

high fidelity

Study 1



INTRODUCTION

Since the glory days of King David & his son Solomon, the path of God's people has been mostly one way away from their God. The kingdom has split and God's people are becoming more and more like the people and nations around them. Despite the warnings of prophets like Amos, of judgment and doom, Israel fails to repent of their unfaithfulness.....

The book of Hosea is a revealing insight into the attitude of a loving God towards an unfaithful people. Hosea's life is something of a soap opera we'll meet his unfaithful wife Gomer, and his unruly kids. But in the end, the message is clear. God is always going to faithful to his people.

Our society today has many problems relating to unfaithfulness in marriage. What are some of them?

What are some ways a person can be unfaithful to their partner? Is it just sleeping around?

Read Hosea 1:1-9

1/ It's tough being a prophet to a people whose hearts have turned away from God. In what way does Hosea deliver his message to Israel?

2/ Hosea's marriage and family are going to be a 'visual aid' to the people of Israel. What effect should this have on the Israelites?

3/ What kind of problems would Hosea face in this unfaithful marriage?

4/ Compare the parentage of the three children from verses 3, 6 and 8. Who is the father of Jezreel? Of Lo Ruhamah? Of Lo Ammi?

5/ It's not tough enough having an unfaithful wife. Hosea has to be a father to children who may not even be his. What sort of difficulties would this cause?

6/ What response would you usually expect from a wife or husband who has been subjected to this kind of treatment?

Without the faithfulness of Hosea, this marriage was doomed from the start. Even though Hosea's heart has been broken, he remains faithful to Gomer. And God's relationship to his people has been exactly like that. Since God promised Abraham He would make him into a great nation, Israel has been exactly like Gomer. They are guilty of the "vilest adultery" in departing from the Lord.

Do a quick health check on the relationship between God and the kings of Israel and Judah who were reigning when God spoke to Hosea (1:1):

King	Verse	Diagnosis
Kings of Judah		
Uzziah (Judah)	2 Kings 15:1-5	
Jotham	2 Kings 15:32-35	
Ahaz	2 Kings 16:1-4	
Hezekiah	2 Kings 18:1-15	
Kings of Israel		
Jereboam	2 Kings 14:23-24	



The birth of Hosea's children represent three oracles of doom for Israel. What are they?

Jezreel
Lo Ruhamah
Lo Ammi

The progressive judgments of God are delivered with each baby. Each one predicting exactly what God said would happen to an unfaithful people. Do you think judgment is inevitable at this point?

What would Israel have to do to avoid judgment?

Israel refused to be faithful to their God, and in 722 BC they were invaded by the king of Assyria and deported.

It seems like Israel's unfaithfulness has finally ended the marriage. They're not God's people, they're not experiencing God's love, and they are not in the promised land. They have become like all the other nations godless.

Read from verse 10 through to 2:1. God hasn't finished with his people. Despite their great unfaithfulness, his intention is *still* to greatly bless them. What are his promises for them?

What questions arise for you from God's great mercy here?

Doesn't God care about the sins of his people?

How can God be both just (and punish sin) and merciful (and accept sinners)? That's a question that leads us all the way to Jesus... and the cross. But more of that in a future study...

Where are YOU in this picture?

It's easy to see ourselves with rose coloured glasses. Maybe as you read about Hosea you imagine yourself as the “faithful partner” in the story. But the bad news is, Hosea's unfaithful wife Gomer is a picture of Israel... and Israel is a picture of all of us.

Do you have trouble with the view that people are basically “unfaithful” to God? Take a look at Romans 3:9-12 and 21-24.