

Title:                   **HOSEA**  
                              *“I will love them freely.”*

Text:                   Hosea 14:4

Subject:               *Christ in Hosea*

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Readings:           *David Burge & Larry Brown*

Introduction:

Hosea was a prophet **contemporary Isaiah, Amos, and Micah**. He was a faithful prophet of God for **65-70 years**. He was God’s messenger to the northern kingdom of Israel, only mentioning Judah (the southern kingdom) incidentally.

This is important. You will remember that, from the time that the kingdom was divided, the northern kingdom was **engulfed in idolatry** (1 Kings 12:1-33). The practice of idolatry, as it always does, brought Israel into a state of utter decadence morally.

**Hosea addresses Israel sometimes as Samaria, sometimes as Jacob, and sometimes as Ephraim, deliberately choosing names connected with failure, sin, rebellion, idolatry, and corruptions calling for wrath and judgment.** And Hosea speaks plainly about the wrath and judgment of God we deserve. But the message of Hosea is a message of immutable grace, unfailing mercy and indestructible love.

This is seen clearly in Hosea 14:4. Here the Lord God declares his purpose of grace toward his chosen, a purpose from which he cannot and will not be turned.

(Hosea 14:4) "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him."

(Hosea 11:7-9) "And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt *him*. {8} How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? *how* shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. {9} I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I *am* God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city."

## A PORTRAIT OF GRACE

The Book of Hosea begins with the story of Hosea and Gomer. It describes Hosea's love for Gomer, her infidelity, despising his love and goodness toward her, and the gracious triumph of his love over her. This sets the background for and tells us the meaning of the rest of the Book. What we have in the first three chapters of this Book is a tremendous, blessed portrait of God's free and sovereign grace toward chosen sinners in Christ.

Hosea, whose name means "savior," is presented in this story as a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. He

was commanded of God to go down to the red light district and take a wife from among the harlots.

(Hosea 1:2) "The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD."

He chose Gomer, whose name means "consumption." That's us, God's elect, consumed with sin and consumed by sin. Gomer was the daughter of Diblaim, whose name means "dried" or "dead." Like Gomer, we are the dead children of a dead father.

Gomer also means "consummation." That's us, too. As Gomer was the consummation of all Hosea's purposes and work, the consummation of his great love, so God's elect are in their ultimate end the consummation of all God's purposes, works, and great love.

The Lord gave Hosea and Gomer three children who also represent us. Jezeel means "seed of God."—Loruhamah means "no mercy."—Loammi means "not mine, or not my people." We who were not his people and had not obtained mercy are now his people and have obtained mercy in Christ. That is exactly how the Holy Spirit interprets this story for us in the Book of Romans (Rom. 9:25-26).

(Romans 9:25-26) "As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. {26} And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God."

Hosea came home one day, and Gomer was gone. She had gone back to her lovers. **Chapter two** tells us about Gomer's great fall and Hosea's purpose of love and grace concerning her. **Chapter three** tells us how Hosea's love and grace prevailed and he fetched Gomer home again. Read the first three verses of chapter three.

**Hosea 3:1-3** "Then said 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. (2) **So I bought her** to me for fifteen *pieces* of silver, and *for* an homer of barley, 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.**"

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to  
perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea And rides upon the  
storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines Of never failing skill

He treasures up His bright designs And works His  
sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints fresh courage take, The clouds ye so  
much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break In blessing on your  
head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him for  
His grace,  
Behind the frowning providence He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast, Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste, But sweet will be the  
flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err, And scan His work in vain:  
God is His own Interpreter, And He will make it plain.

Once Gomer had proved herself unfaithful, abandoning her husband and going after her loves, though she proved herself “*a wife of whoredoms*,” Hosea did not cease to love her. Instead, he slipped away into the haunts of shame and ill-repute. There he found the object of his love, found her in the arms of her lovers. What did he do? He did not have her stoned to death, executing the just sentence of the law. He did not force her to return to him. What did he do? He loved her! As chapter 2 describes Gomer’s horrible sin, it also

describes Hosea's incomparable, indestructible love for her.

But, as I have already indicated, there is more to this story than the love of Hosea for Gomer. This is a picture of the love of Christ for us.

- **Just as Hosea took Gomer for his wife** and married a woman altogether beneath him, unworthy of him, and totally without regard for him, so the Lord God our Savior is married to his elect.
- **Just as Gomer forsook her loving husband** and went after her lovers, you and I went astray from our God as soon as we were born.
- **Just as Gomer's pursuit of her lovers** brought her into bondage, slavery, and utter ruin, so we have ruined ourselves, walking after the lusts of our own flesh.
- **Just as Hosea hedged up Gomer's ways** to force her into his arms again (2:6-7), so our God and Savior hedged up our ways to graciously force us, to force our hearts, to return to him (Ps. 65:4; 110:3).

(Hosea 2:6-7) "Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. {7} And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but

shall not find *them*: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then *was it* better with me than now."

- **Just as Hosea secretly provided for and took care of Gomer**, though she ran after her lovers (2:8), so our great God graciously took care of and provided for us throughout the days of our rebellion (Jude 1; Heb. 1:14).

(Hosea 2:8) "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, *which* they prepared for Baal."

- **Just as Hosea, in order to save Gomer, came to where she was and walked through the haunts of iniquity**, so the Son of God, in order to save us, came into this world and walked in this land of darkness.
- **Just as Hosea redeemed Gomer** with a legal ransom price, our Lord Jesus Christ redeemed us by the price of his own precious blood.
- **Just as Hosea made Gomer his faithful wife** and was faithful to her, so the Lord Jesus, by his omnipotent mercy, irresistible love, and almighty grace makes the objects of his love his faithful bride (3:3; Jer 32:38-40).

(Hosea 3:3) "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."

(Jer 32:38-40) "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: {39} And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: {40} And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

- **Just as Hosea did all that he did for Gomer in obedience to the will of God**, because of a covenant of love, so the Lord Jesus Christ does all that he does for us in obedience to the will of God as our Surety because of his covenant love for us (2:18-20).

(Hosea 2:18-20) "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. {19} And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. {20} I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD."

- **Just as Hosea conquered Gomer's whorish heart** by his love for her, so the Lord Jesus Christ conquers



the hearts of chosen, redeemed sinners in the time of love (2:9-17).

(Hosea 2:9-17) "**Therefore** will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax *given* to cover her nakedness. {10} And **now will I discover** her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. {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: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. {13} **And I will visit upon her** 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. {14} **Therefore**, behold, **I will allure her**, and bring her into the wilderness, and **speak comfortably** unto her. {15} **And I will give** her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and 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** (MY HUSBAND); and shalt call me no more Baali (MY LORD-MY RULER). {17} For **I will take away** the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and **they shall no more be remembered** by their name."

## HOSEA'S MESSAGE

The rest of the Book of Hosea describes:

- The sins and sinfulness, the utter debauchery of God's people.
- The horrible evil Israel brought upon itself, the horrible evil we bring upon ourselves, by rebellion and sin.
- And our God's matchless, unalterable purpose of grace and love, his determination to save his elect.

This is not an over-simplification of Hosea's message, but precisely the message Hosea was inspired of God to convey. In chapters 4-6, we see that Ephraim, Israel, and Judah fully deserved and constantly courted God's wrath.

- They would not forsake their idols (4:17).
- They dealt treacherously with the Lord God, often pretending in time of fear to turn to him, but clinging still to their own devices (5:4-6:6).

(Hosea 5:4-5) "They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms *is* in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD. {5} And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them."

(Hosea 5:7) "They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions."

(Hosea 5:14-15) "For I *will be* unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, *even* I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue *him*. {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."

(Hosea 6:1-3) "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 revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. {3} Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth."

**But the pretended repentance which comes as a result of fear and judgment, is only another mockery of God** (6:4-6)

(Hosea 6:4-6) "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness *is* as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. {5} Therefore have I hewed *them* by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments *are as* the light *that* goeth forth. {6} For I

desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

Yet, in spite of all their iniquity, in spite of all the wrath they heaped upon themselves, **the Lord God would not give up his own**. He declares, "*though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them*" (8:10). Why? Because **he will not give them up** (11:8-9).

(Hosea 11:8-9) "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I deliver thee, Israel? *how* shall I make thee as Admah? *how* shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. {9} I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I *am* God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city."

Why? Because **his love for his elect is free, unconditional, indestructible love** (14:4, 7-9).

(Hosea 14:4) "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him."

(Hosea 14:7-9) "They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive *as* the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof *shall be* as the wine of Lebanon. {8} Ephraim *shall say*, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard *him*, and observed him: I *am* like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found. {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."

## PROPHECIES OF CHRIST

Prophecies of Christ in these fourteen chapters are crystal clear. **Both Peter and Paul show us that the prophecy of 1:10 has been fulfilled in Christ** (1 Pet. 2:10; Rom. 11:25-26). The Book of Hosea is not talking about God's love and grace toward Abraham's physical seed. It describes, in prophetic type, God's mercy, love, and grace toward his elect in every nation, Abraham's spiritual seed, the Israel of God.

(Hosea 1:10) "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that* in the place 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."

(1 Pet 2:10) "Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

(Rom 11:25-26) "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. {26} And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is

written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:"

### Hosea 3:4-5

After giving us the tremendous picture of his mercy, love and grace by which we are saved (1:1-3:3), Hosea declares the meaning of the picture, **assuring us that God will save his people** (3:4-5).

(Hosea 3:4-5) "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 and his goodness in the latter days."

### Hosea 6:1-3

Hosea 6:2 speaks of **the resurrection of Christ** and our resurrection in him, could not be more plainly foretold. The prophet expressly mentions two days, after which life should be given, and a third day, on which the resurrection should take place. Christ will come again as "*the Day-spring from on high,*" coming forth from the grave on the resurrection morning, and of whom it is written that he shall "*come down like showers upon the mown grass.*"

(Hosea 6:1-3) "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 revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. {3} Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth."

### Hosea 11:1

Hosea 11:1 had its fulfillment in Matthew 2:15.

(Hosea 11:1) "When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."

(Mat 2:15) "And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son."

### Hosea 11:3-4

Who can read Hosea 11:3-4 and not hear the Lord Jesus Christ speaking of his great, gracious method of grace to our poor souls?

(Hosea 11:3-4) "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. {4} I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them."

### Hosea 13:4

In chapter 13 (verse 4), our great God and Savior declares his singularity as God and his gracious determination to make us know it.

(Hosea 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."

(Isa 45:22) "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else."

(Mat 1:21) "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

### Hosea 13:14

Hosea 13:14 speaks again of our resurrection by Christ in the last day.

(Hosea 13:14) "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."

The word translated "*ransom*," means "rescue by the payment of a price." The word "*redeem*," speaks of Christ work as our Kinsman Redeemer. Our risen



Redeemer sings triumphantly, “*O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction!*” Soon, we shall sing the same song (1 Cor. 15:51-58).

(1 Cor 15:51-58) "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, {52} In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. {53} For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. {54} So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. {55} O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? {56} The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. {57} But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. {58} Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Amen.