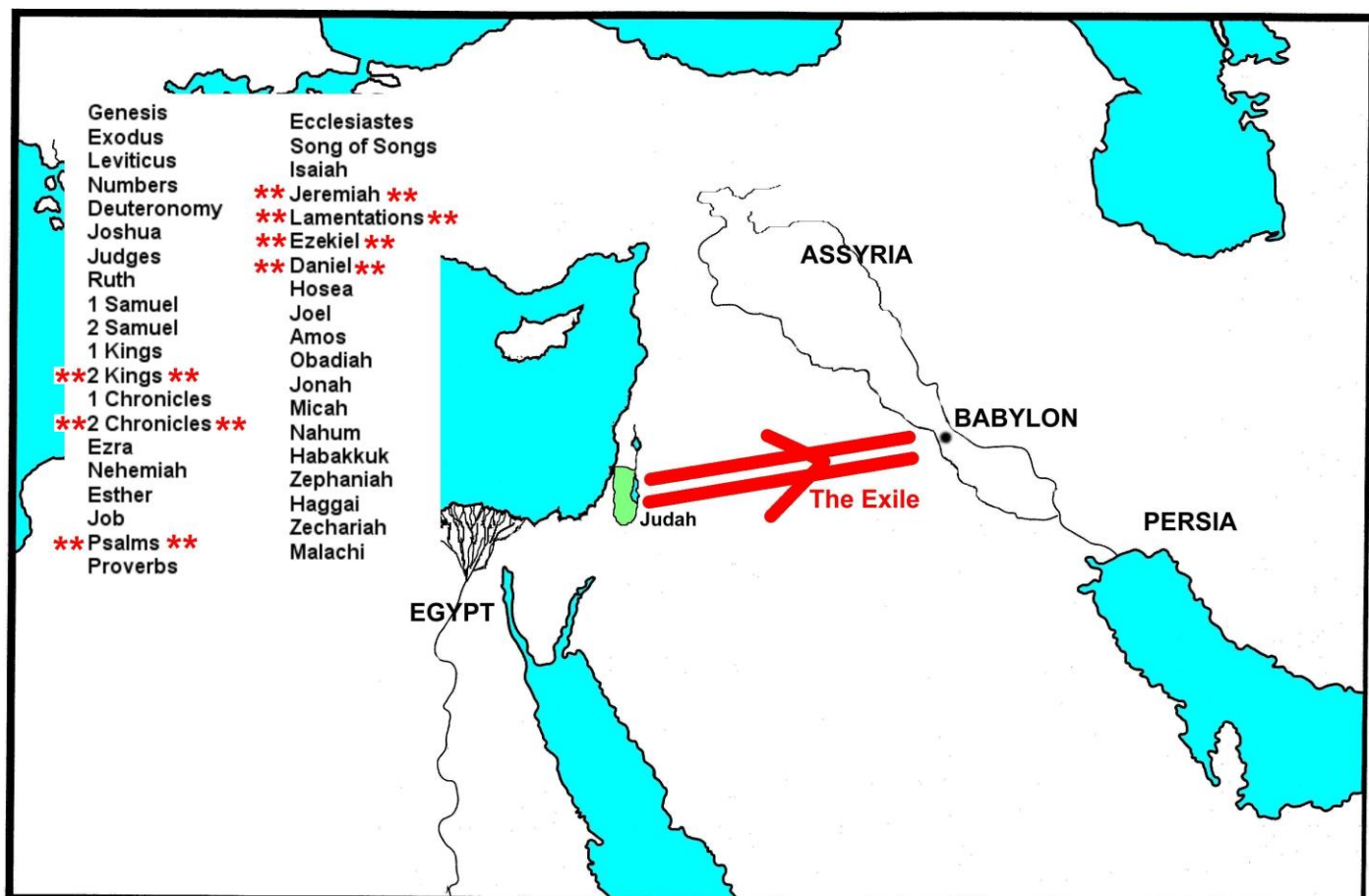
## 10. Play RiversOfBabylonBoneyMShort.mp3

Translation: By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down. Yeah we wept when we remembered Zion. (twice)  
When the wicked carried us away in captivity, required from us a song. }  
Now how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land. } (twice)

Bible: By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.  
There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs,  
our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"  
How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?

Where? Ps 137:1-4

Context? God's people are in exile in Babylon and living in misery.



**Isaiah**, **Jeremiah** and **Daniel** prophesied the defeat of the Babylonians and the return of the exiles.

## 11. Play EricLiddellReadsIsaiahShort.mp3

As read from KJV: Behold, the nations are as a drop in the bucket and are counted as the small dust in the balance. All nations before him are as nothing. They are counted to him as less than nothing and vanity.  
He bringeth the princes to nothing. He maketh the judges of the earth as a vanity. Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?  
He giveth power to the faint and to them that have no strength he increaseth might. But they that waiteth on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles.  
They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

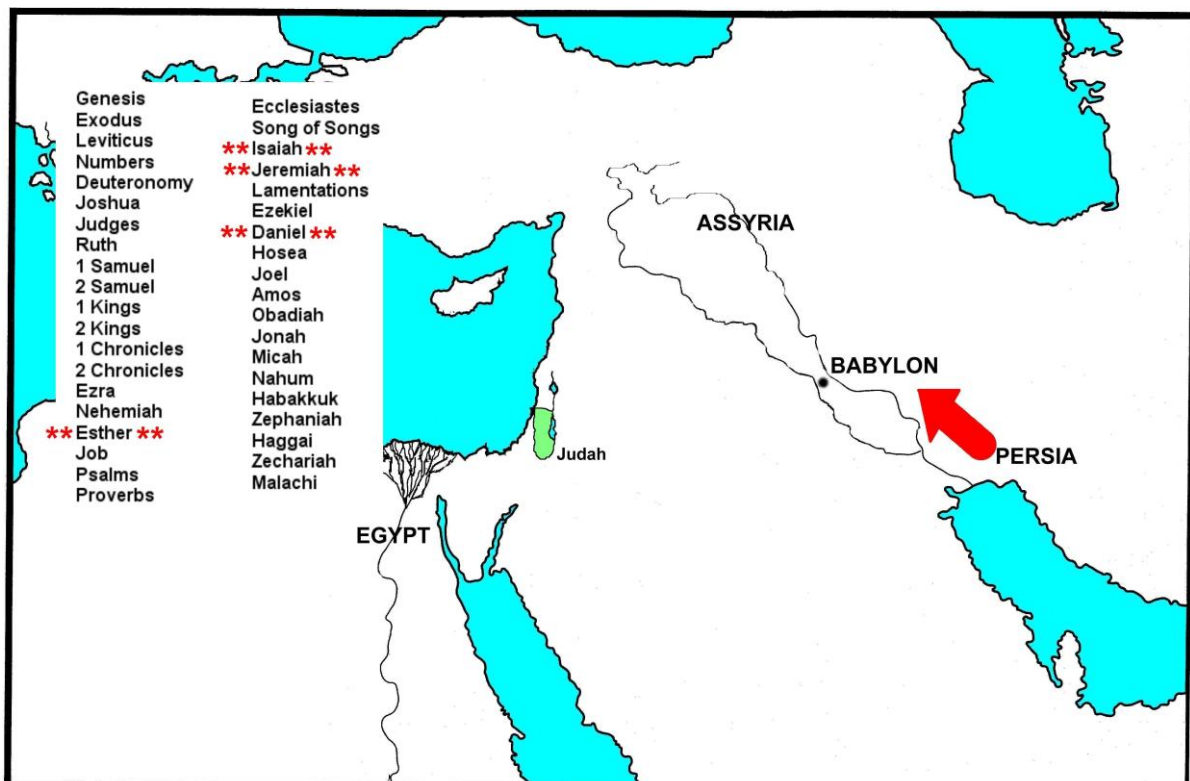
Bible: v 15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales;  
V 17 Before him all the nations are as nothing, they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.  
V 23 He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.  
V 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary,  
V 29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.  
V 31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Where? Isaiah 40:15-31

Context? Bible: God is bringing his people out of exile in Babylon and back to the Promised Land.

Chariots of Fire: Eric Liddell reads from Isaiah in church before he competes in the 1924 Olympics in Paris.

These prophecies came true when Cyrus the Great defeated the Babylonians in 539 BC and Persia became the major world power.



The Persians allowed the Israelites (the remnant) to return to Judah although some preferred to stay in Persia/Babylon e.g. the Jewish community written up in **Esther**.

In 538/7 the main group of Israelites returned to Judah with Zerubbabel, their leader.

**Haggai** and **Zechariah** were written during the reign of Darius I of Persia (521-486 BC).

Haggai wrote to encourage the re-building of the walls of Jerusalem.

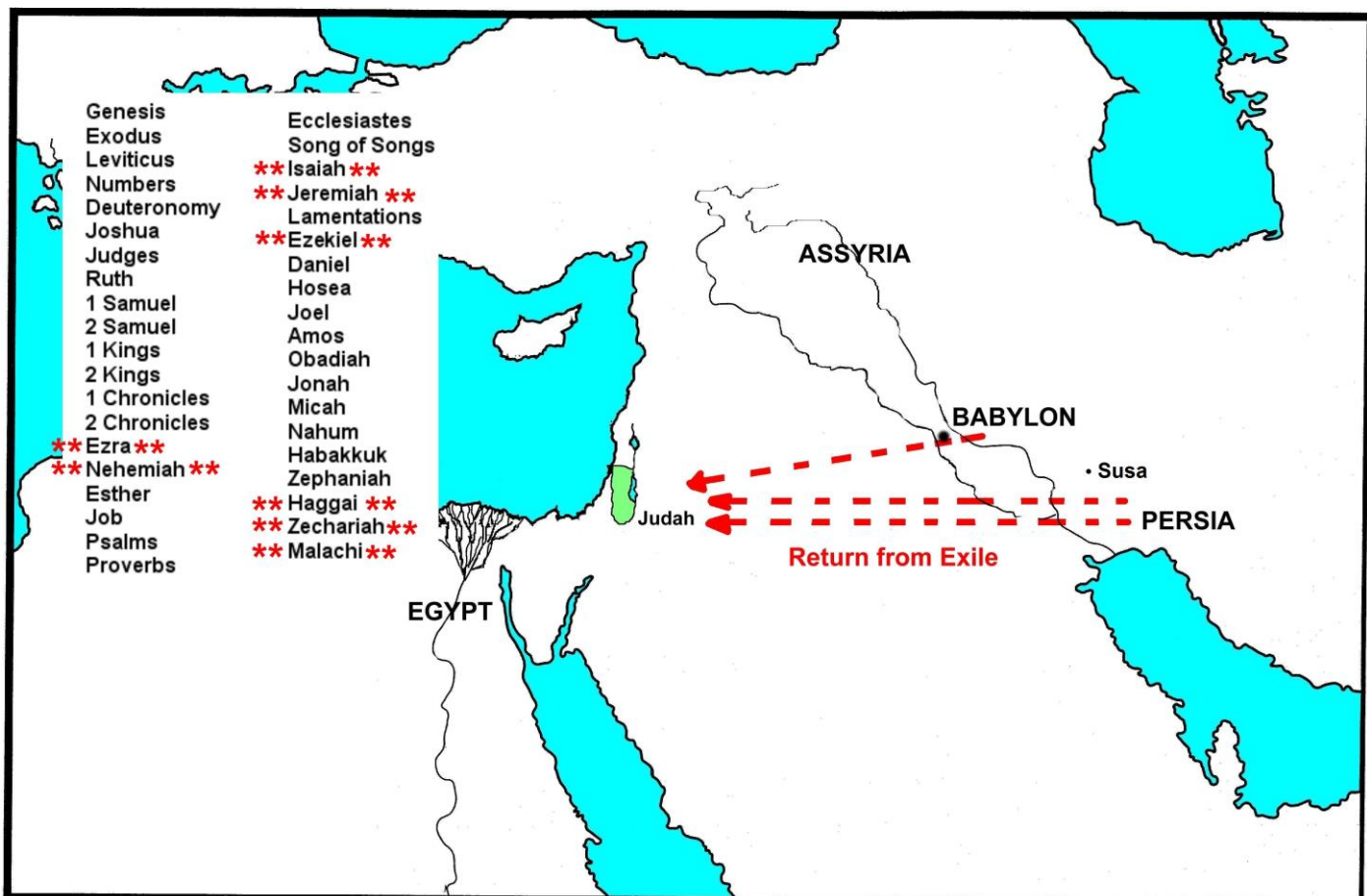
Zechariah looked to the restoration of the Temple and the future of God's people.

(Battle of Thermopylae 480 BC when the Greeks blocked the advance of the massive Persian army under Xerxes I (486-465 BC) depicted in the 2006 movie "300".)

**Ezra** and a group of Israelites returned to Jerusalem in 458 BC to organise the rebuilding of the Temple.

**Nehemiah** returned with his group in 445 BC to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. (Artaxerxes I, son of Xerxes I, was king of the Persians from 465-423 BC, see Neh 2:1.)

**Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah** and **Malachi** all looked ahead to a time beyond the exile, to a time of restoration and a time when God's king, Jesus, would come.



12. 'The time is coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,' declares the LORD.

'This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after that time,' declares the LORD. 'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, "Know the LORD," because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,' declares the LORD. 'For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.'

Where? Jer 31:31-34.

Context? God's people are in exile in Babylon but Jeremiah looks ahead when there will be a new exodus and a new covenant.

In 331 BC the Greeks, under Alexander the Great, defeated the Persians, under Darius III (336-331 BC).

331-146 BC – Greek rule.

146 BC – 410 AD – Roman rule.

**To finish**

13. Why do we have to study the Bible?



## Study 2, Hosea 1:1

**Before the study** skim read the whole book of Hosea (14 chapters but each chapter is fairly short).

Spend as much or as little time as you want skim reading Hosea.

- Write down
- your first impressions of Hosea.
  - any expectations you have about the upcoming studies in Hosea.
  - any questions you might have.

Where is Hosea in the Bible?

### Old Testament

Genesis	Ecclesiastes
Exodus	Song of Songs
Leviticus	Isaiah
Numbers	Jeremiah
Deuteronomy	Lamentations
Joshua	Ezekiel
Judges	Daniel
Ruth	Hosea
1 Samuel	Joel
2 Samuel	Amos
1 Kings	Obadiah
2 Kings	Jonah
1 Chronicles	Micah
2 Chronicles	Nahum
Ezra	Habakkuk
Nehemiah	Zephaniah
Esther	Haggai
Job	Zechariah
Psalms	Malachi
Proverbs	

### New Testament

Matthew	
Mark	
Luke	
John	
Acts	Philemon
Romans	Hebrews
1 Corinthians	James
2 Corinthians	1 Peter
Galatians	2 Peter
Ephesians	1 John
Philippians	2 John
Colossians	3 John
1 Thessalonians	Jude
2 Thessalonians	Revelation
1 Timothy	
2 Timothy	
Titus	

### Old Testament



## Getting started

1. From your skim read of Hosea what are your first impressions?

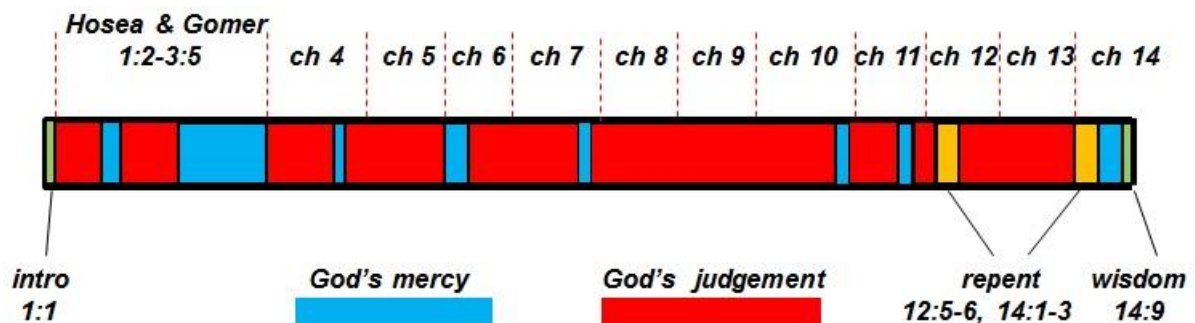


2. Along with first impressions come expectations.  
(a) What are your expectations, if any, about what you might get out of (or not) studying Hosea?

(b) Did you form any other expectations not associated with what these studies might produce?

3. Along with first impressions and expectations come questions.  
Have you any questions about Hosea?

Hopefully we will be able to answer these questions as we make our way through Hosea.

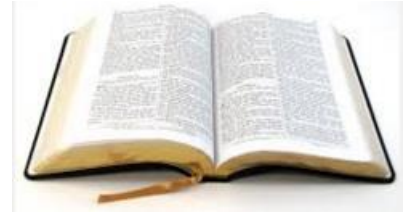


## Bible

4. Read Hosea 1:1.  
So we make acquaintance with the prophet and his times. His name has suffered a little in its journey into English via Greek and Latin (where it is called Osee), for it should be Hoshea – the name also of the last king of Israel (2 Ki 17:1 [and see p 6]), and the name originally borne by Joshua. Like Joshua/Jesus, it is derived from the verb 'to save'. (See Num 13:8 (Hoshea) with 14:6 (Joshua) = Neh 8:17 (Jeshua) = Acts 7:45, AV (Jesus). 'Jesus' is the Greek form of Jeshua/Joshua.)  
From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 17.

(a) What does the Bible mean by "the word of the Lord" (see also Gen 1:3, John 1:1, 14)?

(b) What do Christians usually mean by “the word of the Lord”?



(a) What do you think “the word of the Lord” means here in Hosea 1:1?

5. A number of kings are mentioned in Hosea 1:1.  
Briefly say what you know about kings in the Bible. You might like to look up 2 Sam 2:3-4, 7:12-13, Luke 23:3, 1 Pet 2:9.

See p 6 to get some information on the kings mentioned in Hosea 1:1.

Why did Hosea, whose prophecy is mainly to Israel, date his book first by the kings of Judah?

Hosea's message is to both Judah and Israel, concerning judgement and mercy. The end of Israel is nearer but Judah's turn will come. The dynasty of Judah is of the house of David to which the promises of God were made. Hosea recognises the supremacy of the throne in Jerusalem, prophesying a Davidic king over the ultimately reunited nation (1:11, 3:5). . . .

Why does only Jeroboam's name appear from the seven kings of Israel living during this time?

Jeroboam II, though an evil king, was God's instrument for the good of Israel (2 Ki 14:25-27), the last saving act of God to Israel. Years before God had promised Jehu that his sons of the fourth generation would sit on the throne of Israel (2 Ki 10:30). Jeroboam II was the last king of Israel to be succeeded by his son. Zechariah, who was assassinated by Shallum, brought Jehu's promise to fulfilment (2 Ki 15:12). Of the six kings after Jeroboam all either succeeded or were succeeded by assassination. Although 30 more years were to pass before the nation was finally deported, its fate was sealed by the end of the reign of Jeroboam II according to the word of the Lord.

From New Bible Commentary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition pp 704-705.

### To finish

6. Read Hosea 14:9 (the last verse of the book).  
How will this verse apply to our studies in Hosea?

### Study 3, Hosea chs 1-3

#### Getting started

1. (a) What do Christians mean by the word “salvation”?



- (b) What benefits do Christians get from being saved?

- (c) What obligations do Christians have once they are saved?

#### Bible

2. Read Hosea 1:1-9.  
 (a) What is weird about this passage?  
  
 (b) What comparison is being made?  
  
 (c) Why does Hosea make this weird comparison?

Listen to Hos1\_1to2\_1RicoTiceOLDfriendHosea.mp3, part of a sermon by Rico Tice at All Souls, Langham Place, England.

Like the ancient prophets of Israel Jesus conveyed a lot of his message through what we call **prophetic signs** or **enacted parables**. He offered pieces of public theatre to drive home the message. This is such a massive part of the Jewish background that I think modern Christians, and certainly the general public, don't spot.

Just to give you some examples:

Hosea, the prophet 700 years before Jesus, was told to marry a known prostitute [Hosea chs 1-3]. Why? It was a prophetic symbol. He actually did it but it was meant to be a prophetic symbol of the fact that God was married to Israel who had prostituted itself. . . .

Ezekiel. I think he probably got the rawest deal. He had to do a whole bunch of things: lie on his left side for months, lie on his right side for months [Eze 4:4-8]. But he also had to build a little model of Jerusalem in the public court. Then, everyone's watching the prophet and he had to attack it – play war games against this little model of Jerusalem without saying anything and everyone was saying he's playing war games against this little model of Jerusalem [Eze 4:1-3]. The point was clear: Jerusalem would fall. . . .

Into the New Testament period, John the Baptist called everyone out to actually go to the Jordan River. They *had* to go into the Jordan River. There were plenty of other rivers, streams and baths around Israel but



you had to go into the Jordan. Why? Because that's where Israel had begun on their journey to get into the Promised Land. They had to go through the Jordan. It was a prophetic sign that Israel has to begin again, or it will end. . . .

This is such a huge part of the prophetic mindset and of Jewish culture that unless you look at the life of Jesus through this lens you really miss a lot of what Jesus was trying to do. He selected 12 apostles, not 11, not 13. Why? A symbol of the 12 tribes of Israel. These were the 12 new patriarchs. Israel begins again. He dined and wined with sinners not just because he was a leftie liberal. No, it was a prophetic enacted parable of the invitation God was making to sinners to join his table. He was acting out his message of preaching.

From a sermon by John Dickson on Mark ch 11 at St Andrews, Roseville, 15/3/2015.

(d) Why is one child called "No mercy" and another child called "Not my people"?

**Jezreel** - listen to Hos1\_1to2\_1RicoTiceJEZREEL.mp3, part of a sermon by Rico Tice at All Souls, Langham Place, England.

**Hosea 1:5 "I will break Israel's bow".**

Usually when God promises to 'break the bow' of some fighting force, it means that He is coming to His people's rescue. . . . But here, pointedly, it is the bow of *Israel* that He will break. As a kingdom, it is no longer a force for God, if it ever has been. . . .

In 733, a decade before the death of the kingdom as a whole, an Assyrian army fought its way into this valley and lopped off the northern territories of Israel, marching their inhabitants off to Assyria. 2 Kings 15:29 lists among these conquests 'Gilead, and Galilee'. God had broken the bow of Israel, and it lay defenceless. . . .

**Jezreel**, the valley of Gideon's victory [Judges 6:33-7:23], had been a name once covered with glory. Now, since the massacres [2 Kings 9-10], it could only stand for savagery.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 21.

**Hosea 1:8.**

To him [Hosea] as to us, the pathos of his situation could hardly fail to sensitize him to the profound sadness of the words to Israel: 'You are not my people and I am not your God' – words which might otherwise have sounded only unfeeling and dismissive.

From one angle this oracle was simply factual: just as accurate as would have been Hosea's disclaimer of paternity for his children. Israel might be nominally the Lord's, but in fact she was the child of her times and of her pagan world. Likewise Yahweh might be nominally her national God; but since He is not for sharing, the presence of other gods flatly denied the relationship.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 23.

(e) (i) What did it mean for Judah to be saved (v 7)?

(ii) What do you think "salvation" meant for God's people in the Old Testament?

In the Old Testament theology scenario, the nation of Israel experiences **God's salvation** on two major signs and wonders, his gracious provision for the people in the wilderness, and his acts as divine warrior in the conquest (B). Second, it is delivered from exile in Babylon (A) to restoration in the land (C) by means of God's providence through the decree of Cyrus (B). . . .

These salvific experiences are not really in the same category as the scenario of the Christian theological idea that refers to salvation from sins (A) to a relationship with God that will stretch through eternity (C) by means of the work of Christ on our behalf (atonement, justification, forgiveness, reconciliation, (B)). . . .

As a final note, we should recognise that the ancient Israelites in the Old Testament did not think that they were saved from their sins through the works of the law. They did not even think in terms of personal salvation from sins. The New Testament conversation pertained to the issues as they had taken shape during the Second Temple period. Therefore, we should not project whatever misconceptions the Pharisees might have had back onto the Old Testament. . . .

Rather than imaging that Jews believed they could work their way to heaven, Jews in the late Second Temple period thought of salvation in light of their identity in the covenant community. Those in good standing in the covenant would be saved, and good standing was achieved through good deeds and obedience to the Torah. It is easy, then, to see how it could be said that they were depending on works for their salvation.

From Old Testament Theology for Christians by John Walton pp 225-226, 236-237.

3. Read Hosea 1:10-2:1.

**1:11 Day of Jezreel.**

Some suggest that *Jezreel* belongs to the next verse [Hosea 2:1], 'O Jezreel, say . . .', and that the final phrase here [1:11] is 'the day of the Lord'. This removes the force of the sentence; the valley of Jezreel will be transformed; where once death reigned, now life abundant reigns, when the Son of David is enthroned.

From New Bible Commentary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition p 706.



From Student's Atlas of the Bible Paternoster Press p 7.

(a) What does the “yet” indicate in 1:10?

(b) How do you reconcile this passage with what God has said in the previous 9 verses?

4. Read Hosea 2:2-13.

Verse 8 **Baal**.

The Hebrew noun means ‘master’, ‘possessor’ or ‘husband’. In the Old Testament, it generally refers to a storm-god, the most important deity in the Canaanite pantheon. The worship of Baal affected and challenged the worship of the Lord throughout Israelite history. Many texts combine to reveal Baal as a nature deity, with myths describing him as being in conflict with death, infertility and flood waters, and emerging victorious as ‘king’ of the gods.

From Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone p 56.

Verse 11 **New Moons**.

The first day of each month was considered holy, hence the association in the Old Testament of the monthly ‘new moon’ with the weekly Sabbath. This fresh beginning was marked by special sacrifices over which trumpets were blown. It seems to have been regarded, like the Sabbath, as a day on which normal work was not done. These festivals were no doubt intended to secure some sort of blessing for those involved and for their fields but their corruption instead brought destruction to both, as indicated in Hosea 5:7.

From Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone pp 60-61.

(a) Explain how parts of this passage are about Gomer.

(b) Explain how parts of this passage are about Israel.

(c) How is God/Hosea going to react to Israel’s unfaithfulness (see the 2 “therefore”s in vv 6 and 9)?

(d) Sum up vv 2-13 in a single sentence.

5. Read Hosea 2:14-23.

Verse 15 **Valley of Achor**.

The valley near Jericho where Achan was executed. Achan had violated the sacred ban during the raid of Jericho by stealing gold, silver and fine clothing (Joshua 7). Stunningly and beautifully, God’s alluring of his people in Hosea is pictured as transforming this valley into a “door of hope”.

From Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone p 62.

(a) Sum up vv 14-23 in a single sentence.

(b) Looking at your summaries of vv 2-13 and vv 14-23, why are the passages so different?

(c) What will happen on “that day” (vv 16, 18, 21)?

Every trained reader of the Old Testament knows that no matter how dire God’s warnings of judgment become, there will always be a spectacular promise of mercy nearby.

From the 2012 sermon series on Isaiah at St Andrews, Roseville by John Dickson.

(d) (i) What are the 5 different ways that Hosea uses to describe God’s promise of mercy?

(ii) How do these 5 ideas relate to Christians today?

6. Read Hosea ch 3.

Verse 1. Israel gives her heart to (of all things) *cakes of raisins*. However one may try to soften the jolt of this, by associating these delicacies with religious feasts or rare occasions [2 Sam 6:19, Is 16:7, Song of Songs 2:5], the incongruity of it is still outrageous. The bride, it seems, is only here, or anywhere else, for the cakes and ale.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 41.

Verse 2. *Bought her* must mean that she had become a slave. After separation she would lose her endowment. Various calculations of the price have been made. From 2 Kings 7:1, 16 the total value = 30 shekels, the price of a slave [Ex 21:32]. But why did he pay in kind? G. Campbell Morgan sees it as ‘half-price and a day’s rations (for a slave)’.

From New Bible Commentary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition p 707.

Verse 4. What is striking about this prophecy is first that it threatens the very pillars of life as Israel knew it, and then that it interprets the withdrawal of all these cherished things – good, bad and indifferent alike – as ultimate gain. . . .

A clean break was needed, deep enough and long enough to make a new beginning possible: a pure return, in all humility, to the Lord Himself; a renewal of the marriage that had seemed beyond repair. . . .

After the fall of their kingdom in 722 BC there was quite a trickle of such converts back to David’s kingdom but Hosea is looking far into the future to *the latter days*.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 43.

(a) What has happened between Hosea and Gomer?

(b) What has Hosea got to do now?



(c) How is this like God and Israel?

(d) What has this got to do with kings, princes and the sacrificial system (v 4)?

### **To finish**

7. Discuss how God's judgement and mercy works out in our lives today.

8. A Bible Brief (from Matthias Media's The Briefing magazine) on this section of Hosea posed the question "Why is faithfulness the key to marriage?" which assumes that faithfulness *is* the key to marriage.  
 (a) Faithfulness is important in marriage but is it the key? What is the key to marriage?

(b) Is faithfulness the key to Christianity?

## Study 4, Hosea chs 4-5

### Getting started

1. Consider this scenario: You meet a middle aged married couple who come to your church for the first time. They begin to attend regularly and you get to know them fairly well. Eventually they ask you how to become a Christian. While you are trying to answer their question they interrupt you and ask what is sin? How would you answer them?



(Sin = no faithfulness, love or acknowledgement of God. [Hosea Series Overview – 2018](#) by Ben Molyneux.)

Listen to Andrew Bartz at a Gospel Conversations Q and A, 7/9/2018, [HellHope7QandAsinAndrewBartz.mp3](#)

		You <b>don't</b> trust them		You <b>do</b> trust them
They <b>don't</b> intend good towards you	!	enmity	!	vulnerable
They <b>do</b> intend good towards you	!	alienation	!	intimacy

2. (a) How big a role does sin play in your practical everyday life?
- (b) Do you think more about sin when you go to church than when you live your life outside of church? Why/why not?
- (c) Do we think of ourselves as terrible sinners, constantly reminding ourselves of our sin like Hosea constantly reminds Israel of their sin, or do we think more positively about ourselves as saints, made in the image of God, sons and heirs of God?

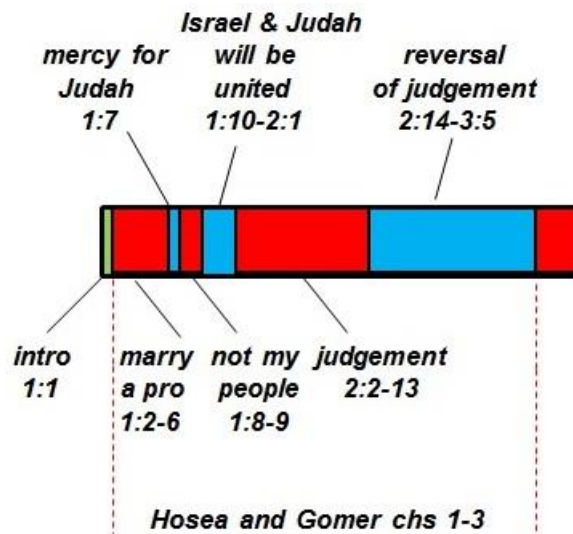
(i) Which of these 2 ways of thinking should we use day by day?

Which one is better for our self-esteem?

(c) Are you sinning if you don't think often enough about sin? Why/why not?

### The story so far . . .

In ch 1 God told Hosea to marry a prostitute and have children by her. So he married Gomer and called his son, "Jezreel", his daughter, "Not Loved", and another son, "Not My People". This was an enacted parable to show that Israel had prostituted herself to other gods and God would not love them or treat them as his people. In ch 2 Gomer's adulterous nature is likened to the way Israel has gone after other gods. God will judge Israel for this but he will later reverse his anger and lead her back to him. In ch 3 Gomer has left Hosea for another lover. God tells Hosea to buy her back and love her as his wife again. Similarly, God loves his people and they will come back to him.



### Bible

3. Read Hosea ch 4.  
Verse 3.

Meanwhile to us, with our modern interest in ecology, born of our new ability to make a desert of the world, the ensuing picture of a poisoned environment in verse 3 is all too familiar. But there is not reason to take it as describing Hosea's contemporary scene (as do RSV and JB), for the tenses are those that normally indicate the future. It is a preview of God's judgment on corporate sin, which 'when it is full-grown brings forth death' on a wider scale than had once seemed possible.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 48.

Verse 4:

NIV But let no one bring a charge, let no one accuse another, for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest.

ESV Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest

NASB Yet let no one find fault, and let none offer reproof; For your people are like those who contend with the priest.

KJV Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.

RSV Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest.

HCSB But let no one dispute; let no one argue, for My case is against you priests.

Whatever we may make of verse 4 (which is not as simple as it may look in our versions), verse 6 removes all doubt that God's chief target is – in modern terms – the clergy. We can use that rough equivalent because it is the priests in their neglected capacity as teachers, not as sacrificers, who are now under fire.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 49.

Verse 5, **Your mother**, the tribe of Levi into which all priests were born.

From New Bible Commentary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition p 708.

Verse 7: The **Glory** mentioned was the proud position in Israel that the priests occupied as the interpreters of Yahweh. A possible alternative reading may be: 'My glory they have exchanged for shame'. The priests have been making a fat living off the superstitions of the people. The word for sinned here means 'missed the mark', as when shooting an arrow. Israel had missed her aim, and had hit the wrong target.

From Hosea by G. A. F. Knight (Torch) p 69.

### Verse 15, **Gilgal and Beth Aven**

*Gilgal* should have been a place of happy memories: it was the first encampment (Jos 4:19-24), and the scene of the first Passover in the promised land (Jos 5:9-12; cf. Mi 6:5). But it was the place where Saul was dethroned (1 Sam 15:21-31) and later a centre of idolatry (Hosea 9:15, 12:11, Amos 4:4). *Bethaven* ('house of iniquity'); near Bethel (Jos 7:2). It is possibly an ironic allusion to Bethel but it most likely refers to a pagan shrine left undisturbed.

From New Bible Commentary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition p 708.

### **Ephraim and Judah**

Abraham – Isaac – Jacob. Jacob had 12 sons and a daughter (Gen chs 29 – 35). Judah was Jacob's 4<sup>th</sup> son and Joseph was Jacob's 11<sup>th</sup> son. God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Gen 32:28) and all of Jacob's sons had families that become the tribes of Israel. Instead of a tribe of Joseph, Joseph's 2 sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, form 2 half tribes. Ephraim's descendants became one of the most prestigious of the twelve tribes of Israel. It was the Ephraimite, Jeroboam, who was responsible for splitting the ten northern tribes, including Ephraim, from the southern tribes during the reign of Rehoboam. The prophets often use '**Ephraim**' as an alternative expression for 'Israel'. . . . **Judah** is the tribe from which King David and all the kings of the southern kingdom come and, for this reason, 'Judah' is often used to describe the whole southern kingdom.

From Two Cities Isaiah by Andrew Reid and Karen Morris p 32.

(a) Many sins are mentioned in this passage but which one does God condemn repeatedly?

(b) Why is there so much focus on this sin?

(c) (i) How does v 1 sum up this chapter?

(ii) Why is faithfulness, love and knowledge of God essential for life?  
Unbelievers have none of those things yet they still live.

## 4. Read Hosea ch 5.

### Verse 1, **Mizpah and Tabor**

The basic meaning of the word [Mizpah] is 'watchtower' or 'place of watching'. . . . referring to a town of Benjamin (Josh 18:26), in the neighbourhood of Gibeon and Ramah (1 Kgs 15:22). In Hosea's time it would probably have been the site of a religious shrine.

**Tabor**: A notable mountain rising from the Plain of Jezreel . . . it was the scene of an idolatrous shrine in Hosea's day.

From Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone pp 60, 62.

### Verse 7.

[T]he fertility rites which produced a crop of bastards ('alien children') in both senses of the word, literal and spiritual. All this may explain the cryptic mention of the disastrous 'new moon' [see p 19] in verse 7 . . . The very festivals that were relied on to placate God would be the sharpest provocation of Him.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 59.

### Verse 8.

The place-names that open this oracle (8) straddle the border of the two kingdoms – a warning that the invader would penetrate Israel right to its southernmost extremity, to the alarm of the Benjaminite Gibeon and Ramah, which lay only just beyond that boundary, even as the doomed Beth-aven lay just within it.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 61.

### Verse 12, **moth**. See also Job 13:28.

More probably 'pus', 'rot' = putrefaction. These both come from *within* the human body. Here we touch upon the mystery of evil. Both Judah and Israel have free-will to love and to cherish their divine Husband. But



they have chosen otherwise. Therefore God himself will be their destruction working as a destroying agency from within.

From Hosea by G. A. F. Knight p 75.

(a) What does it mean for Ephraim/Israel that the Lord knows them (v 3)?

(b) (i) What is the nature of God's judgement of Israel (see Hosea 5:8-15, 6:5)?

(ii) Does God punish us for our sins? Why/why not?

(iii) What might the consequences be for us for similar failures?

(c) What does it mean to seek the Lord's face (Hosea 5:15)?

5. (a) Can we seek the Lord's face (Ex 33:20-23, Gen 32:30, Num 6:25, 2 Chr 7:14, Ps 24:1-6, Is 6:5, 1 Cor 13:12, 1 Tim 6:16, 1 Pet 3:12, Rev 22:1-5)? Why/why not?

(b) *How* so we see the Lord's face?

First, the ways we *cannot* see God:

1. We can't see God with our physical eyes for the simple reason that he is a spirit, and he doesn't have a body. That is probably at least part of what Paul means when he says that Christ is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (Col 1:15).

2. We can't see God even spiritually with unmediated directness. This is partly owing to our sinfulness and partly owing, perhaps, to our creaturely weakness. He is too great, too bright, too glorious, and we could not live if we saw him with unmediated directness. We must always have Christ our Mediator as a go-between. And I think that is what Jesus meant when he says in John 6:45-46 "It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me - not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father."

Now, when it says, "except he who is from God; he has seen the Father," he means, not with physical eyes. The Son of God didn't have physical eyes before the incarnation, and that is what he is contrasting our seeing with. Only the Son can see the Father with non-physical, unmediated, direct seeing. We cannot see God spiritually the way the Son of God in unmediated directness can see him. So, those are the two ways we can't see God when we use the word "see" in different ways.

Here are the two ways we *can* see God:

1. We use the word "see" to mean that we finally understand and discern the beauty and glory of God after being blind to it. Like when we say: Oh, now I see. Our soul is tuned in to the glory so that the glory of God that shines through the gospel is seen as glorious, and we are no longer spiritually blind to it. That is the first way we see him.

2. And the second way is that, in the narrative of the Bible, we see the glory of God and finally we will see him face to face through Christ — by seeing Christ. So, John 1:14-18 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. . . . No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” So, we see God by seeing Jesus. And 1 John 3:2 “We know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”

So, the implication is: Pursue purity of heart, purity of faith, purity of life so that your heart is able to see God’s beauty as what it really is in the Scripture, and so that, when he comes or when he calls us in death, we will see him face to face and be glorified with him.

From John Piper [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org)

## To finish

6. Play BattleHymnRepublicMormonTchoir.mp3  
(a) What is this song all about?

### **Battle Hymn of the Republic** (6 verses originally)

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;  
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;  
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword;  
His truth is marching on.  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.

**I have seen Him in the watch fires of a hundred circling camps  
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;  
I can read His righteous sentence in the dim and flaring lamps;  
His day is marching on.**

Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.  
[originally ...His day is marching on]

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,  
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:  
As He died to make men holy, let us live to make men free;  
**[originally ...let us die to make men free]**  
While God is marching on.  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.  
[originally ...While God is marching on]

Above are verses 1, 2 and 5. The other verses are:

3. I have read a fiery gospel writ in **burnished rows of steel:**  
"As ye deal with my **contemners**, so with you my grace shall deal";  
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,  
Since God is marching on.

4. **He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;**  
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-seat;  
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant, my feet!  
Our God is marching on.

Howe's original manuscript differed slightly from the published version. Most significantly, it included a final verse:

6. He is coming like the glory of the morning on the wave,  
He is Wisdom to the mighty, He is Succour to the brave,  
So the world shall be His footstool, and the soul of Time His slave,  
Our God is marching on.



Julia Ward Howe modified the words of two songs, "Canaan's Happy Shore" and "John Brown's Body". The new song suggested that the soldiers she passed [during the American Civil War 1861-1865] were fighting to build God's Kingdom on earth. In the very first line she proclaimed that this was no common historical event unfolding before them; this war was being fought to bring about "the glory of the coming of the Lord." In other words, crushing the South was part of a much larger series of events—the Second Coming of Christ and the realization of God's kingdom on earth. In the second and third lines, Howe made it even clearer that God was striding alongside man in his resolution to wipe out the evil that plagued the nation. God was trampling things, shooting lightning, and swinging a terrible sword. And for those slow to get the point, Howe stressed again in the first lines of the second verse that God had sided with the North: "I have seen Him in the watch fires of a hundred circling camps."

Nations and armies almost always manage to find God on their side, but "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" employed Biblical passages and quickly recognizable Christian phrases to make a very specific argument. God did not just favour the Union; He was marching alongside the Union soldiers as they paved the way for the Second Coming of His Son and the realization of His kingdom on earth.

From [www.shmoop.com](http://www.shmoop.com)

(b) Why do you think Hosea is so much about the themes of sin and judgement?

(c) What does Jesus' death and resurrection teach us about the defeat of God's enemies?

## Study 5, Hosea chs 6-7

### Getting started

1. The Handmaid's Tale is an American TV series based on a 1985 Margaret Atwood novel by the same name. In the near future, fertility rates have collapsed as a result of sexually transmitted diseases and environmental pollution. The government of "Gilead" rules the former United States in the aftermath of a civil war. Society is run by male Christian fundamentalists called "Commanders". Women are subjugated and by law are not allowed to work for themselves, own property, handle money, or read. Worldwide infertility has resulted in the conscription of the few remaining fertile women in Gilead, called "Handmaids". They are assigned to the homes of the ruling elite where they must submit to ritualized sex with their Commander in order to become pregnant and bear children. Other classes of women are "Marthas", who are housekeepers and cooks, "Wives", who are expected to run their households, women prisoners are called "Unwomen" and are worked to death clearing toxic waste in the Colonies, "Aunts" train and oversee the Handmaids and "Jezebels" are prostitutes in secret brothels catering to the elite ruling class.

Everything in Gilead (Hosea 6:8, 12:11) has a Biblical basis.

Commanders rule because man was made in the image of God while woman was created to be his helper (Genesis 2:18) and the head of a woman is a man (1 Cor 11:3).

Handmaids are given to Commanders because Sarai couldn't have children (at first) so she gave her handmaid, Hagar, to Abram (Gen 16). When Rachel can't get pregnant she gives Jacob her handmaid, Bilhah (Gen 30). Handmaids are saved by bearing children (1 Tim 2:15) and are not to be given any anaesthetics when giving birth (Gen 3:16).

Wives are given the children borne by Handmaids (Gen 30:1).

Women are to grow their hair long (1 Cor 11:15).

Marthas derive their name from the biblical Martha, Mary's sister, who's more interested in preparing food and serving than listening to Jesus' teachings (Luke 10).

Transgressions of the law are dealt with most severely e.g. the death penalty is given for adultery (Lev 20:10) and homosexuality (Lev 20:13). Women are not allowed to be educated but Serena, the wife of Commander Waterford, asks an assembly of Commanders if the daughters of Wives could be allowed to read. As punishment for her "sin" Serena has a finger cut off (and one of the Wives comments that the penalty used to be a hand – Matt 5:30).

(a) If Commanders can justify their actions biblically, where have they gone wrong?

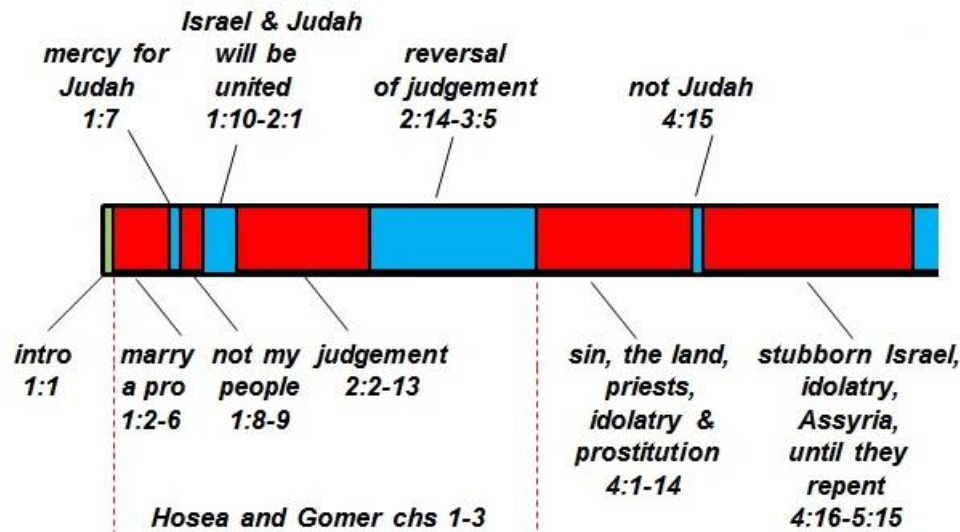


(b) What is dangerous about using the Bible to justify our actions?

(b) How can we make sure we don't make the same mistakes in applying Hosea to our lives?

### The story so far . . .

In an enacted parable God tells Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute, which points to how Israel has prostituted herself to other gods. God will punish his people for their sins. Gomer leaves Hosea but God tells him to buy her back and love her as his wife which points to how God will take Israel back and love her as his people (chs 1-3). In chs 4 & 5 God charges Israel for idolatry, prostitution, breaking the law and corruption in the priesthood. As judgement Israel will be taken away in exile. Ch 5 ends with the note of hope that God's people will admit their guilt and seek the Lord.



## Bible

2. Read Hosea 6:1-10.  
 (a) Do you think the sentiments in vv 1-3 are genuine? Why/why not?

(b) By referring to the passage, what is the evidence for true repentance?



(c) How do people in our day show their repentance?

John Chapman explains **repentance** as follows:

In essence, repentance is a change of mind towards God with an accompanying change of behaviour. It is the point at which I admit that I have rebelled against God's rightful rule over my life and I declare my intention to obey God in the future to the best of my ability.

A genuine repentance would require that where my rebellion against God involved other people as well then I would need to make restitution whenever that was possible. . . .

Repentance is not basically feeling sorry. . . . Some of our sins make us feel bad. Others leave us fairly unaffected. Some make us feel guilty, others hardly cause a ripple across our pond. You may feel really sorry about something you have done, but have no real desire to start living a new life under Christ's authority. You may feel a strong sense of relief when something which has really been bothering you moves on. That is not repentance. It is possible to experience real sorrow and not be repentant. On the other hand you can be truly repentant and not feel sorry. . . .

1. *You can be sorrowful and not be repentant.* In repentance the question is not "Are you sorry?", but "Why are you sorry?" Is it because you feel bad or because you have sinned against God and have turned your back on Him. . . .

2. *You can be repentant and not sorrowful.* Jesus tells the story about a farmer and his two sons – "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

'I will not,' he answered, but later changed his mind [repented] and went.

Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing.

He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

Which of the two did what his father wanted?" (Matthew 21:28-32).

You can imagine the situation. The father comes to the first son, "Go work in the vineyard," he says.

Whether in his mind or out aloud you can hear the son say, "I'm sick of this place, I'm sick of the farm and I'm sick of work! I'm not going." He doesn't like it. But finally he repents and the reason we know that he did



repent was that he went to work. I dare say he didn't like the farm or the farm work any more when he went, than when he said that he wouldn't go. But he did change his mind and exercised his will and obeyed. The second boy was full of good feelings toward his father but he was no real son, he said one thing and meant another. He changed his mind and exercised his will and disobeyed.

From A Fresh Start by John Chapman pages 152-156.

(d) Who should repent?

(e) Do Christians need to repent? What difference does it make if Christians repent since they are already saved?

3. (a) Why is God's desire for Israel described in relational terms not religious categories (v 6)?

(b) (i) What would be similar religious categories in a 21<sup>st</sup> century context?

(ii) How can we avoid getting too caught up in our religious categories in order to engage with God in relational terms?

(c) What are the 5 characteristics of God that are revealed in this chapter?

(d) Do you think vv 1-2 are a reference to Jesus' death and resurrection? Why/why not?

4. Read Hosea 6:11-7:26.

(a) What are Israel's sins in this passage?

(b) How will God discipline (v 12) or punish Israel?

### **To finish**

5. Is the purpose of God's justice to discipline, punish or correct people? Give reasons for your answer.

## Study 6, Hosea chs 8-9

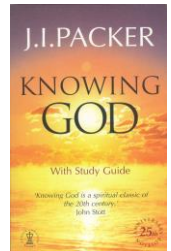
### Getting started

1. Consider the following scenario: A middle aged couple have been coming to your church regularly over the past couple of months. They seek you out for a chat every Sunday but one day they don't show up. They don't come on the next 2 Sundays either. The minister is beginning to get worried and before he asks you if you know what has happened he asks you if you know them.

In this context (a) what does it mean to know someone?

(b) What is the difference between knowing someone and knowing someone well?

(c) In what sense do you know the Lord (Hosea 6:3a, 8:2, Heb 8:11 = Jer 31:31-34)?



NIV Hos 6:3a "Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him."

ESV Hos 6:3a "Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD"

RSV Hos 6:3a "Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD"

NIV Hos 8:2 "Israel cries out to me, 'O our God, we acknowledge you!'"

ESV Hos 8:2 "To me they cry, 'My God, we – Israel - know you'"

NASB Hos 8:2 "They cry out to Me, 'My God, we of Israel know you'"

KJV Hos 8:2 "Israel shall cry unto me, 'My God, we know thee'"

RSV Hos 8:2 "To me they cry, 'My God, we Israel know thee'"

Then the call, Let us know, let us press on to know the *LORD* [Hos 6:3], lifts the appeal decisively above the plane of mere national survival, to that of a growing relationship with God. This anticipates not only the climax of the great verse 6, 'the knowledge of God', but also our Lord's own definition of the content of eternal life, as to 'know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent' (Jn 17:3). It is, after all, a *marriage* that God is concerned with; nothing less.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 66.

(d) What does it mean that the Lord knows us (Hosea 5:3a, Matt 7:21-23 and John 10:14)?

NIV Hos 5:3a "I know all about Ephraim; Israel is not hidden from me."

ESV Hos 5:3a "I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me."

NASB Hos 5:3a "I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from Me."

KJV Hos 5:3a "I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me."

RSV Hos 5:3a "I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me."

. . . the deep thrust of God's knowledge, however painful it may initially be, is seen as something to be welcomed, for it means that He knows the worst, and yet persists with us.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 58.

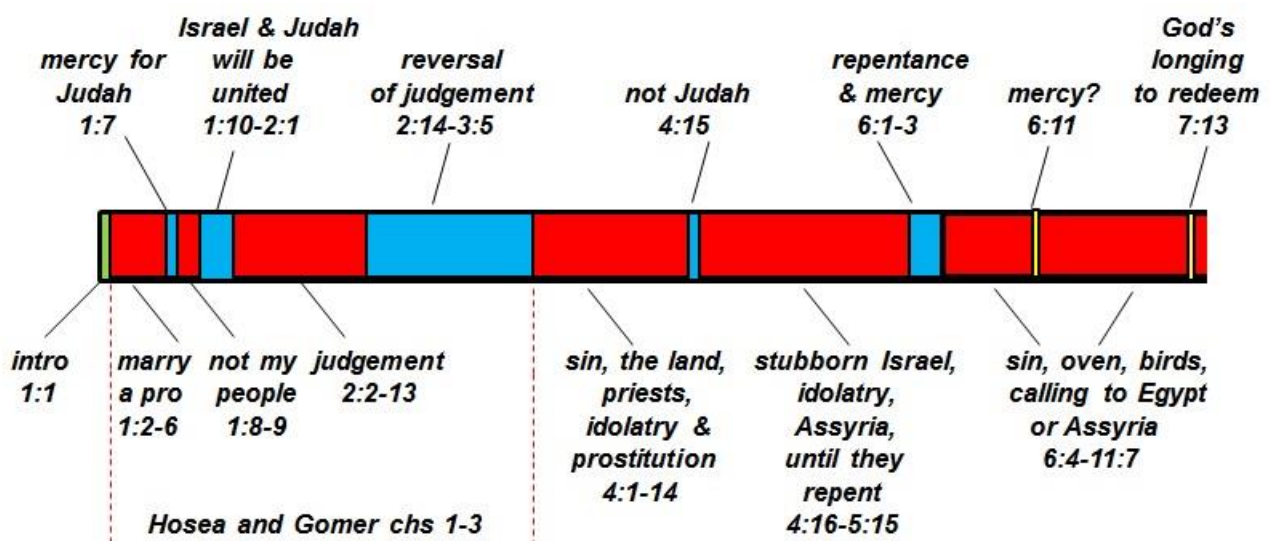
The new covenant achieves intimacy between God and humanity

1. Inward not outward i.e. not robotically followed practices and procedures, but deep inward intimacy with the spirit of God that makes us privy to his desires and hopes and plans

2. Knowledge of God is the primary outcome i.e. very much described in educational and learning terms not moral terms. "No-one will have to teach his neighbour, saying 'Know the Lord' but all will know me from the least to the greatest" [Heb 8:11]
  3. Universal and widespread and non-hierarchical knowledge of God among the new humanity i.e. no intermediaries necessary
  4. Thus God achieves what he aimed for in the sanctuary – communion and intimacy between God and mankind.
  5. This overshadows the 'forgiveness' attribute which is the means to the end. We are forgiven and cleansed in order that we may know God. Hence the forgiveness and cleansing aspect of the new covenant is added as postscript at the end, and gets less emphasis than the intimacy benefit.
- From "Hebrews part 4: Jesus and the reverse incarnation" 7/8/2015 by Tony Golsby-Smith.

### The story so far . . .

In an enacted parable God tells Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute, which points to how Israel has prostituted herself to other gods. God will punish Israel for her sins and send her into exile. In ch 6 Hosea calls on Israel to return to the Lord and God weighs up their sins against his longing to redeem them (7:13).



### Bible

2. Read Hosea 8:1-6.
  - (a) What do you think the trumpet might be for (v 1)?
  - (b) Did Israel know God (v 2)? Why/why not?
  - (c) What does God mean by not knowing that Israel set up princes (v 4)?
  - (d) What might the calf of Samaria be referring to (vv 5-6)?

The golden calf . . . famous first appearance was, outrageously, at the foot of Mount Sinai itself and at the instigation of the future high priest, Aaron (Ex 32:1ff). . . Later, just after Solomon, Jeroboam I set up two **golden calves**, one at Bethel and one at Dan, as rallying-points for his breakaway kingdom of the north, Hosea's native land, as counter-attractions to the temple at Jerusalem (1 Ki 12:27-30).

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 78.

3. (a) What does the expression “you reap what you sow” mean?

Read Hosea 8:7-10.

(b) What has Ephraim = Israel sown?

(c) How is this like wind?

(d) What will Ephraim reap?

(e) How is this like a whirlwind (v 7, 4:19)?

In 4:19, God warns that a ‘wind has wrapped them in its wings’ (or a “whirlwind will sweep them away”; NIV). In 8:7, it would appear that this whirlwind has now come (or, at the very least, is imminent). An added dimension, which would be helpful to pick up on, is the connection between sowing and reaping. Hosea 8:7 fills out 4:19 by showing that the whirlwind is the subsequent and inevitable reaping of the ways in which God’s people have sown. They have sown the wind by pursuing things that are empty and worthless; they will therefore reap the whirlwind.

From Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone p 84.

(f) What has Assyria got to do with it (v9)?

4. Read Hos 8:11-14.

(a) What has Ephraim = Israel done wrong?

(b) What is God going to do about it?

Assyria is coupled with Egypt as their place of exile, and Assyria was in fact to be their conqueror and captor; so Egypt probably received only refugees. Yet this word ‘return’ is used in 9:3 and 11:5 as well as here, for they had spiritually retraced their steps to Egypt long before they did so physically.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 82.

5. Read Hos 9:1-3.

Verse 1: The Baals were thought to give grain in exchange for devotion.

From New Bible Commentary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition p 712.

**Threshing floor** [verse 2] – a flat surface prepared for the threshing of grain. The threshing floor was usually located at the edge of a village, frequently on a large flat rock outcropping.

**Threshing** – removing the kernel of grain from its stalk. Different methods were used to accomplish this. The most basic method, beating the grain, was used by farmers with a small amount of grain to thresh. These farmers sometimes would walk their animals over the grain to thresh it. For larger operations, animal-drawn machines were used. The most common of these was the threshing sledges (Is 41:15). Made of planks with rocks or metal attached to its underside, the sledge was pulled back and forth over the grain.

From New Illustrated Bible Dictionary p 1248.

Verse 2: Though their harvest is prolific their need will exceed it. Pursuit of pleasure, or even the satisfaction of natural religious instincts rather than knowing God Himself, is sure to disappoint.

From New Bible Commentary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition p 712.

(a) What was the connection between God's people and Egypt?

(b) What do you think Hosea might mean when he says "Ephraim shall return to Egypt"?

6. Read Hos 9:4-9.

Verse 6: **Memphis**: An ancient Egyptian city situated in northern Egypt, on the west side of the Nile River. It was the capital in early Egyptian history before power was transferred to Thebes. However, even after this it nevertheless remained an important city. Twenty pyramids and the famous Sphinx of Memphis still remain today.

Verse 9: **Gibeah**: a major religious centre in Hosea's day, with judgement being issued against it for the false religion carried out there.

From Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone pp 60, 58.

(a) What has happened to Israel's culture (vv 4-5)?

(b) What *will* happen (vv 6-7)?

(c) (i) What was the prophet's job (v8)?

### Watchman

Picture an Israelite village or city in time of invasion, or the army encampment during a military campaign, Sentries would be posted by day and night on a tower or some elevated place, and charged with the crucial task of watching for any movements of the enemy. If they spotted any such danger, it was their responsibility to blow a trumpet or horn, or call out loudly, to awaken the rest of the inhabitants or army to the situation. Early warning would save lives. Sentry duty was thus an awesome responsibility. If the enemy attacked and people got killed, who was to blame? If the sentry had done his duty and given prompt warning, whatever happened next was not his responsibility. But if he had failed to see, or failed to raise the alarm, even if people died in battle because of their own cowardice or lack of preparation, the sentry would still bear some responsibility for his own failure to warn them [see also 1 Sam 14:16, 2 Sam 13:34, 18:24].

From The Message of Ezekiel by Christopher J. H. Wright p 65.

(ii) What has gone wrong with prophecy (vv 7-9)?

7. Read Hos 9:10-17.

Verse 10: The story of **Baal-peor** (10b), which can be read in Numbers 25, is very apt, since it combined the two kinds of unchastity which Hosea had to fight: the physical and the spiritual. It was not only the Moabite women but their local Baal that had seduced the men of the exodus; and we have already heard Hosea's protests against the same two levels of adultery in his day.

Verse 11: The quickest thing to disappear, . . . is **glory** – whether in the sense of self-respect (for conscience must be silenced by cynicism), or of reputation, or, more profoundly, of the glory of God's presence. A nation may be spiritless enough to shrug off the loss of glory, but what is left 'when I (the Lord) depart from them' (12)? The name Ichabod [means 'where is the glory' or 'no glory'] marked such a moment, or so at least it seemed, in an earlier generation, when the ark of God was captured (1 Sam 4:21); and Ezekiel would later have a vision of God's glory withdrawing from Jerusalem (Ezk 8:6, 11:23). For our comfort we can remember the sequel to that capture and, in Ezekiel 43:2ff. to that withdrawal; but the people whom Hosea was addressing would soon be losing not only their glory but their corporate identity as the northern kingdom, for ever.



Verse 15: **Gilgal** [see map p 18] is a case in point: hallowed by its altars (12:11) and its famous names and moments (Joshua's first foothold in the promised land, Saul's first kingly glory, David's welcome back from exile [Jos 4:19, 1 Sam 11:14f, 2 Sam 19:15] – all of which leave God entirely unimpressed. Far from hallowed, it is crammed with evil; and the only reference to its history (if such it is in verse 15a) is to its role in forfeiting God's favour for the nation as a whole.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner pp 88-90.

(a) Hosea uses metaphors involving fruit (vv 10, 16, 10:1), a palm tree (v 13), tree roots (v 16), and children (vv 11-14, 16). How do these metaphors describe Israel?

(b) What is God going to do because Ephraim has not listened/obeyed God?

NIV "My God will reject them because they have not obeyed him; they will be wanderers among the nations."  
ESV "My God will reject them because they have not listened to him; they shall be wanderers among the nations."

NASB "My God will cast them away because they have not listened to him; and they will be wanderers among the nations."

KJV "My God will cast them away because they did not harken unto him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations."

RSV "My God will cast them off because they have not harkened to him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations."

#### 8. **Video**

The Nooma video, #5, Noise, by Rob Bell is one of 24 made between 2002 and 2009. In each video Rob Bell takes an aspect of Christian life and expresses it in an interesting and challenging way. This video was one of his early ones and it is a little bit "dated". While watching this video you will need to position yourself to be able to read the writing on the screen.

(a) What are your first impressions of this video?



(b) What did you think when the screen went blank?

(c) What is the main point of the video?

9. (a) Do you surround yourself with sound? Why/why not?

(b) How does God speak to us?

(c) Are we *afraid* of what God might say to us? Why/why not?

(d) How can you *listen* to what God might have to say to you?

(e) What value should we put on listening to God?

For example, what value should we put on listening to God compared with the values we put on:

- prayer
- church
- work
- evangelism
- watching TV
- holidays

10. Rob Bell refers to Matt ch 11. Read Matt 11:25-30.

Context: In the first four chapters of Matthew we read about the coming of the king heralded by angels and a scruffy prophet called John the Baptist. After being commissioned by the Holy Spirit Jesus describes, in chapters 5 to 7, what the kingdom of heaven is like under his rule. In chapters 8 to 15 we get glimpses of what it will be like to live with Jesus as king – the sick healed, the dead raised, demons cast out, evil opposed, people fed, relationships restored. In chapter 11 Jesus answers the doubts that John the Baptist had about him and then announces God's judgement on cities where the people have ignored his mighty works.

(a) What sort of “rest” is Jesus talking about?

(b) How does Jesus give us rest?

(c) What has this got to do with listening to God?

Rob Bell usually finishes with a “may you” statement e.g. “may you rely on Jesus for your assurance of salvation” but he doesn’t do that in this video, so I’ve made one up:

May you make room in your lives to listen to God in silence.

### To finish

11. To finish with the subject of listening to God read Heb 1:1-2 and John 1:1-14.

(a) How has Jesus spoken to us?

(b) Does Jesus still speak to us? How?

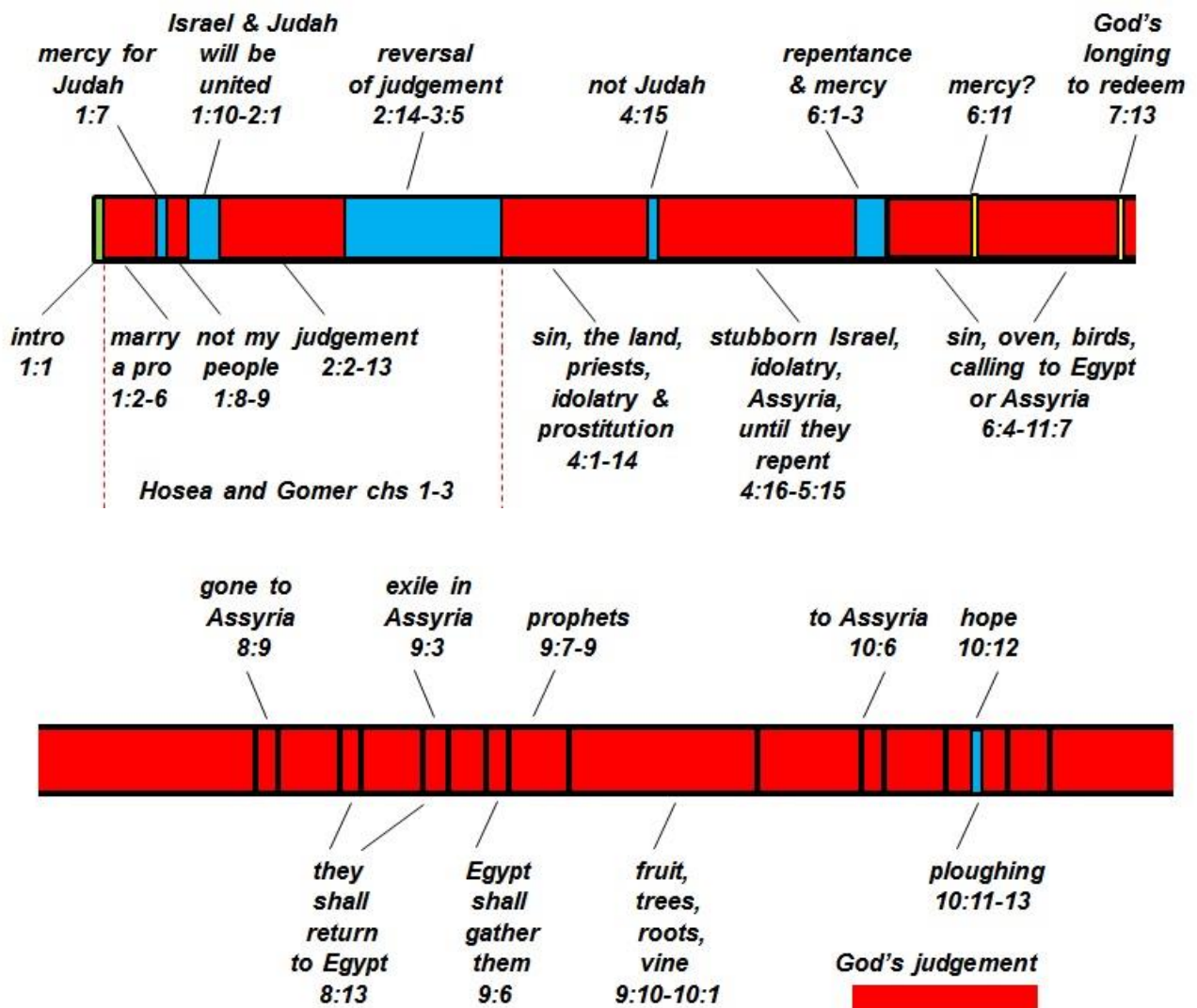
## Study 7, Hosea chs 10-11

### Getting started

- How might you respond to a friend who says, "The God of the Old Testament is an angry god, and the God of the New Testament is a compassionate god. I can believe in the latter but not the former"?

### The story so far . . .

In an enacted parable God tells Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute, which points to how Israel has prostituted herself to other gods. God will punish Israel for her sins and send her into exile. In ch 6 Hosea calls on Israel to return to the Lord and God weighs up their sins against his longing to redeem them (7:13). In chs 8 to 9 God describes the sins of Israel and his punishment which includes sending them into exile at the hands of Assyria.



### Bible

- Read Hosea 10:1-10.

Verse 2: **Pillars**, or upright standing stones with religious significance, were used by both the Canaanites and the Israelites. In Canaanite worship places, a stone pillar was used as a symbol for the male

god, usually Baal (2 Ki 17:10). Moses erected twelve pillars, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, beside the altar he built to call upon the covenant (Ex 24:4).

From New Illustrated Bible Dictionary p 994.

Verse 3: no king.

We might well wonder whether arrogance or apathy is the greater of two evils for a nation. For Israel, the mood had swung between the two, marked by their changing attitudes towards the throne: at one moment pinning all their hopes to kingship ('Give me a king and princes', 13:10), at another cheapening it with debauchery and tearing it apart with assassinations (7:3-7); finally, here in verse 3, shrugging it off as meaningless, along with everything else, from the Lord downwards. Only their superstition, their talisman the golden calf, will awaken any sense of loss by its removal.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 93.

Verse 5: calf-idol of Beth Aven see notes in Study 4 and 6.

Verse 8: **Aven**. The nickname 'Aven' ('iniquity') for these holy places, and the comment that they are 'the sin of Israel'. together say the last word on man-made religion.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 95

Shorthand for Beth-aven. From Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone p 56.

Verse 9: **Gibeah**: a major religious centre in Hosea's day, with judgement being issued against it for the false religion carried out there.

From Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone p 58.

(a) What sins of Israel are described here?

(b) What is God going to do about it?

### 3. Read Hosea 10:11--15.

Verse 11: **Yoke**. The rendering of several Hebrew and Greek words, used either literally for the wooden frame joining two animals (usually oxen), or metaphorically as describing one individual's subjection to another.

From the New Bible Dictionary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition p 1260.

Verse 11: **Harrow** (ESV) = break up the ground (NIV).

Verse 14: **Shalman** is most probably short for Shalmaneser of Assyria: either Shalmaneser V (727-722 BC), whose march to besiege Samaria could well have taken him through **Beth-arbel** (? the Arbela of 1 Macc 9:2 near the west shore of the lake of Galilee); or alternatively Shalmaneser III of the previous century (859-824 BC), who campaigned against Syria, Hauran and Israel in 841 BC, and whose route could well have included this Arbela or another Arbela near Pella, east of the Jordan.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 99.

What is the element of hope in these verses?

### 4. Read Hosea 11:1-4.

How has God loved Israel?

### 5. Read Hos 11:5-7

What will happen to Israel?

6. Read Hos 11:8-12.

**Verse 8: Admah:** One of the five cities of the plain (Gen 10:19, 14:2, 8), specifically linked with **Zeboiim** (Hos 11:8) and eventually destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut 29:23).

From Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone p 55.

**Verse 9:** But how does this fit in with what in fact transpired? For Ephraim/Israel (the northern kingdom) fell in 722 BC and was deported to Assyria. One answer could be that she was given, after this prophecy, yet another chance to repent. More probably the answer lies in the remnant who threw in their lot with Judah, and whose descendants returned with them from Babylon (1 Chr 9:1-3) to be part of the continuing Israel which meets us in the New Testament as the parent stock of the church.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 105

(a) Describe God's conflicting emotions?

(b) What encouragement comes from God's statement "I am God and not a man" (v 9)?

(c) Where is hope in this chapter?

Why does God move at all to do a work of salvation for a rebellious nation? From the point of view of the Old Testament it is because he is faithful to his covenant made with Abraham as an everlasting covenant (Gen 17:7). God wills to show steadfast love or covenant love to his chosen people (Isaiah 54:7-8, 55:3, Jer 33:10-11, Micah 7:18-20). . . .

God is faithful to the covenant and on that basis he will save a remnant of the people to be his own true possession. Like the judgement oracles [prophecies], the salvation oracles depict two related aspects of saving restoration. God will restore the covenant people to their inheritance and he will also restore the whole universe to a glory which has not been known since man was ejected from Eden.

From Gospel and Kingdom by Graeme Goldsworthy pp 81, 84.

7. **Tzim Tzum** [note: still working on this section, thanks to Ron Winestock for his talks on Tzim Tzum at Gospel Conversations 2013-14.]

A common view of the God of the OT is that he is a harsh God, full of anger and wrath. Examples are not hard to find - God kicks Adam and Eve out of Eden, God wipes out most of humanity with the Flood, God annihilates the people of Canaan so that his own people can live there, God punishes his people for their sin by sending foreign invaders to conquer Israel in 721 BC and Judah in 587 BC.

Contrary to this harsh view of God, Tzim Tzum views God as a god of restraint. A good comparison is made by considering the Sun of our solar system. Nuclear fusion happens in the Sun to produce light and energy. It is so powerful it dissolves matter. The immense energy produced by nuclear fusion is very difficult to contain. This is like God - immensely powerful and impossible for humans to contain. Tzim Tzum is God's power to restrict or contain himself.

An example of God's power is when Moses asks to see God's glory, Ex 33:18. Previous to this request God descends on a mountain with smoke, fire, thunder, lightning and earthquakes (Ex 19). No-one is allowed to get anywhere near this mountain but God lets Moses come up. When Moses asks to see God's glory God puts Moses in a cleft in a rock and covers Moses with his hand until God has passed. Only then is Moses allowed to see God and it is only God's back that he is allowed to see (Ex 33). God is immensely powerful and protects Moses from his power otherwise Moses would die.

Tzim Tzum is an idea developed by Jewish rabbinic philosophers from 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards, peaking in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They studied the Old Testament and there are plenty of instances of God restricting or withdrawing his power rather than releasing the full force of his anger.

This old idea has not been forgotten. Life of Pi was a book written in 2001 and made into a movie in 2012. The story is about Pi who survives a shipwreck and finds himself in a lifeboat with a number of animals. "Tsimtsum" is the name of the ship that sinks on its passage across the Pacific, drowning Pi's family and leaving Pi stranded on a lifeboat. The word "tsimtsum" (or tzim tzum) describes an idea from the Jewish Kabbalah teachings of Isaac Luria, a rabbi and mystic who is mentioned elsewhere in Life of Pi. The concept of Tzim Tzum says that God withdrew or contracted his infinite light in order to create the universe. This purposeful



concealment left “empty space” for the cosmos and free will. The ship's sinking can then be compared to God withdrawing, leaving Pi alone to become an independent person with a strong faith. Pi is exiled from his loved ones and also experiences a religious abandonment, as God allows him to undergo such suffering, but Tzim Tzum implies that such experiences are necessary to grow in faith and independence.

The Jewish rabbis who developed Tzim Tzum didn't study the NT but there are plenty of instances involving Jesus and Tsim Tsum. For example:

1. The Pharisees plotted to kill Jesus but he could have easily killed them first.
2. When Jesus and the disciples went into a Samaritan village they were not welcomed so James & John suggested they call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritan village (Luke 9:54). Jesus could easily have done that but instead he rebukes James and John.

(a) Can you think of other examples where Jesus restricts or contains his power?

- some people believe and follow Jesus, others turn away - Jesus never makes them believe
- at Jesus' arrest he could have slain them all
- at Jesus birth God's immense power was restricted to reside in a weak, vulnerable human
- at the cross Jesus could have summoned angels to defeat his opponents and get down from the cross (Matt 26:53)

(b) Why did Jesus restrain his power in these circumstances?

- not the type of king he wanted for his people
- not the type of kingdom he wanted for his people

(c) How does the idea of Tzim Tzum relate to Hosea?

## To finish

7. Considering the idea of Tzim Tzum how would you now answer Question 1 “How might you respond to a friend who says, “The God of the Old Testament is an angry god, and the God of the New Testament is a compassionate god. I can believe in the latter but not the former”?

## Study 8, Hosea chs 12-13

### Getting started

1. (a) What is hope?



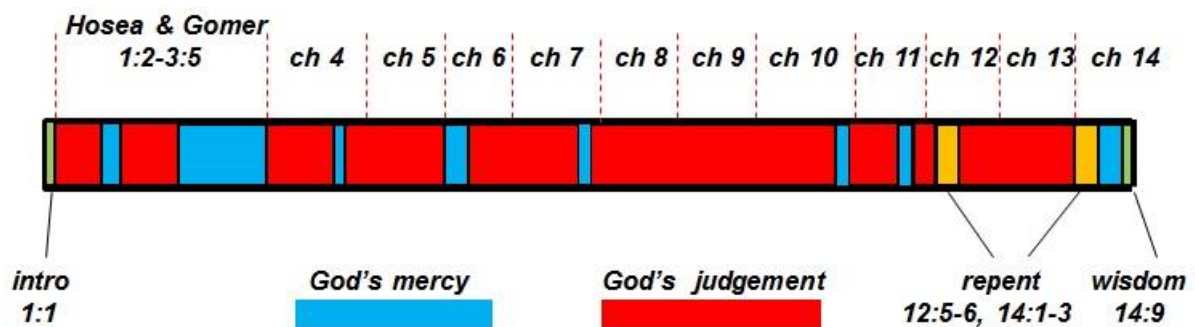
- (b) What are you hoping for?

- (c) What does it mean to call someone a “no hoper”?

- (c) What is the Christian view of heaven?

### The story so far . . .

In an enacted parable God tells Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute, which points to how Israel has prostituted herself to other gods (chs 1-3). God will punish Israel for her sins and send her into exile at the hands of Assyria. Amongst all these words of judgement there are glimmers of hope for God's people (chs 4-10). God has compassion for his people and he will bring them home when they return to him (ch 11).



### Bible

2. Read Hosea 12:1-14.

**Gilead:** Refers to the mountainous country to the east of the Jordan Valley. This area was occupied by the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half-Manasseh.

**Gilgal:** [see map p 18] became a centre of formal and unspiritual worship, eliciting condemnation from prophets such as Hosea (4:15, 9:15, 12:11).

From Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone p 58.

[T]he **prophets** were sent to make men *think*, and to confront them with the signs of their own time and with the living God, who is not shut away timelessly behind His laws and liturgies, but turns upon us ‘the eyes of his glory’ (as Isaiah puts it: Is 3:8 RV) and brings whole nations into judgment.

So – and here is the connection between **verses 10 and 11** – God names actual places, far and near, that are ripening for judgment, and pours fine scorn on pious superstitions, punning on the falsely venerated Gilgal with the disrespectful plural of *gal*, 'a rubble heap'.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 112.

(a) What references does Hosea make to Israel's past history?

**Jacob** was the son of Isaac and Rebekah, and the twin brother of Esau (Genesis 25:23-26). Jacob, meaning "grabber", was born clutching Esau's heel. He eventually received his father's blessing that was meant for Esau. Cheated by his brother, Esau vowed to kill Jacob (Genesis 27:41). Jacob left his home and went to the town of Padan Aram, where his uncle, Laban, lived. At the outset of his journey, near Bethel, Jacob was given a vision by God of Israel's future [Gen28:10-22]: that the Jews would establish their own nation, that they would be scattered like dust to the ends of the earth, that they would have a worldwide impact, and that they would one day return to their homeland. . . . After working seven years as a herdsman for his uncle Laban, Jacob wanted to marry Laban's youngest daughter Rachel. But, Laban deceived Jacob by giving him his eldest daughter, Leah, in marriage. Jacob consented to work another seven years for the permission to marry Rachel. . . . Jacob and his family and went back to Canaan. On that trip, at night Jacob wrestled with an angel, asking for a blessing (Gen 32:24-31. At last the angel blessed him and gave him a new name: Israel ("You have struggled with God.")

From [www.aboutbibleprophecy.com](http://www.aboutbibleprophecy.com).

(b) How do these references connect with Israel's current plight?

In verse 12 Jacob and Israel are used interchangeably. By this means Hosea identifies the behaviour of Israel with that of their eponymous ancestor. Jacob learned from experience, however; Israel had learned nothing.

From Hosea by G. A. F. Knight (Torch) p 114.

3. Read Hosea ch 13.

Verse 1: **Ephraim** counted himself the foremost, as he was indeed the largest tribe of Israel.

Verse 2: Along with their sacrifice 'men kiss calves'! These were young bulls of the Baal cult being the symbol of fertility. So they were kissing their own handywork! How we can hear Hosea's sarcasm!

From Hosea by G. A. F. Knight (Torch) p 116.

**Threshing floor** [verse 2] – a flat surface prepared for the threshing of grain. The threshing floor was usually located at the edge of a village, frequently on a large flat rock outcropping.

**Threshing** – removing the kernel of grain from its stalk. Different methods were used to accomplish this. The most basic method, beating the grain, was used by farmers with a small amount of grain to thresh. These farmers sometimes would walk their animals over the grain to thresh it. For larger operations, animal-drawn machines were used. The most common of these was the threshing sledge (Is 41:15). Made of planks with rocks or metal attached to its underside, the sledge was pulled back and forth over the grain.

From New Illustrated Bible Dictionary p 1248.

Verse 11: In 1 Sam 8:6, 20 we read that Israel cried to Samuel: 'Give us a king to judge (rule) us . . . that we also may be like all the nations' (c.f. John 19:15), thereby rejecting Yahweh from being their king. Thereupon Samuel solemnly warns them of what will happen if they give blind loyalty to a sinful regime (see vv 1 Sam 8:11-18); ' . . . When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you on that day' (v 18 NIV). And so it had now happened in Israel's history.

From Hosea by G. A. F. Knight (Torch) pp 118-119.

The **kings** hold office only by God's consent. The verbs are iterative indicating general practice, but showing that the kingship is God's second best and subject to his will.

From New Bible Commentary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition p 715.

Verses 12 -13: [A] double thrust at Israelite complacency: first by picturing unforgiven sin as a well-kept store of trouble for the future, and then by the analogy of a birth that threatens to go fatally wrong. This second picture combines the tantalizing thought of early promise that has come to nothing, with that of a disaster that no-one can now avert.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 117.

Verse 14: A straight promise, exactly as it is written; a promise to be unfolded by our Lord's great 'ransom' saying in Mark 10:45.

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner p 118.

Verses 15-16: The name **Ephraim** had the attractive sound of 'flourishing' (15a), and had been chosen for that reason: 'For God', said Joseph, 'has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction' (Gen 41:52). In comparison with Judah and some of her southern cousins, the northern kingdom of Ephraim's wealth was as vulnerable to an aggressor as an orchard to an east wind.

And what an aggressor! Assyria was noted for its cruelty in war, and would certainly not stop short of the atrocities which lesser powers allowed themselves. There is a sickening frequency of references to the butchery described in 16b [2 Kings 8:12, 15:16, Ps 137, Is 13:16, Amos 1:13, Nahum 3:10].

From The Message of Hosea by Derek Kidner pp 119-120.

(a) Why is Israel/Ephraim going to be judged?

(b) What will happen when God judges them?

(c) What is the glimmer of hope in this chapter?

4. Play RockyValentinePeteRollins.mp3 – 2 mins – referencing The Twilight Zone "A nice place to visit".

(a) What was Rocky hoping for?

(b) Why was Rocky disappointed?

(c) What is the problem with getting everything you ever wanted?

(d) Compare Rocky's view of heaven and a Christian view of heaven?

(e) Is it better to hope for something than to attain the thing you are hoping for? Why/why not?

5. (a) How is our hope connected with Jesus' resurrection (read 1 Cor 15:12-23)?

Context: Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to answer a number of problems and issues that the church was struggling with i.e. divisions within their group, wisdom and foolishness, sexual immorality, lawsuits among believers, marriage and singleness, food sacrificed to idols, Paul's apostleship, idolatry, headship, eating meals together, spiritual gifts and the resurrection. In chapter 15 Paul writes about the importance of the resurrection of Jesus and describes the resurrection of everyone else.

(b) What does Hos 13:14 mean in its context?

Hosea means to declare first that Israel has forced Yahweh to bring upon her the pains of 'death'. The latter is his figure for the destruction of the nation and for their coming dismissal into exile. But secondly he also declares by means of the figure this amazing and wondrous truth, that even when God's flouted love must act in wrath and judgment, that act of God's is not the end. In Israel's case, God had covenanted with her at mount Sinai in terms of his everlasting and unbreakable *hesedh*. His *hesedh* must therefore be stronger even than death. God must remain faithful to his own nature even when he is compelled to reject the people with whom he has already covenanted to remain loyal and true. Thus it is that God himself can now declare that Israel's 'death' will not be the end of his unique relationship to her.

From Hosea by G. A. F. Knight (Torch) p 120.

(c) Hosea 13:14 is repeated (approximately) in 1 Cor 15:55.

Hos 13:14 "I will deliver this people from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction?"

1 Cor 15:55-57 <sup>55</sup>Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" <sup>56</sup>The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup>But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Read 1 Cor 15:50-57.

What does 1 Cor 15:55 mean in its context?

Many people read this phrase and think, "Shouldn't it say 'The sting of sin is death?' We want to swap 'sill' for 'death' so that the phrase reads the way we think it should—that is, that death is the inevitable result of sin. Because we have all sinned, we will all die. Death follows sin. Death is the sting we are left with because of our sin. . . .

In English, then, we can use the word 'sting' in a subjective sense—that is, "I'm suffering from a bee sting". In this sentence, I have been stung and now have a bee sting. But we can also use the word 'sting' in an objective sense—for example, "A bee's sting". In this phrase, 'sting' does not refer to what I experience, but refers instead to the bee's stinger. . . . So 'sting' can actually refer to a 'stinger'—the pointy bit that a bee can stab you with. . . .

I am convinced that "The sting of death is sin" should be read with the second sense of 'sting' in mind—that is, sin is *death's stinger*. The phrase does not, then, speak about our experience of having been stung; rather, it refers to death's fangs. Sin is death's dangerous weapon. The way death gets you is by stabbing you with sin. Once you sin, you die. The reason that death is the consequence of sin (Rom 6:23) is that sin is the instrument—the stinger by which death claims human beings.

Death is like a funnel-web spider. If it gets its fangs into you, it will claim you and you will die. (Okay, so a funnel-web bite is not necessarily fatal, but you get the point.) The funnel-web can only claim you if it gets its fangs into you. The same goes for death: it can only claim you if you sin. But if you chop the fangs off a funnel-



web, it cannot claim you. It cannot bite you. And if it cannot bite you, its venom cannot affect you, and the funnel-web spider just becomes a furry plaything. It's the same for ' death: if you cut off its fangs—that is, if you cut off sin—death holds no threat. It can't bite you and its lethal venom cannot affect you.

This is exactly the point that Paul is making in 1 Corinthians 15. The logic goes like this: sin has been dealt with by Christ on the cross. He has paid the penalty for sin. With the problem of sin gone, death has lost its power. Death has lost its stinger. Without its stinger, death can no longer claim human lives. This is why resurrection is so important: resurrection from the dead, among other things, means that sin has been conquered. By removing death's stinger, Christ conquered death. Without sin, death is nothing but a furry plaything.

From "The stinger of death" by Con Campbell, article from The Briefing #357, June2008.

### To finish

6. (a) What is the connection between hope and Jesus' resurrection?

(b) Why is Jesus' resurrection so important?



(c) What does Jesus' resurrection mean for your daily life?

## Study 9, Hosea ch 14

### Getting started

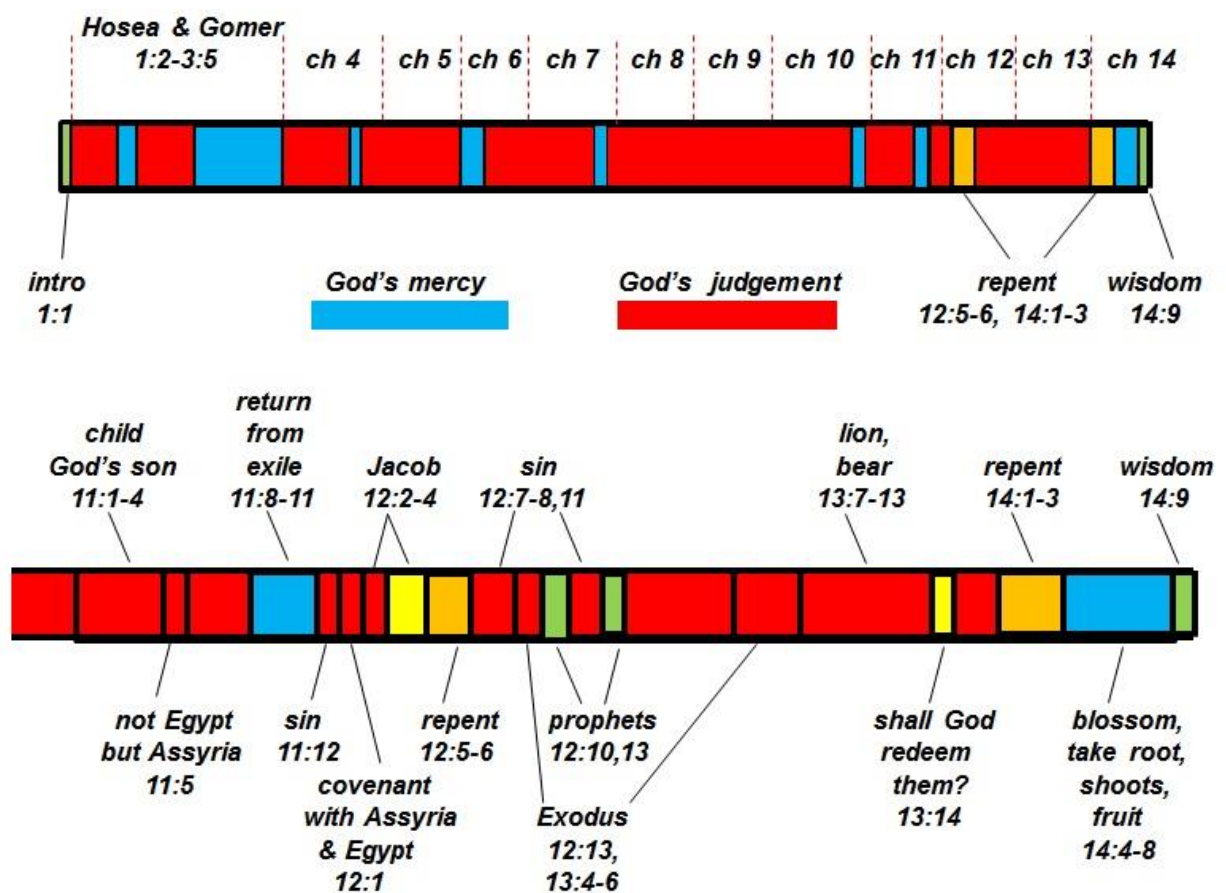
1. (a) What would someone be like if they were “flourishing”?



- (b) How can we help people flourish?

### The story so far . . .

In an enacted parable God tells Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute, which points to how Israel has prostituted herself to other gods. God will punish Israel for her sins and send her into exile at the hands of Assyria. Like Jacob, Israel will eventually have to rely on the Lord. Like the Exodus, God will bring his people out of exile and redeem them.



### Bible

2. Read Hosea 14:1-3  
What does Hosea suggest the people do to show repentance?

3. Read Hosea 14:4-8

Verses 5-7: **Lebanon**

A mountain range in Syria. Sometimes the name is also more loosely applied to the surrounding regions. In biblical times, the Lebanon mountains consisted of two ranges running north and south, and were famous for their forests of gigantic cedars. Fir trees and cypresses also abounded here. The lower mountain slopes supported garden cultivation, olive groves, vineyards, fruit orchards and small cornfields. The fertility and fruitfulness of the region is indicated on many occasions throughout Scripture, including in Hosea 14.

From Return to the Lord Hosea by James Stone p 60.



(a) What will God do?

(b) How will Israel respond?

4. Read Hosea 14:9  
How does this last verse apply to Israel?

5. Look back over the book of Hosea.  
(a) How much is about God's judgement?

(b) How much is about God's mercy?

(c) Why is there so much difference?

6. How would you apply Hosea's message to your own experience and knowledge of God?

**To finish**

7. Before the first study you were asked to skim read Hosea and give your first impressions, your expectations and ask any questions you may have had about the book.  
(a) What are your overall impressions of Hosea?

(b) Did Hosea meet your expectations? Why/why not?

(c) Were all your questions answered? If not, which ones were not answered?

(d) Would you recommend studying Hosea - to other Christian groups?

- to non-Christians?

Why/why not?

(e) What would you like to study next?