

Hosea 1:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Take unto thee a wife of whoredoms (אִשֶּׁת זְנוּנִים, eshet zenunim)—God commands Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute, creating a living parable of Israel's covenant unfaithfulness. The phrase **wife of whoredoms** doesn't mean merely past sin but ongoing harlotry, paralleling Israel's continuous spiritual adultery with Baal worship. **The land hath committed great whoredom** (זָנָה תְּזַנֶּה הָאֶרֶץ)—the intensive form emphasizes persistent, shameless idolatry. This prophetic sign-act dramatizes God's covenant love pursuing an unfaithful bride, prefiguring Christ's redemption of His adulterous church (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Historical Context

Hosea prophesied to the Northern Kingdom (Israel/Ephraim) during the 8th century BC, beginning around 755 BC during Israel's final decades before Assyrian conquest. God's shocking command for Hosea to marry Gomer, a woman of promiscuity, came during an era when Israel had syncretized YHWH worship with Baal cult practices, treating God's covenant as casually as Gomer would treat marriage vows. This living parable confronted a society that was materially prosperous under Jeroboam II but spiritually bankrupt, pursuing foreign alliances and fertility cults while claiming covenant loyalty to YHWH.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Hosea 1:2 deepen your understanding of God's character, particularly His holiness, justice, and mercy?
2. What specific attitudes, thought patterns, or behaviors does this verse call you to examine and change in light of the gospel?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and His redemptive work, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

תְּחִלַּת	דְּבַר	יְהוָה:	הוֹשֵׁעַ	וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה:		
The beginning	of the word	And the LORD	by Hosea	said	And the LORD		
H8462	H1696	H3068	H1954	H559	H3068		
אֶל	הוֹשֵׁעַ	לִי	קַח	לְבָ	אֵשֶׁת	זְנוּנֵי	יְלִידֵי
H413	by Hosea	H1980	take	H0	unto thee a wife	of whoredoms	and children
	H1954		H3947		H802	H2183	H3206
זְנוּנֵי	כִּי	תִזְנֶה	תִּזְנֶה	בְּ	אֶרֶץ		
of whoredoms	H3588	hath committed great	hath committed great		for the land		
H2183		H2181	H2181		H776		
מֵאֶחָד	יְהוָה:						
departing from	And the LORD						
H310	H3068						

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 3:1 (References Lord): 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.

Deuteronomy 31:16 (References Lord): And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them.

Psalms 106:39 (Parallel theme): Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

Jeremiah 3:9 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.

Revelation 17:5 (Parallel theme): And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

2 Peter 2:14 (Parallel theme): Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

Ezekiel 6:9 (Parallel theme): And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.

Mark 1:1 (Parallel theme): The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

Hosea 5:3 (Parallel theme): I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.