



Tecumseh United Methodist Church
Making Disciples of Christ for the Transformation of the World

Bible Study: *The Minor Prophets*

Session 4: **Hosea 1:1-3:5**

Overview of Hosea

Hosea is about the **relationship** between God and the Israelite people. This relationship is presented using metaphors which make the relationship immediately understandable:

- Husband & adulterous wife - chapters 1-3
- Parent & rebellious child - chapters 4-11
- Husband, wife & rebellious child - chapters 12-14 (repentance, return, and restoration of the family)

Authorship/History of Hosea

Hosea's authorship is . . . complicated. It is also a good example of the literary process involved in the development of prophetic literature:

1. The prophet's career involves his prophetic work and, sometimes, his own writing.
2. Following the prophet's death and into succeeding generations, his sayings and writings are passed down and redacted within the later historical situations.

Redaction - *collection of edits of a text that prepares it for publication*

Hosea took shape over the span of about three centuries. Its history is as follows:

8th Century – Hosea the prophet (750-724BCE):

- The Prophet began work during the reign of Jeroboam II, a king of Israel considered a bad and idolatrous king.
- Following Jeroboam, there were 6 kings, 4 of which were assassinated and 1 who was captured by the Assyrians
- Lots of governmental corruption and palace intrigue
- During this period, the Assyrian Empire slowly encroached on the eastern Mediterranean area.
- Lots of economic problems: large social inequities, depleted resources due to wars and tributes paid to Assyria, and the wealthy class exploited the peasants to pay the nation's debts

- Religion was a mix of worship of God and worship of Canaanite gods (which was typical since the Israelites entered Canaan; Israelites were not yet purely monotheistic). Hosea pushed for the *innovation* of pure monotheism.

8th-7th Centuries – Period of Collection:

- Collection of the prophet's oracles to preserve them following the destruction of Israel by Assyria in 721BCE.

Oracle - *message from God to an individual or group, usually delivered through a prophet*

- 1st written version of Hosea's oracles
- Likely development of the narrative in Hosea 1

7th Century Deuteronomistic Redaction (pre-Exile):

Deuteronomistic History (DH) - *a theory describing the composition & unity across Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings. It begins with the Law presented in the form of an Ancient Near East treaty (Deuteronomy). The 1st edition of the DH begins as early as the reign of Josiah in Judah (604-609BCE), who reformed Judah's religion, and ends with the beginning of the Babylonian Exile in 587BCE. A 2nd edition was created during the Exile that explains the Exile as the result of a long history of faithlessness and idolatry by the Israelites.*

- There are noted similarities in style and parallels in emphasis between Hosea and the DH books:
 - Promotion of monotheism
 - God's election of the Israelites as the Chosen People
 - Relationship between God and Israel described as *covenantal*
 - Insistence on obedience to God's Law
 - Strong condemnation of idolatry and pagan religion
 - Call to repentance and return to God

6th Century Redaction during Exile:

- Done alongside the 2nd edition of the DH during the Babylonian Exile (587-539BCE)
- Addition of the themes of repentance and return to God.

Hosea 1:1 - 3:5

... Read it! ...