

Sixth after Trinity – Hosea chapter 1, verses 1 – 11:-

Unlike Amos, Hosea belonged to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He may have prophesied a little later than Amos; perhaps about 743 B.C. Both Amos and Hosea foretell immediate trouble for Israel. The Book itself can be compared to ‘a love story gone wrong’. Hosea’s love for his wife reflects the love of the Lord God for His people Israel. Throughout the book there is the promise of hope and the restoration of the Lord’s love and protection.

It may be that the reference to “*a wife of harlotry*” applies to Gomer as a child of “*the land which commits great harlotry by forsaking the Lord*”. At that point Hosea would have married a pure wife, an echo of the ‘marriage’ of the Lord God with His people at the time of the Exodus. The theme of the people of God committing adultery is taken up by the prophet Ezekiel at a later date, see Ezekiel chapters 16 and 23.

Hosea chapter 1, verse 1:- The dates of these kings shows that Hosea prophesied over a period of some 40 years. Jeroboam II was king of Israel from about 793 – 753.

Verses 2 – 5:- As noted above, the ‘harlotry’ refers to the whole people of Israel. The children born to Hosea and his wife Gomer (her name means ‘completion’) were counted as “*children of harlotry, for the land commits great harlotry by forsaking the Lord.*” Maybe the mother of Gomer is named because “*Diblahim*” means ‘worthless’.

The first child of Hosea and Gomer was named by the Lord as “*Jezreel*”, foretelling the end of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. (Jezreel was the site of Naboth’s vineyard, Jezebel’s death and the end of Ahab’s dynasty – see 1 Kings chapter 21, verses 1 – 19 and 2 Kings chapter 9, verses 30 – 37.)

Verses 6 – 7:- The second child, a daughter, was named “*Lo-ruhamah*” - “*Not pitied*”. Israel was condemned but the southern kingdom of Judah was to continue being saved by divine intervention. See 2 Kings chapter 19, verses 32 – 35.

Verses 8 – 9:- The third child, a son, was to be called “*Lo-ammi*” - “*Not my people*”. Because the people have forsaken the Lord God and worshipped false gods and idols they no longer belong to Him.

Verses 10 – 11:- These verses are a prophecy of the distant future. There will come a ‘Day of the Lord’ when the disparate and exiled peoples of both Israel and Judah will be united under one King. A word of hope which echoes again and again throughout the Book of Hosea – see for example Hosea chapter 2, verses 14 - 23

1) O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

2) O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine’s blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

3) O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.

4) O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life’s glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

George Matheson, 1882