

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan

Hosea 4

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The book of Hosea is an amazing story that illustrates the life of a prophet in the Old Testament and the lengths God will go to show His love, mercy and compassion toward his erring people, Israel. Hosea's name means "Salvation", and this is what God offered to His constantly wayward and backsliding people. Hosea is set in the beginning during days of relative prosperity and stability in both the northern kingdom of Israel, under the reign of Jeroboam II and in the southern kingdom of Judah, under Uzziah. Hosea prophesied until the reign of godly king Hezekiah and until just before the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. when the Assyrians totally decimated Israel. Most of Hosea's prophecies were to the godless north that had begun in idolatry and simply never got away from it. Furthermore, after the reign of Ahab, who married the Sidonian princess, Jezebel, ba'al worship gained a foothold until the kingdom's destruction.

The story of Hosea is the story of a man who was called by God to marry a woman who either had been, was, or would become a harlot. The text is unclear. What is clear, is that while Hosea married the woman, Gomer, she became a harlot. She had children and the relationship as well as the

children's names became a symbolic illustration of the relationship between God and His people Israel. The first child's name is "Jezreel", which means God sows, from Zara, to sow or scatter like seed, and El, the name for God. The second child is "Lo-Ruhamah" meaning no mercy, no compassion or love. Lo, means no, Ruhamah is the word for compassion, mercy, pity and sometimes love. The third child is Lo-Ammi, not my people. Lo, means no, and Ammi is the word Am, pronounce "awm" with the mi, is the first-person pronoun my. God sent a message through Hosea and Gomer's children that the time of his compassion and mercy was coming to an end. The seeds of murder and bloodshed that had been sown in Jezreel would soon bear bitter fruit. Finally, God said, you are not my people, not that He had cast them off, but they were not behaving as the people of God should, so he would turn them over to their appetites which bring Judgement.

Prayer and Action Steps

Chapter 4 is God's charges against Israel. Ask God to keep you away from anything that would bring judgment upon you and your family.

Date _____ Scripture _____

- *Read the chapter. If you have time, read it again.*
- *Highlight, underline or circle the Key Verse or Verses of the chapter.*
- *Ask yourself these questions as you read through the chapter.*

Is this historical narrative, analogy, metaphor, allegory, or some other element of speech or communicating truth?

What is the Context? Old Testament? New Testament? What is the writer speaking or writing about? To whom is he writing?

Is this a clear passage of Scripture (can only be interpreted one way)? Or could the passage be interpreted legitimately, in two or more ways, according to grammar and context?

Does the passage teach a Biblical Precept; that is, tells you something to be, do or act?

Are there principles in this chapter that if followed, would require me to change my attitudes or actions?

Does the passage give a Biblical Pattern that is followed here and other places in the Bible?

