

Amos and Hosea

GOD'S VOICE IN
THE BEST OF TIMES,
AND THE WORST OF TIMES

Northern Kingdom

- Both prophesied in the "Golden Age of Prophecy."
- Northern Kingdom (Israel) was short-lived as compared to the Southern Kingdom (Judah).
- The last half of the 9th century was mostly quiet and uneventful.
 - Jehu's purge (842 B.C.) of Baalism and the corrupt leadership (Ahab, Jezebel and Ahaziah) had both positive and negative effects.
- Syria threatened Israel's security.

Facts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jeroboam Nadab Baasha Elah Zimri Omri Ahab Ahaziah Jehoram Jehu Jehoahaz Jehoash Jeroboam II Zachariah Shallum Menahem Pekahiah Pekah Hoshea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 kings • Lasted 200 years (922-722 BC) • 10.5 years average length of rule • Several kings were assassinated • Zimri took his own life • Ahab killed by archer in battle
--	---

The 8th century brought capable leaders and a new power

- Assyria defeats Syria (802 B.C.), but too weak to pursue Israel.
- Jeroboam II (786-746 B.C.) and Uzziah (783-742 B.C.), capable leadership leads to peace & prosperity.
 - Jeroboam extends border from entrance of Hamath to the Dead Sea (2 Kings 14:25).
 - Uzziah regained control over Edom, reopened the port and industries of Ezion-geber (2 Kings 14: 22).





- During Jeroboam's reign, a two class system developed; the lower class (suffered oppression and poverty) and the upper class (power and excess).
- After Jeroboam's death, almost every king of Israel died by assassination at the hands of his successor.

Zechariah	6 months	
Shallum	1 month	
Menahem	10 years	supported Assyria
Pekahiah	1-2 years	
Pekah	7 years	opposed Assyria
Hoshea	10 years	supported Assyria

- Israel's political weakness, combined with the rise of Assyria under Tiglath-pileser III [Pul] (745-727 B.C.) and his successors Shalmaneser V (727-722 B.C.) & Sargon II (722-705 B.C.), sealed the fate of the Northern Kingdom.
- Jeroboam's son, **Zechariah**, succeeded him for 6 months and was assassinated by **Shallum** (Jehu Dynasty ends).
- In less than a month, he is assassinated by Menahem.
- Menahem sends Pul 1,000 talents of silver in return for Assyria's support for his claim to the throne (2 Kgs 25: 17-22). He is succeeded by his son, **Pekahiah**.

- In less than two years, he is assassinated by **Pekah**.
- **Pekah's** reign is difficult to date. In 2 Kings 15:27 it says he reigned for 20 years. It could be that he opposed Menahem's pro-Assyrian stance and was secretly working against the family. **Pekah** was very anti-Assyrian. He soon formed a coalition with Rezin of Syria against Assyria and asked Judah (kings Jotham and later Ahaz) to join them.



- **Pekah** was assassinated by Hoshea.
- Hoshea quickly submitted to Assyria and probably saved them from destruction. He also began secret negotiations with Egypt for support against Assyria. When discovered by Assyria, now under Shalmaneser V, he invaded Israel and took Hoshea captive.
- Samaria held out for about two years, during which time Shalmaneser V died. His successor, Sargon II, completed the destruction of Samaria. According to Assyrian records, 27,290 Israelite citizens were deported to Mesopotamia.

- While the kingdoms may have prospered materially, they fell into moral decay. As a result, the people of Israel became (1) **rich**, (2) **religious**, and (3) **remorseless**.
- 1) Amos noted the opulence:
 - summer/winter palaces adorned with ivory (A. 3:15)
 - beds and couches (A. 3:12)
 - lambs/calves, drinking wine in excess (bowls; see also 5:1), anointing with oils (A. 6:4-5)
 - lush vineyards (A. 5:11)

2) Both prophets described the religious state:

- flocked to the sacred shrines at Bethel (see also A. 7:13), Gilgal, and Beersheba (A. 4:4-5; 5:4) *for so you love you do* (A. 5:5)
- *They sacrifice on the tops of mountains,...make offerings upon the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good.* (H. 4:13)
- cultic prostitution (H. 4:14)
- idols and interactions with them (H. 13:2-3)

- *As robbers lie in wait for a man, so the priests are banded together; they murder on the way to Shechem, yea, they commit villainy* (H. 6:9)

3) Both prophets described Israel's pitiless and unmerciful treatment of others:

- Amos talked about the rich sparing no expense for themselves *are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!* (A. 6:4-6)
 - *who oppress the poor, who crush the needy* (4:1)

- *they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes -- 7 they that trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth, and turn aside the way of the afflicted;* (2:6b-7a).

- *you trample upon the poor and take from him exactions of wheat...turn aside the needy in the gate* (5:11a, 12b)

- *buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals* (8:6)

- Hosea also noted the remorseless way they *Are hot as an oven, And they devour their rulers.* (H. 7:7)

AMOS

- Name mentioned only in the Bible, very little personal information (1:1; 7:8,10,11,12,14; 8:2).
- *Amos* (עֲמוֹס) means “burdened” or “burden bearer.”
- The broadest dating of his ministry under Jerobaom and Uzziah would be 783-746 B.C.
- *Tekoa* – SE of Jerusalem, military outpost
- *Shepherd* (נֹקֵד נֹקֵד) – sheep breeder or sheep raiser; sacral or religious emphasis





- **7:14-15**

- *herdsman* (bōqer)
- *dresser, tender, gatherer* (bōlēš)
- *followed after [tended] the flock*
- Refused the title *prophet* (nabi), claiming only his bivocational employment; he came to Bethel as a layperson under divine guidance from God to perform His desire.

- Amos' contact with people as a resident of Tekoa, one who followed after a flock, and one who worked with sycamore fruit gave him keen awareness of the world by confronting:

- those who oppressed the weak
- religious leaders (Amaziah)
- greedy land grabbers and merchants
- injustice

Hosea

- Hosea means "salvation."
- The Hebrew name, **הוֹשֵׁעַ** (transliterated Hoshea), is the same name as Joshua's original name (Num. 13:16; Deut. 32:44) and of the last king of Israel. English translators spell the prophet's name Hosea to distinguish him from the others.
- The prophet's name appears only in Hosea 1:1-2 and Romans 9:25 (taken from Hos. 1:10; 2:23).

1. Absence of kings in 1:1:

The word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of *Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah*, kings of Judah, and in the days of *Jeroboam* the son of Joash, king of Israel.

Uzziah		Jeroboam II
Jotham		Zechariah
Ahaz		Shallum
Hezekiah		Menahem
		Pekahiah
		Pekah
		Hoshea

2. Hosea's Marriage (Chapters 1 and 3)

A. Allegory/vision with no historical basis (Rabi Ibn Ezra, John Calvin)?

- Rationale - literal story is too offensive
- Weakness:
 - Lev. 21:14 does not apply.
 - No indication that the text isn't a straightforward account.
 - No comparison to the other prophetic vision accounts.
 - If one's life story is fiction, can the rest be true.

B. Part allegory/historical (R. Pfeiffer, Y. Kaufmann)?

- Gomer was his real faithful wife, the prostitute was an unfaithful woman (two separate people).
- Ch. 1 is a metaphor of Israel's sin (Gomer's adultery is a made-up story to make a point).
- Ch. 3 is a symbol of compassion (Hosea towards a prostitute, God towards Israel).
 - Referring to a faithful wife as unfaithful is cruel.
 - Counterproductive: since he falsely accuses his wife, why listen when he accuses them?

C. Historical (D. Stuart, G. Fohrer, D. Garrett)?

i. Historical, but Chs. 1 & 3 refer to two different women

- Hosea married the prostitute (זְנוּנִים) Gomer (גֹּמֶר) illustrating Israel's sinfulness against God, Ch. 1) and later married a second unnamed prostitute (נָאִרָה) woman (אִשָּׁה, doesn't specifically say his wife) illustrating God's compassion and hope for salvation, Ch. 3.

➤ Gomer is the only unfaithful woman mentioned.

➤ *Again* (עוֹד, 3:1) references *the Lord said or Go, love...*

ii. Historical, but Ch. 3 is a second account of Ch. 1 not a sequence of events (two versions of one story).

- Hosea was commanded to marry a prostitute 1:2, purchased Gomer from a slave market (1:3; 3:1-3), and then had children by her before she returned to her immorality (1:3-9).

➤ The word *again* (עוֹד, 3:1) refutes this thought and could be a later insertion by a scribe.

➤ Understanding Ch. 3 as the second half of the story is congruent with the message of Hosea.

iii. Historical, but Gomer was chaste leading up to the marriage but had "tendencies" (זְנוּנִים; נָאִרָה) towards immorality.

- Hosea didn't marry a person actively engaged in immorality. She later took part in the acts of immorality.

➤ How is knowing she will be unfaithful better than knowing she is unfaithful?

➤ אִשָּׁת זְנוּנִים (1:2) **wife of harlotry, wife of whoredom(s), adulterous wife, or a promiscuous wife** can't be translated as **a woman of immoral tendencies.**

iv. Historical.

- Hosea was commanded to marry an immoral woman, and took Gomer as his wife. After the birth of the first or second child, she abandoned Hosea for other lovers. After falling into destitution, God again directed Hosea to **go** after Gomer and to **love** her **again**.
- Was it a speech act (Isaiah 20:3; Ezekiel 4 and 5; Jeremiah 16:2)? Did it violate Deuteronomy 24:1-4?

Understanding Hosea's marriage to Gomer is paramount to understanding the purpose of the book and God's message.

3. Children (1:3-2:23)

Hosea had three children. Though his children were a blessing to him, their significance went beyond his parental love for them.

The birth and naming of the children marks the beginning his prophecy (760-710 B.C.).

The Lord gave a name to each child, and each name was a sign, an oracle establishing the theological framework for his message.

A. Jezreel ("may God sow" 1:3b-5)

- Mentioned as a person's name (1 Chr. 4:3) and often as a town in the midst of the valley bearing the same name.
- Location of numerous and violent events in Israel's history.
- God explains the name as He will soon punish the house of Jehu and bring Israel to an end. Why?

➤ Sheer volume of Omride and priestly blood was spilled?

➤ Overly zealous in his approach? (see Isaiah 10:5-12)

➤ He didn't learn the lesson of Jezreel. Jehu ended an apostate dynasty, but his was little better.

B. Lo-Ruhamah (“not loved”1:6-7)

- The dreadful name caused people to take note, but it didn’t communicate Hosea’s feelings for the child. It was a part of his message.
- The people may have thought Hosea doubted the child was his and then cruelly named and rejected her. Imagine Hosea’s response, “You are Lo-Ruhammah!”
- **כִּי־נָשָׂא אִשָּׁה לָהֶם:** - *but I will utterly take them away* (NKJV); *I will certainly take them away.* (HCSB); *to forgive them at all.* (RSV); *that I should at all forgive them.* (NIV)

C. Lo-Ammi (“not my people”1:8-2:23)

- The dreadful name also caused people to take note. Was Hosea saying the child was not his? Not necessarily. Again, the name was a part of God’s message.
- God declares the covenant between himself and Israel to be null and void.
- **וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא־אֱהָיָה לָכֶם:** - *and I will not be your God.* (NKJV, HCSB); *and I am not your God.* (RSV, NIV)
- *and I am not I AM to you.* (see God’s response to Moses in Exodus 3:14)

Outline for Amos

- I. Title and Theme (1:1-2)
- II. The Words of Amos (1:3-6:14)
 - Judgment upon the nations (1:3-2:26)
 - Israel’s Sins Expounded (3:1-4:13)
 - Israel’s Destruction (5:1-6:14)

- III. Visions and Indictments of Amos (7:1-9:15)
- Locust (7:1-3)
 - Fire (7:4-6)
 - Plumb Line (7:7-17)
 - Basket of Summer Fruit (8:1-3)
 - Greedy Merchants (8:4-10)
 - Threat of Famine (8:11-14)
 - The Lord standing by the altar (9:1-6)
 - Israel's Destruction and Restoration (9:7-15)

- Outline for Hosea**
- I. Gomer and her children (1:1-3:5)
 - Command to marry Gomer (1:2-3a)
 - Jezreel, Lo-Ruhammah, Lo-Ammi (1:3b-2:23)
 - Gomer's Restoration (3:1-5)
 - II. Accusations and Redemption (4:1-14:9)
 - Threefold complaints and appeals for grace (4:1-7:16)

- Proclamations by the Lord and Hosea (8:1-14:8)
- Hosea's riddle (14:9)
