

#34: Hosea

Monte F. Shelley, 19 Sept 2010

Quotes

- Never look a gift horse in the mouth, and don't get too close to the other end, either. (Maxine)
- God commanded us to love our neighbors and to love our enemies. ... Usually they are the same people!
- God's purpose in sending prophets to announce His punishments is precisely to make them unnecessary. (EJ-Jonah)

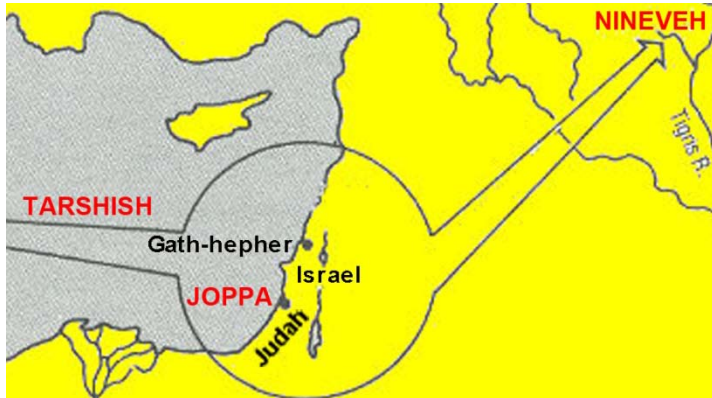
1. Kings of Judah and Israel

Kings of Judah		Kings of Israel	
Azariah/Uzziah*	792–740 BC	Jeroboam II	793–753 BC
		Amos, Jonah, Hosea	
		Zachariah	753 BC
		Shallum	751 BC
Jotham*	750–732 BC	Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah	752–742 BC
Isaiah			
Ahaz*	735–715 BC	Hoshea	732–722 BC
Hezekiah	715–686 BC	721 Ten Tribes taken captive Micah (740–697 BC)	

Dates are approximate. (Adapted from BD and OT-I.)

2. Book of Jonah

¹ The LORD ... [said] ² go to Nineveh ... ³ But Jonah ... went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: ... ⁴ I fled ... unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, [a God who relents from sending calamity. (NIV)]



A LORD commands Jonah to preach to wicked Ninevites (1:1–2)

B Jonah sins, not wanting Nineveh to be saved (1:3–17; 4:2)

C Jonah repents (returns); LORD saves Jonah (2:1–10)

C Nineveh repents (returns); LORD saves Nineveh (3:1–10)

B Jonah sins, not wanting Nineveh to be saved (4:1–10)

A LORD asks Jonah: Should not I spare Nineveh? (4:11)

If Jonah's answer to the Lord's question is, 'No, the Ninevites, who you have saved, shouldn't be saved,' who, then, by implication, must also not be saved? ... If Jonah can't be happy at the thought of Nineveh's salvation, then he makes *himself* unworthy of salvation. ... Jonah is *already* unworthy of salvation, as is Nineveh. *No one* merits it. Salvation is an act of mercy. The Lord poses his question in terms of mercy for Nineveh, but mercy for Nineveh is no longer in question. The mercy that remains in question is mercy for Jonah. The implication of the Lord's question is this: mercy can be extended only to those who are willing to extend it themselves.

"The Lord's question to Jonah is the same one he posed in the parable of the unmerciful servant, whose debt the lord—his

master—had forgiven: 'Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?' the lord asked. 'And his lord was wroth, ... and delivered him to the tormentors. ... So likewise,' the Savior continued, 'shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.' ...

"[Jonah] has forgotten his own prior sin; he has forgotten the mercy extended to him by the mariners, who tried to spare him even when they knew he was the cause of their troubles; he has forgotten the ultimate mercy of the Lord, who delivered him even though he didn't deserve it. ... All he can see is that he is 'right,' 'entitled,' 'deserving' ... feeling no personal mercy, he is locked in despair. ... Meanwhile, the Lord's question hangs in the air, 'Should not I spare Nineveh?'

"What do you suppose would happen ... if Jonah were to give up his belligerence and answered, both in word and feeling, 'Yes!?' Do you suppose he would sit the same way under those sticks? Do you suppose his countenance would remain sour? Do you suppose he would continue to curse at the sun? Do you suppose he would feel the way he currently does about Nineveh? ... No... his world would change, ... not because he would be perfect but because he would recognize in that moment that he has no claim to perfection in others, that his and others' hopes rest entirely on mercy, that he is entitled to nothing and grateful for everything. In that moment, he wouldn't become perfect, but he would become innocent ... because he would have allowed the Lord's offered mercy to well up inside of and change him into a new man, free from the clutches of sin." (*Peacegiver*, 103-107, 119-120)

Jonah tries to escape God's will but he learns that this cannot be accomplished. Even the sea and the great fish, which according to myth are great independent powers in the universe, ... have to obey the orders of God. The sea becomes stormy and calm according to the wish of God (1:3, 15); the fish swallows and spews out according to God's order (2:1, 11); the castor-oil plant, the worm, and the east wind are all obedient servants of God (4:6–8). ... The book begins and ends with the word of God, an assertion of God's absolute power over all creation, the sea and the dry land (1:9). (EJ-Jonah)

3. Jonah is a type of Christ (*Hidden* 255; S&S 85–86)

- Jonah did not want to drink the bitter cup at Nineveh
- Jonah slept on ship during raging storm; crew was afraid (1:5)
- Crew said "arise, call upon thy God ... that we perish not" (1:6; Mark 4:38–39)
- Crew cast lots (1:7); Roman soldiers cast lots (Matt 27:35)
- Jonah chose to sacrifice self to save others (1:12)
- Crew tried to save Jonah; prayed for forgiveness (1:13–14); Pilate tried to save Jesus and then washed his hands.
- Storm ceased and sea was calm (1:15); Jesus calmed sea.
- Descended to the depths and was presumed dead (2:3–6)
In 1891 a man was found alive in a whale after 15 hours. ("Jonah," *Ensign*, June 1974, 27)
- Spent 3 days in 'hell' [HEB *sheol*] (1:17; 2:2; Matt 12:38–40) *sheol* = spirit world
- Suffered immensely for sin (2:1–6)
- Felt forsaken by the Lord (2:4)
- In moment of utter aloneness, looked to the Lord (2:4, 7)
"When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple."
- Came forth alive from watery grave (2:10)
- Jonah preached to Gentiles who repented (3:1–10; 3 Ne 15:23)

4. Hosea commanded to marry a harlot (Hosea 1)

The LORD said to Hosea, Go, take ... a wife of whoredoms ... for the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD. So he ... took Gomer.

What are possible purposes of this marriage?

“The rabbis of the talmudic period ... accepted literally the divine command to Hosea to marry a prostitute. They conjectured that God had complained to Hosea, ‘My children have sinned,’ in the expectation that, as befits a prophet, Hosea would make intercession on their behalf; instead, he had suggested that God disown them and choose another people in their stead. So God ordered Hosea to marry a whore, waited until she had borne him three children, and then asked him if it had not occurred to him to ... [give] up his wife because of his holy calling. When Hosea pleaded that he could not put away the mother of his children, ... God said to him, ‘If you feel like that though your wife is a whore and you cannot even be sure that the children are yours, how could I exchange for others the Israelites, who are the descendants of My proved servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?’” (EJ-Hosea).

People have long debated whether this account is literal. ... Most scholars conclude, as do we, that Hosea did marry Gomer, that she was a recidivist [repeater] prostitute, and that the Lord intended these experiences to teach Hosea and all Israelites about his love for Israel and his patient efforts to bring them ‘home’ when they were disloyal by interacting with other ‘lovers’ (foreign gods and, by application, whatever modern power takes precedence over one’s loyalty to the Lord). This use of the marriage metaphor to depict Jehovah’s covenant with his people occurs elsewhere (e.g., Isa 50:1; 54:6–7; Jer 3:6–12; Ezek 16; 23; Rev 19:6–8). Hosea’s marriage thus functioned as a symbolic prophecy, a visual aid to his message, as well as a poignant lesson for him and us about Jehovah’s love.” (JWOT)

“As with all prophets of God, the message is improving, changing and turning toward God (‘to turn’ ‘return’ or ‘go back’ is the word repentance in Hebrew). Various metaphors were used by various prophets and Hosea chooses the tender subject of marriage and moral fidelity to emphasize the nurturing and forgiving nature of our Father in Heaven.” (Rona #34)

How does one come to understand a father’s love?

Before Internet, TV, radio, and printing, how did messages get to the people or how did a person become famous?

5. Prophetic names of Hosea’s children (Hosea 1)

⁴ Call his name Jezreel [HEB God sows or scatters]; for ... I will avenge the blood of Jezreel ... and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

⁶ Call her name Lo-ruhamah [HEB no mercy]; for I will no more have mercy upon ... Israel; but I will utterly take them away.

⁹ Call his name Lo-ammi [HEB not my people]; for ye *are* not my people, and I will not be your *God*.

6. Future gathering (Hos 1:10–11 or Hebrew Bible 2:1–2)

¹⁰ Yet ... the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea ... and ... where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people, *there* it shall be said unto them, Ye *are* the **sons of the living God**. ¹¹ Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head.

7. Idolatry is like adultery (Hosea 2)

¹ Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi [HEB My-people]; and to your sisters, Ruhamah [HEB Mercy-obtained].

² Plead with your mother ... for she *is not my wife*, neither *am I* her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms ... ³ Lest I strip her naked, ... and make her as a wilderness. ... ⁴ And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they *be* the children of whoredoms. ⁵ For their mother hath played the harlot: ... for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.

⁶ Therefore, ... I will hedge up thy way with thorns [instead of killing her]. ... ⁷ And she shall follow after her lovers, ... but shall not find *them*: then shall she say, I will go and return [repent] to my first husband; for then *was it* better with me than now. ⁸ For she did not know that I gave her ^acorn, and wine, and oil, and ... silver and gold, *which* they prepared for Baal. ⁹ Therefore will I ... take away my corn ... wine ... wool and my flax. ... ¹⁰ And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, ... ¹¹ I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. ¹² And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These *are* my rewards that my lovers have given me. ... ¹³ I will [NIV punish her for] the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD.

8. I will entice her to return

¹⁴ Therefore... I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness [or desert as in exodus], and speak [tenderly] unto her. ¹⁵ And I will give her [back] her vineyards ... and she shall sing there, ... as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁶ And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, *that* thou shalt call me Ishi [HEB my husband]; and shalt call me no more Baali [HEB my master]. ... ¹⁸ And in that day will I make a covenant for them ... [Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety.] ¹⁹ And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; ... in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. ²⁰ ... [and] in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. ... (NIV in brackets)

¹⁹ If a man marry a wife by ... my law ... and ... abide in my covenant, ... they shall pass by the angels ... to their exaltation ... which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever. ... ²⁴ This is eternal lives—to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. (D&C 132)

²³ And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon ^aher that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to ^bthem which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

I [God] will sow = Jezreel;

^aHEB *lo-ruhamah*; ^bHEB *lo-ammi*

9. Hosea commanded to love an adulteress (Hosea 3)

¹ The LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

NIV “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”

NIPS “Go befriend a woman who, while befriended by a companion, consorts with others, just as the LORD befriends the Israelites, but they turn to other gods and love the cups of the grape.”

² So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer ... and an half homer of barley: ³ And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for *another* man: so *will* I also *be* for thee.

⁴ For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: ⁵ Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD ... in the latter days.

This alludes to Israel's impending captivity when they would be without leadership ("kings," "princes") and without the temple and the religious practices they believed in ("sacrifice"). They would also be without revelation (represented by the ephod, to which the Urim and Thummim were attached). The teraphim were worshiped by the Canaanites as givers of earthly prosperity and deities who revealed the future. Commentators believe that these objects of Canaanite worship were included with objects from the worship of Jehovah to show the people that the worship of idols would also be lost. "David their king" is one of the titles of the Messiah or Jesus Christ. ... As noted in Hosea 3:3, Gomer had to purify her life before she could feel Hosea's love. In their captivity Israel would suffer without God's help until she purified her life. Then she would know of God's continued love. (OT-I)

10. Lord's case against Israel

^{4:1} The LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because *there is* no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. ² By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they ⁴break out, and ⁶blood toucheth blood.

¹ ... The LORD has a case

Against the inhabitants of this land,
Because there is no honesty and no goodness
And no obedience to God in the land.

² *False* swearing, dishonesty, and murder,
And theft and adultery are rife;
Crime follows upon crime! (NJPS)

^{5:5} The pride of Israel doth testify to [the LORD's] face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them. ... ¹⁵ I will go *and* return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

^{6:1} Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. ² After two days will he ^arevive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his [presence]. ...

¹ Come, let us turn back to the LORD;
He attacked, and He can heal us;
He wounded, and He can bind us up. (NJPS)

⁴ O Ephraim ... [and] Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness *is* ... as the early dew it goeth away. ... ⁶ For I desired mercy [**HEB charity, or loving-kindness**], and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

⁶ For I desire goodness, not sacrifice;
obedience to God, rather than burnt offerings. (NJPS)

^{9:1} Rejoice not, O Israel, ... for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, ... ³ They shall not dwell in the LORD's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean *things* in Assyria.

^{10:12} Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; ... for *it is* time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. ¹³ Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity;

11. The Lord's love for Israel (Hosea 11)

¹ When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. ...

² [but] they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. ³ I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. ⁴ [I led them with cords of human kindness ...; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them.] ... ⁸ How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? ... ⁴ [My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused.] {NIV in brackets}

^{12:10} I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets. ...

^{13:4} Yet, I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for *there is* no saviour beside me.

⁹ O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me *is* thine help. ...

¹⁴ I will ransom them from the power of the grave [*Sheol*]; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave [*Sheol*], I will be thy destruction.

^{14:1} O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. ... ⁴ I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. ⁵ I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily. ...

⁹ Who *is* wise, and he shall understand these *things*? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD *are* right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

¹⁴ Who is wise? He will realize these things.
Who is discerning? He will understand them.
The ways of the Lord are right;
the righteous walk in them,
but the rebellious stumble in them. (NIV)

¹⁴ He who is wise will consider these words,
He who is prudent will take note of them.
For the paths of the LORD are smooth;
The righteous can walk on them,
While sinners stumble on them. (NJPS)

12. Jewish traditions

"Hosea describes the relationship of God and the people of Israel as essentially one of love, like that between a man and a woman, and prophesies that the divine punishment will be similar to that befitting an unfaithful wife, i.e., God will cast Israel out of its home and into exile. However, Hosea was the first prophet to introduce the theme of repentance, proclaiming that through repentance, Israel can return to its former glory. The love of God for Israel is eternal; thus, God will eventually restore His people to their land. In the aggadah [written oral traditions], great emphasis is placed on God's command to Hosea to marry a harlot and beget children of harlotry. God evidently wanted Hosea to experience the bitterness of being married to an unfaithful woman. This theme of Israel as the unfaithful wife appears frequently in the Prophets. Jeremiah used the favorite image of the earlier prophet Hosea that the relationship between God and Israel is like that of husband and wife and that Israel, in deserting the true faith, had been like an unfaithful wife. He urged the people to acknowledge no other God than the God of Israel, and to submit to Him totally." (EJ Jr.; Rona #34)

13. Symbolism of Marriage Covenant

In the symbolic marriage covenant, God is the husband and Israel, the covenant people, is the bride. God wed Israel in the covenant of Abraham (see Gen 17). That covenant was renewed with Moses' people at the foot of Mount Sinai (see Ex 19:4–8). Isa 54:5 reads, "For thy Maker is thine husband," and Jer 3:14 reads, "For I am married unto you." Further references to God's role as husband in the covenant are found in Jer 3:20; 31:32 and Rev 19:7. When Israel turned away from her husband to worship other gods, then she broke the covenants. She "hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord" (Hos 1:2) and "hath played the harlot" (Hos 2:5; see also Jer 2:20; 3:1, 9; 5:7; Ex 34:14–16; Deut 31:16). Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: "In a spiritual sense, to emphasize how serious it is, the damning sin of idolatry is called *adultery*. When the Lord's people forsake him and worship false gods, their infidelity to Jehovah is described as whoredoms and adultery. (Jer. 3:8–9; Hos. 1:2; 3:1) By forsaking the Lord, his people are unfaithful to their covenant vows, vows made to him who symbolically is their Husband." (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 25.) (OT-I)

14. How is the book of Hosea relevant to us?

Quotes

The *natural man* wants mercy for self, but justice for others.

The *saint* wants justice for self and mercy for others. (CC Riddle)

Moroni: Condemn me not because of mine imperfection ... but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been. (Morm 9:31)

Henry B. Eyring: The book of Hosea, like the writings of Isaiah, uses what seem to me almost poetic images. The symbols in Hosea are a husband, his bride, her betrayal, and a test of marriage covenants almost beyond comprehension. ... Here are the fierce words of the husband, spoken after his wife has betrayed him in adultery: [Hos 2:6–7]. He goes on (through verse 13) to describe the punishment she deserves, and then comes a remarkable change in the verse that follows. ... [Hos 2:14–15, 19–23].

"At that early point in the story, in just two chapters, even my youngest [seminary] students knew that the husband was a metaphor for Jehovah, Jesus Christ. And they knew that the wife represented his covenant people, Israel, who had gone after strange gods. They understood that the Lord was teaching them, through this metaphor, an important principle. Even though those with whom he has covenanted may be horribly unfaithful to him, he would not divorce them if they would only turn back to him with full purpose of heart. ...

"I had a new feeling about what it means to make a covenant with the Lord. All my life I had heard explanations of covenants as being like a contract, an agreement where one person agrees to do something and the other agrees to do something else in return. ... During those days teaching Hosea, I felt something new, something more powerful. This was not a story about a business deal between partners, nor about business law. ... This was a love story. This was a story of a marriage covenant bound by love, by steadfast love. What I felt then, and it has increased over the years, was that the Lord, with whom I am blessed to have made covenants, loves me, and you, . . . with a steadfastness about which I continually marvel and which I want with all my heart to emulate" (*Covenants and Sacrifice* [address to religious educators, 15 Aug. 1995], 1–2). (OT-I)

Ronald E. Poelman: John was a thoughtful, kind young man... and ... [enjoyed] family life. Gayle, his wife, was young, attractive, high-spirited, but inclined toward more worldly interests and activities. The society in which they lived was, in general, one of affluence and materialism. People seemed preoccupied with temporal gain, social status, entertainment, and self-gratification. Religious leaders were concerned about the apparent breakdown in family life and moral standards. ...

John and Gayle were blessed with children ... but Gayle seemed uninterested in her domestic responsibilities. She longed for glamour and excitement in her life. ... Gayle encouraged ... the attentions of other men until eventually she was unfaithful. ... Shortly after the birth of a third child ... Gayle deserted her husband and children and joined her worldly friends in a life of ... immorality. John ... was ... brokenhearted. Soon, however, the glamour and excitement ... turned to ashes. Her so-called friends ... abandoned her. Then each successive step was downward. ... Eventually she recognized her mistakes and realized what she had lost, but could see no way back. Certainly John could not possibly love her still. ... Then one day, passing through the streets, John recognized Gayle. Surely he would have been justified in turning away, but he didn't. ... A feeling of compassion came over him. ... Learning that Gayle had incurred substantial debts, John repaid them and then took her home. Soon John realized ... that he still loved Gayle. Out of his love for her and her willingness to change ..., there grew in John's heart a feeling of merciful forgiveness, a desire to help Gayle overcome her past. ... Through his personal experience ... [John realized] the nature of God's love for us, his children. Though we ... reject him, when we recognize our mistakes and desire to repent, he wants us to seek him out and he will accept us. ...

Though I have taken some literary license in telling the story, it is the account ... of Hosea ... and his wife, Gomer. Portraying God to ancient Israel as a loving, forgiving father, Hosea foreshadowed, more than most Old Testament prophets, the spirit and message of the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and modern revelation. (*Ensign*, May 1982, 27)

Neal A. Maxwell: The man of Christ ... expects a variety of assignments in the Church; some carry the thrills of making a beachhead landing deep in enemy territory, and others involve "minding the store" back home. When he sings, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord" ..., it is not only a promise to go to a Nineveh, but it is also a pledge to stay at his present post. ("The Man of Christ," *Ensign*, May 1975, 102)

TURN AROUND, LOOK AT ME

There is someone walking behind you,

Turn around, look at me.

There is someone watching your footsteps,

Turn around, look at me

There is someone who really needs you,

Here's my heart in my hand.

Turn around, (turn around), look at me, (look at me,)

Understand, understand,

That there's someone who'll stand beside you.

Turn around, look at me.

And there's someone who'll love and guide you.

Turn around, look at me.

I've waited, but I'll wait forever for you to come to me.

Look at someone (look at someone)

Who really loves you, yeah, really loves you.

Turn around, look at me.