

Lesson 34

“I Will Betroth Thee unto Me in Righteousness”

Hosea

Purpose: To help class members understand that the Lord is loving and merciful and will forgive us when we repent and return to him.

My lessons take a different path than the Gospel Doctrine lesson manual. The lesson outline looks closer at the doctrinal topics included in the lesson purpose and scripture block. The lessons are designed to challenge mature, active Latter-Day Saints who have a solid Gospel foundation and are looking for insights into the scriptures that will broaden their faith and understanding.

If you are interested in downloading the PowerPoint file, links to source material or reading posts about improving Gospel Doctrine class preparation, delivery and engagement, you can join my Facebook Group and have full access to the content posted there. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/188904648521022/>

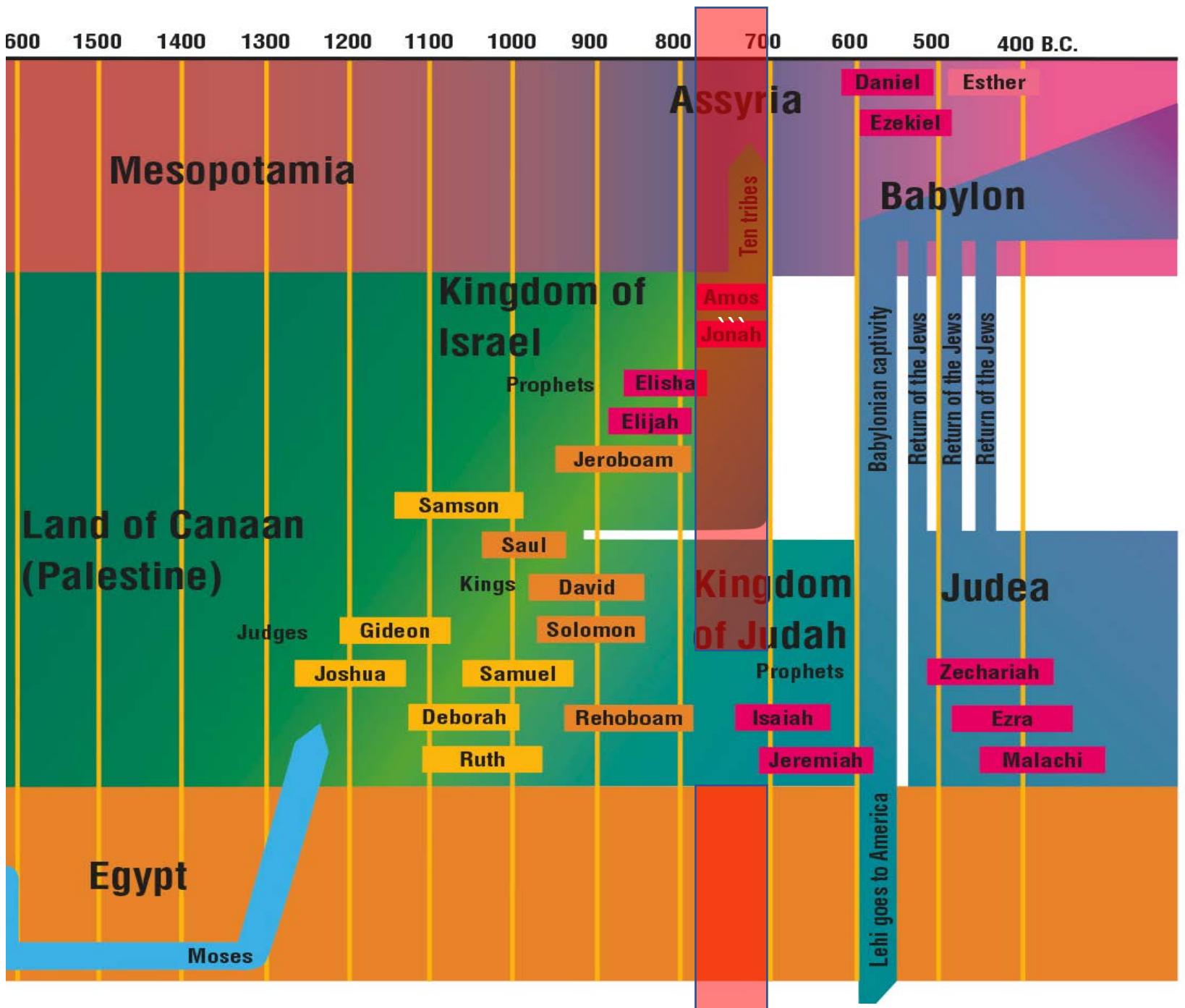
Last Week's Lesson Challenge

Last week's lesson challenge asked you to consider your innermost feelings about your neighbors, who or wherever they may be. Is there even a shred of doubt that they are unworthy of Jesus Christ's love and forgiveness?

As members of Jesus Christ's church, we have accepted a commission to spread the Gospel. Consider what you should do to promote the missionary program of the Church across the street or around the world.

Would anyone like to share their thoughts over the past week on this?

Hosea



The Book of Hosea is an excellent introduction to the type of Old Testament books that we will begin studying soon, particularly Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. These books are difficult for present day Westerners (Europe, the Americas) because they were written in a style of Hebrew poetry that we do not use and have difficulty understanding.

Many people are surprised to learn that as much as a third of the Old Testament is written in poetry. In addition to the poetic books, Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, isolated poems are preserved throughout the Pentateuch and the historical books, such as Jacob's patriarchal blessings to his twelve sons, the songs and blessings of Moses, the song of Deborah and the song of Hannah. A substantial portion of the prophetic writings is also poetic in structure. Many of the prophets of ancient Israel wrote their messages in Hebrew poetic forms, and their discourses recorded in the Old Testament are often framed in Hebrew poetry. Therefore, both for purposes of understanding and appreciation, students of the Old Testament should have some familiarity with Hebrew poetry. <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1990/06/understanding-old-testament-poetry?lang=eng>

The metaphorical and allegorical method of poetry used by the Old Testament prophets is difficult for us to understand because to us, it is a foreign language. Even with the English translation provided in the King James Version, using metaphors, allegories and similes is not a language we speak today. With time and study, the meaning of Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel can be understood. Once it is understood, it is beautiful in its description of the Jehovah's love, the Gospel and the events of their time and our time.

Hosea, Son of Beeri, and the only prophet of the northern kingdom who has left written prophecies. He began to prophesy during the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam II. He lived during a time of national decline and ruin, the result of the sin of Israel. **Hosea's fundamental idea is the love of God for His people.** In love God redeemed them from Egypt (Hosea 11:1); their history has been but an illustration of His love (11–13); all His chastisements are inflicted in love (2:14; 3); and their restoration shall be due to His love (2:19; 14:4). **In contrast with this moral Being, who is Love, Hosea sets Israel, characterized always by want of affection, by treachery and infidelity.** Yet he is able to look forward to a final redemption (2:19; 11:12–14:9). The profound thought and pathos of this prophet of the north deeply influenced succeeding writers (see Isa. 40–66; Jer. 2–3; Ezek. 16; 33).

<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bd/hosea?lang=eng&letter=H>

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles commented on his experience years before teaching Hosea to his early morning seminary classes:

"The book of Hosea, like the writings of Isaiah, uses what seem to me almost poetic images. The symbols in Hosea are a husband, his bride, her betrayal, and a test of marriage covenants almost beyond comprehension. ... Here are the fierce words of the husband, spoken after his wife has betrayed him in adultery: [Hosea 2:6–7].

"At that early point in the story, in just two chapters, even my youngest students knew that the husband was a metaphor for Jehovah, Jesus Christ. And they knew that the wife represented his covenant people, Israel, who had gone after strange gods. They understood that the Lord was teaching them, through this metaphor, an important principle. Even though those with whom he has covenanted may be horribly unfaithful to him, he would not divorce them if they would only turn back to him with full purpose of heart.

For more reasons than I can explain, during those days teaching Hosea, I felt something new, something more powerful. This was not a story about a business deal between partners, nor about business law. ... This was a love story. This was a story of a marriage covenant bound by love, by steadfast love. What I felt then, and it has increased over the years, was that the Lord, with whom I am blessed to have made covenants, loves me, and you, ... with a steadfastness about which I continually marvel and which I want with all my heart to emulate" (Covenants and Sacrifice [address to religious educators, 15 Aug. 1995], pp. 1–2).

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If we look at the opportunities to repent that Jehovah gave a sinful and defiant Israel, can we ever doubt his love for us who strive to follow His commandments.

Consider what the Savior said in Luke 11:11-13:

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Hosea 1:2-11 King James Version

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.

3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

4 And the Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

5 And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

6 ¶ And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Lo-ruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.

7 But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

8 ¶ Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.

9 Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.

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.

11 Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

Hosea 1:2-11 NIV

2 When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord.”

3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4 Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel.

5 In that day I will break Israel’s bow in the Valley of Jezreel.”

6 Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means “not loved”), for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all forgive them.

7 Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but I, the Lord their God, will save them.”

8 After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son.

9 Then the Lord said, “Call him Lo-Ammi (which means “not my people”), for you are not my people, and I am not your God.[a]

10 “Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘children of the living God.’

11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.[b]

Hosea 2 Excerpts King James Version

Hosea 2 Excerpts NIV

2 Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts;

4 And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms.

5 For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.

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 forgat 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; and shalt call me no more Baali.

17 For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.

2 Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts.

4 I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery.

5 Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my olive oil and my drink.’

12 I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them.

13 I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot,” declares the Lord.

14 “Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her.

15 There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will respond[c] as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.

16 “In that day,” declares the Lord, “you will call me ‘my husband’; you will no longer call me ‘my master.’

17 I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked.

Whether or not Hosea actually took a harlot for a wife (there is debate among scholars), there is a strong metaphor illustrating Jehovah's love for Israel (the husband) and Israel's sins and defiance to follow Jehovah's commandments. The following is a description of Israel during Hosea's time.

"The years of Hosea's life were melancholy and tragic. The vials of the wrath of heaven were poured out on his apostate people. The nation suffered under the evils of that schism, which was effected by the craft of him who has been branded with the indelible stigma—'Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin.' The obligations of law had been relaxed, and the claims of religion disregarded; Baal became the rival of Jehovah, and in the dark recesses of the groves were practiced the impure and murderous rites of heathen deities; peace and prosperity fled the land, which was harassed by foreign invasion and domestic broils; might and murder became the twin sentinels of the throne; alliances were formed with other nations, which brought with them seductions to paganism; captivity and insult were heaped upon Israel by the uncircumcised; the nation was thoroughly debased, and but a fraction of its population maintained its spiritual allegiance."

The remaining chapters of Hosea talk more about Jehovah's love for Israel and His wish that they return to His fold, knowing that they will not.

Chapter 3 Israel will seek the Lord, return to the Lord, and receive of His goodness in the latter days.

Chapter 4 Israel loses all truth, mercy, and knowledge of God and goes whoring after false gods.

Chapter 5 The kingdoms of Judah and Israel will both fall because of their iniquities.

Chapter 6 Hosea calls Israel to return and serve the Lord—The mercy and knowledge of God are more important than ritualistic sacrifices.

Chapter 7 Israel is reproved for her many sins—Ephraim is mixed among the people.

Chapter 8 Both Israel and Judah have forsaken the Lord—The Lord has written the great things of His law to Ephraim.

Chapter 9 The people of Israel are taken into captivity for their sins—Ephraim will be a wanderer among the nations.

Chapter 10 Israel has plowed wickedness and reaped iniquity—Hosea calls upon Israel to seek the Lord.

Chapter 11 Israel, as a child, was called out of Egypt in similitude of our Lord, as a child, coming out of Egypt—But Ephraim turns away from the Lord.

Chapter 12 The Lord uses prophets, visions, and similitudes to guide His people, but they become rich and will not wait on the Lord—Ephraim provokes Him most bitterly.

Chapter 13 Ephraim's sins provoke the Lord—There is no Savior beside the Lord—He ransoms from the grave and redeems from death.

Chapter 14 In the last days, Ephraim will repent and return unto the Lord.

The following are poignant examples of Jehovah's lament for the disobedient Israel, like a husband laments for his disobedient child or wife.

Hosea 11:1-5

- 1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.
- 2 As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.
- 3 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.
- 5 ¶ He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return.

Hosea 14:1-9

- 1 O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.
- 2 Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.
- 3 Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.
- 4 ¶ I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.
- 5 I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.
- 6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.
- 7 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.

Hope for You in the Story of Gomer

God loves you, no matter what you have ever done to hurt or disappoint Him, and He has provided a way for you to return to Him. The story of Gomer clearly shows God's love for you. Even when you break His commandments and your life seems to fall apart, God's greatest desire is to see you repent and come back to receive the happiness of a good life.

The world today exhibits many of the same social ills that existed in Gomer's time. Perhaps in the past you have forgotten covenants in order to respond to the promises and flattery of the world. Now you know the longing to be loved and trusted again. For you, the story of Gomer testifies of hope and a Redeemer who longs to have you restored to the close relationship you once had with Him (see [Hosea 3:1–2](#)). Her story is a promise that if you will return "home" and prove your repentance and faithfulness (see [Hosea 3:3–4](#)), then all that you desire will be restored to you (see [Hosea 2:19–23](#)). Enduring or overcoming trials in proving your repentance and faithfulness will require your greatest efforts in prayer and acts of obedience to God's laws.

This Week's Lesson Challenge

Each of us know someone in our lives who has lost their faith in Jesus Christ and has strayed from Gospel teachings. The Book of Hosea is an example of Jehovah's boundless love for Israel. His willingness to forgive sins where there is true repentance.

This week, consider what this means to you and your family. Remember, the Savior is always there, arms out stretched. He only asks us to have faith, repent and work to live His commandments.