

## **Old Testament:**

Hosea 1:2-10

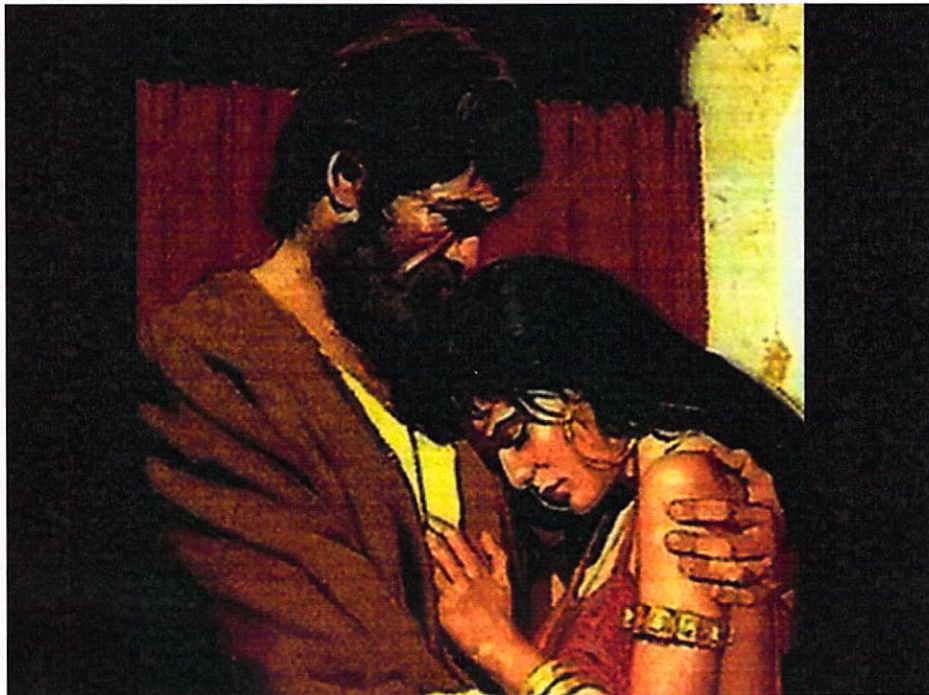
2 When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, 'Go, take for yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord.' So he went and took Gomer, and she conceived and bore him a son.

And the Lord said to him, 'Name him Jezreel; for in a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.'

She conceived again and bore a daughter. Then the Lord said to him, 'Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them. But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God; I will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by horsemen.'

When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said, 'Name him Lo-ammi,\* for you are not my people and I am not your God.'

\*Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered; and in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people', it shall be said to them, 'Children of the living God.'



The Lord used Hosea and Gomer's relationship as an object lesson to show how Israel had sinned against Him by following other gods and how God remains faithful even when His people don't.

God gave Hosea an unusual command: "Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her. Hosea obeyed by marrying Gomer, and the couple had two sons and a daughter. Some folks believe that Gomer was a prostitute or that she had been guilty of repeated sexual sin before she married Hosea.

We do know that, after bearing three children, Gomer left Hosea to live with another man. God then gave Hosea another, even more amazing, command: "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods". Hosea obeyed, buying his wife back with fifteen shekels of silver and some barley. This loyal love, undeterred by Gomer's unfaithfulness, God meant as a picture of His own love for His wayward, idolatrous people.

Hosea prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in Judah and the last six kings in Israel.

Gomer was a fitting symbol of Israel because of the sexual nature of the idolatry that the people were practicing. Their spiritual adultery was resulting in actual, physical adultery. Such ritual prostitution was a common method of worshipping Baal.

Hosea says that God will remove the names of the Baals from Israel's mouth and betroth her to Him forever, in righteousness and justice, in steadfast love and mercy. God will heal them by His own power. These passages foreshadow the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit dwelling in us is who keeps us from following Israel's bad example and straying from the Lord.

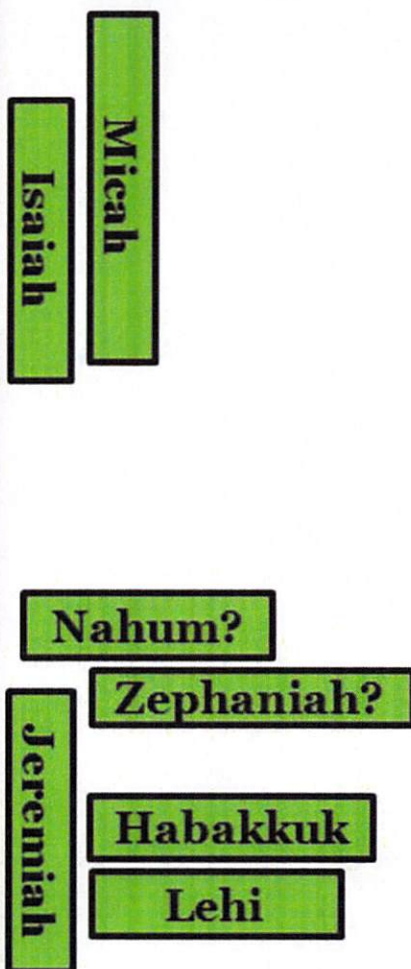
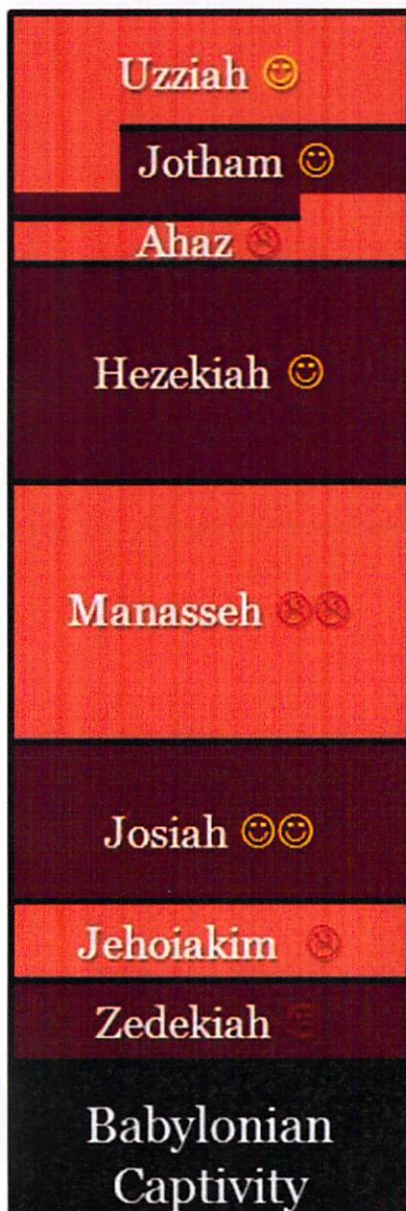
Gomer's infidelity was a symbol of Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness, but Hosea's marriage to and redemption of Gomer is an enduring symbol of God's faithfulness and provisional redemption of His unfaithful people, then and now, through Jesus Christ. God's words to ancient Israel should fill us with hope today: "I will betroth you to me forever; / I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, / in love and compassion. / I will betroth you in faithfulness, / and you will acknowledge the Lord".

# JUDAH: SOUTHERN KINGDOM

# ISRAEL: NORTHERN KINGDOM

## MAIN KINGS

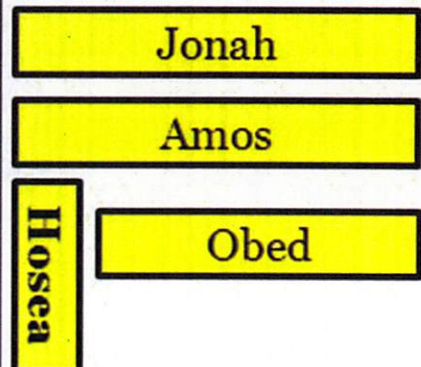
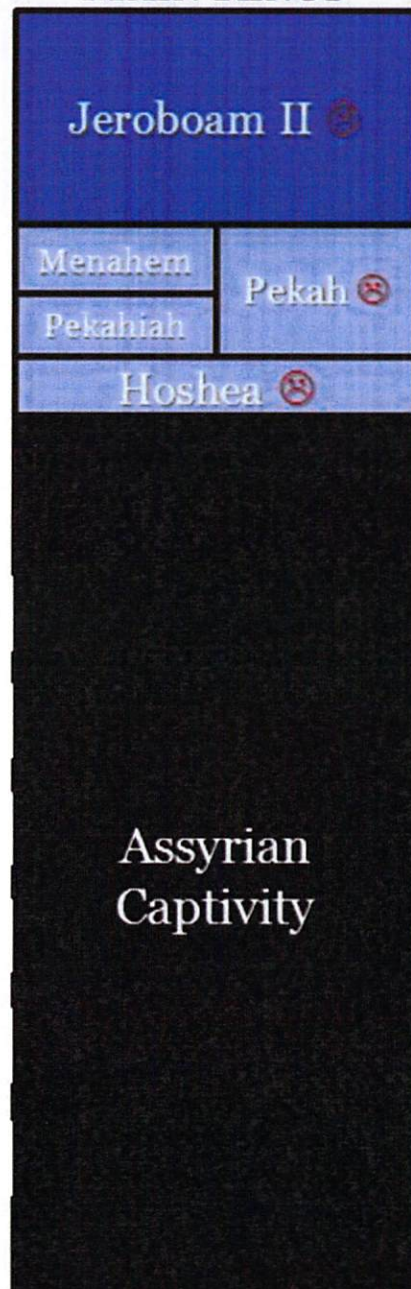
## MAIN PROPHETS



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## MAIN KINGS

## MAIN PROPHETS



# The Old Testament Story†

