

# Hosea

God's Loyalty to Repentant Israel							
Unfaithful Gomer			Unfaithful Israel				
Faithful Hosea			Faithful LORD				
Marriage of Hosea			Message of Hosea				
Personal			National				
Chapters 1–3			Chapters 4–14				
Personal Marriage Tragedy 1:1–2:1	Judgments/ Restoration 2:2-23	Gomer Received Back Ch. 3	Lawsuit Summary 4:1-3	Spiritual Knowledge 4:4–6:3	Loyal Love 6:4–11:11	Faithfulness 11:12–13:16	Repentance Yields Fruitfulness Ch. 14
Northern Nation of Israel							
755-710 BC (Before, During, and After Israel's Exile in 722 BC)							

**Key Word:** Loyal

**Key Verse:** (God about Israel) "I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love (*hesed*) to the one called 'Not my loved one.' I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God'" (Hosea 2:23).

**Summary Statement:**

Hosea experiences a personal marriage tragedy that illustrates God's faithful reception of His unfaithful people, who show a lack of knowledge of God, rejection of loyal love, and faithlessness to His covenant, to motivate them to repentance.

**Application:**

God's loyal love is tough love, so He'll do what it takes to bring us back to Him.

# Hosea

## Introduction

- I. **Title** The name Hosea (הוֹשֵׁעַ *hoshea*) means "salvation" (BDB 448a 3). In Hebrew, it is precisely the same name as that of Hoshea (the last king of Israel) and the original name of Joshua (whose name Moses changed from Hoshea to Joshua; Num. 13:6, 16). The names Joshua and Jesus both originate from the same root, but they carry an additional concept: "Yahweh is salvation."

### II. Authorship

- A. **External Evidence:** Hosea appears nowhere else in Scripture outside of this prophecy, but few critics have debated authorship by Hosea on these grounds. Their concerns are more internal (see below).
- B. **Internal Evidence:** The first verse of the prophecy notes that Hosea ministered during the reigns of both kings in the north (Israel) and south (Judah) of the divided kingdom. Some scholars debate Hosea's claim to be the author, supposing that later redactors (editors) added references to Judah and passages similar to Deuteronomy (see William R. Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, pp. clix-clxii, and Hans W. Wolff, *Hosea*, AB, pp. xxix-xxxii). However, this poses no problem for those who recognize that Hosea's message, although primarily intended for Israel, included all the people of God. Additionally, allusions to Deuteronomy are understandable, given that Moses wrote the book hundreds of years before Hosea's time (although these liberal scholars date Deuteronomy *after* Hosea's time). Nothing is known about Hosea except that he was the son of Beerī (1:1), his wife was Gomer (1:3), and he had at least one child (1:3) and as many as three children (1:3-9; this depends upon how one interprets 2:4). Hosea probably lived in Israel as he called the king of Samaria "our king" (7:5).

### III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** Hosea began prophesying during the prosperous reigns of Jeroboam II, king of Israel (782-753 BC), and Uzziah, king of Judah (767-739 BC). His prophecies stretched through the reigns of these two kings and those of Jotham (739-731 BC), Ahaz (731-715 BC), and Hezekiah (715-686 BC), kings of Judah. Similarly, in the north, the last six kings of Israel (following Jeroboam II) reigned briefly during his preaching. Therefore, his ministry lasted approximately forty-five years, spanning the time before, during, and after the captivity of the northern kingdom by Assyria, as well as the reigns of eleven kings from the two nations (755-710 BC). It is presumed that he compiled his prophecy in this book during the early years of Hezekiah, the last of these eleven kings.
- B. **Recipients:** The book is addressed primarily to the northern kingdom of Israel (4:1f.), though it contains fifteen references to Judah (1:1, 7, 11; 4:15; 5:5, 10, 12, 13, 14; 6:4, 11; 8:14; 10:11; 11:12; 12:2), thirteen to Egypt, and eight to Assyria.
- C. **Occasion:** When Hosea began his ministry during Jeroboam II's reign, Israel enjoyed a temporary period of prosperity. However, the tide soon turned with seven kings on the throne in only thirty-two years, five of whom were murdered, and the last brought the nation into exile. Israel was a nation of idolatry, and God promised judgment for such.

### IV. Characteristics

- A. Although many prophets used object lessons in their prophesying, Hosea's tragedies illustrate God's relationship to Israel more than any other prophet.
- B. Unlike other Bible books, the message of Hosea appears twice: personally with an adulterous wife and faithful husband (Hosea 1-3), and nationally with an adulterous nation and a steadfast God (Hosea 4-14).
- C. Some have advocated that Hosea's marriage to Gomer was only visionary or allegorical, not literal, because they feel that God would not ask a prophet to marry someone of disreputable character, but this does not hold weight. The account is presented in a straightforward narrative, and God sometimes asked His prophets to undertake difficult tasks (e.g., Isa. 20:1-4; Ezek. 4:1-5:4). However, even considering the account as historical still presents its problems. Three difficult issues will decide how the first section of the book (1:2-9) should be interpreted:

1. Was Gomer adulterous *before* or *after* marrying Hosea? Since “adulterous” refers to sexual sin *after* marriage (2:2, 4; 4:12; 5:4) and the emphasis of the book is upon Gomer and Israel’s behavior *following* the initiation of their covenants, it is best to see her adulterous condition as following her marriage. Thus, the Lord’s command should be seen as follows: “Go, take to yourself a wife who will prove to be unfaithful...” (Chisholm, *BKC*, 1:1379).
  2. Were Gomer’s second and third children fathered by Hosea or an adulterous relationship? Hosea is not explicitly mentioned in the text (1:6, 9) as he is with his first child (1:3). This is an argument from silence, though. The fact that *all three* children are called “children of unfaithfulness” (1:2), the parallel absence of the father’s name in Genesis 29:32-35, and the emphasis on the *mother’s* (not the children’s) character, all indicate that these children were “born *in the context of* (but not as a direct result of) Gomer’s infidelity” (idem., 1:1380, emphasis mine). So Hosea fathered all three.
  3. Did Hosea divorce Gomer? And if he did, what are the implications for those whose spouses are unfaithful today? Only a separation is in view here (see p. 574).
- D. Hosea uses a Hebrew equivalent for the English word “love” (חֶסֶד *hesed*) six times in his short writing (2:19; 4:1; 6:4, 6; 10:12; 12:6 [7]). Other prophets use the same word, such as Isaiah (8 times) and Jeremiah (6 times), but Hosea uses this term more frequently than any other prophet (proportionally, considering his small book size). What does *hesed* mean? The KJV often translates it as “lovingkindness” (2:19) or “mercy” (4:1; 6:6; 10:12; 12:6) but sometimes “goodness” (6:4) and “kindness” (Joel 2:13). The NASB emphasizes these last two translations while the NIV agrees and adds the concept of acts of devotion, unfaithful love, great love, unfaithful kindness, favor, devout, faithful, grace, loyalty, approval, lovingkindness, and many other terms! It is a crucial term, as it is used nearly 250 times in the Old Testament.

The above was the traditional understanding until Nelson Glueck’s 1927 study advocated that the term referred not to God’s *mercy*, but to His *loyalty* to His covenant obligations made with the nation (just as the Hittites and other pagan nations were bound to show loyalty to their deities). This view has gained wide acceptance, though with some exceptions (e.g., R. Laird Harris, “חֶסֶד” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1:305-7 sees it referring to a kind of love, including mercy, when the object is in a pitiful state).

This may seem like a technical study but it becomes essential since *hesed* is used in the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:6; Deut. 5:10). Are these commandments: (1) *temporary* stipulations stemming from God’s *covenant* given only to *Israel* to whom God remains true and demands loyalty, or (2) are they “*eternal* principles stemming from *God’s nature* and his creation to which *all* men are obligated...” (idem., 305, emphasis mine).

The present study of Hosea follows Glueck’s view above (#1), which interprets the term as referring to covenant loyalty. In particular, the Mosaic Covenant is in view which obligates both God and Israel to specific requirements (cf. Exod. 19–20), including Israel’s blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (Deut. 28). Therefore, God continues to show commitment and mercy towards the nation (based upon the Abrahamic Covenant) and Israel should respond by showing loyalty towards God by following the Mosaic stipulations. This best fits the theme of the book, as Gomer’s violation of the marriage covenant illustrates Israel’s violation of the nation’s covenant with God. Also, “LORD (Yahweh),” the covenant name for God, appears 48 times in contrast to “God (Eloheim),” a non-covenantal designation occurring only 29 times. (For a more complete study on these covenant ideas, see the Deuteronomy notes for this course.) The terms “loyal love” or “loving loyalty/kindness” in the following outlines are used when referring to *hesed*.

## Argument

The Book of Hosea flows in two broad sweeps, with chapters 1–3 illustrating the remainder of the book (Hosea 4–14). In chapters 1–3, Hosea’s personal marriage tragedy later finds parallel in chapters 4–14, wherein Israel’s unfaithfulness is contrasted with God’s faithfulness.

In the central part of the book (chapters 4–13), God summarizes an official lawsuit against Israel in 4:1-3, which provides the outline for the rest of the book (except chapter 14). This lawsuit marshals evidence against Israel, the defendant who is guilty of lacking three covenantal requirements: knowledge of God (4:4–6:3), loving loyalty/kindness (6:4–11:11), and faithfulness (11:12–13:16). Finally, God calls for the wise and righteous in the nation to repent and turn to Him for fruitfulness that can only come from Him (Hosea 14).

## Synthesis

### God's loyalty to repentant Israel

<b>1–3</b>	<b>Unfaithful Gomer/faithful Hosea</b>
1:1–2:1	Personal marriage tragedy
2:2–2:3	Judgments/restoration
3	Gomer received back
<b>4–14</b>	<b>Unfaithful Israel/faithful God</b>
4:1–3	Lawsuit summarized: lack of...
4:4–6:3	Spiritual knowledge
4:4–19	Idolatry
5	Prostitution/restoration
6:1–3	Forgiveness for repentance
6:4–11:11	Loyal love
6:4–7:16	Formalism, vices, alliances
8:1–11:11	Dispersion coming
11:12–13:16	Faithfulness
11:12–12:14	Alliances, pride, rejecting prophets
13	False worship
14	Repentance yields fruitfulness

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

The way God motivated unfaithful Israel to be loyal to their LORD was by having Hosea restore his immoral wife, Gomer.

#### I. The way Hosea modeled God's loyalty to his unfaithful people was by restoring his immoral wife, Gomer (Hosea 1–3).

- A. Hosea's adulterous wife Gomer bears three children before the Assyrian deportation, who symbolize God rejecting Israel, yet He promises restoration in commitment to the Abrahamic Covenant (1:1–2:1).
  1. The 45-year period of the prophecy, preceding, during, and following the Assyrian deportation, reveals God's last-minute warnings to His wayward people, Israel (1:1).
  2. Hosea obeys God's instructions to marry Gomer, and she bears three children during her adultery, who symbolize God's rejection of Israel and compassion on Judah (1:2–9).
    - a) Hosea obeys God to marry Gomer, who bears a son named "God scatters" to predict God's dispersion of Jehu's house for murdering Ahaziah and his relatives (1:2–5; cf. 2 Kings 9:27ff.).
    - b) Gomer bears a daughter named "Not loved" to illustrate God's compassion upon Judah but His lack of compassion upon Israel (1:6–7).
    - c) Gomer bears a son named "Not my people" to illustrate God's rejection of the northern nation of Israel (1:8–9).
  3. God promises Israel a restored population, relationship, and land as His beloved people because of His faithfulness to the Abrahamic Covenant (1:10–2:1).
    - a) God promises that Israel will be numerous so that the nation will realize He will not wipe them out because of His faithfulness to the Abrahamic Covenant (1:10a).
    - b) God promises that Israel will once again be called His people because of His faithfulness to the Abrahamic Covenant (1:10b).
    - c) God promises that Israel will be restored to the Promised Land because of His faithfulness to the Abrahamic Covenant (1:11).

- d) God promises that Israel will once again be called His beloved people because of His faithfulness to the Abrahamic Covenant (2:1).

\*The Church is also called God's people in a quote from Hosea (Rom. 9:25-26), yet this does not annul God's promise to the nation. See W. Edward Glenny, "The 'People of God' in Romans 9:25-26," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 152 (January-March 1995): 42-59.

- B. God's strategy to woo Israel back to Himself after they trusted the Baals was to reject them, withhold their crops, and promise restoration due to His commitment to the Abrahamic Covenant (2:2-23).
  - 1. God officially rejects His "wife," Israel, and warns that He will make life difficult because of the nation's idolatry (adultery) so that Israel would see that returning to Him is best (2:2-13).
    - a) God's formal legal accusation against the people of Israel for their idolatry (adultery) officially declares His temporary rejection of them as His people (2:2a).
    - b) God will make life difficult due to Israel's idolatry (adultery) so the people would see that following God again is best (2:2b-7).
    - c) God warns that since the nation trusted the Baals for their crops, He would destroy them that Israel might acknowledge His Lordship (2:8-13).
  - 2. God promises that He will tenderly bring His faithless "wife", Israel, back to Himself to restore the covenant relationship due to His commitment to the Abrahamic Covenant (2:14-23).
    - a) God promises to woo His "wife," Israel, back to Himself again because of His commitment to the Abrahamic Covenant (2:14-20).
    - b) God promises to restore the covenant relationship with His faithless "wife" Israel because of His commitment to the Abrahamic Covenant (2:21-23).
- C. Hosea redeems Gomer from prostitution and quarantines her to depict God's future restoration of Israel after being away from the land (Hosea 3).
  - 1. Hosea redeems Gomer from prostitution by paying her debts and quarantining her from other men (3:1-3).
  - 2. Hosea's restoration of Gomer depicts God's future restoration of Israel after the nation returns to God "in the last days" (3:4-6).

## II. The way the LORD shows his loyalty to Israel was to indict them for lacking covenant loyalty but also to restore them to future fruitfulness (Hosea 4–14).

- A. God's lawsuit against Israel (4:1-3) promises judgment for lacking covenantal knowledge of God (4:4–6:3), loving loyalty (6:4–11:11), and faithfulness (11:12–13:16).
- B. God will judge Israel and Judah for lack of spiritual knowledge, resulting in prostitution and idolatry, but promises to accept them when they repent (4:4–6:3).
  - 1. God will judge Israel for lack of spiritual knowledge that results in rejecting God by participation in idolatry (4:4-19).
    - a) Israel's lack of spiritual knowledge is inexcusable and will bring judgment (4:4-9).
    - b) God warns of judgment for idolatry and prostitution so Israel might repent (4:10-19).
  - 2. Lack of knowledge in both Judah and Israel prevents them from repenting of prostitution and idolatry, but God promises that they will eventually repent and seek Him (Hosea 5).
    - a) Lack of knowledge in both Judah and Israel prevents them from repenting of prostitution and idolatry (5:1-7).
    - b) God warns both Judah and Israel of coming exile and prohibits trust in Assyria, but promises that they will eventually repent and seek Him (5:8-15).

- (1) God also warns Judah to repent so that they would not be judged with Israel (5:8-12).
  - (2) Israel should not rely on Assyria since Assyria will be God's means of judgment (5:13).
  - (3) Both nations will be carried into exile (5:14).
  - (4) Both nations will eventually repent and seek God (5:15).
3. Hosea encourages the nation to repent because of God's willingness to accept them back (6:1-3).
- C. God will judge Israel for substituting loving loyalty (*hesed*) to God's covenant with formalistic sacrifice, idolatry, wickedness, and alliances (6:4–11:11).
1. God desires Israel's loving loyalty, but instead observes formalistic sacrifice, internal vices, and external alliances (6:4–7:16).
    - a) God prefers loving loyalty (*hesed*) over sacrifice, but Israel's murders and prostitution show how it broke the covenant (6:4-11).
      - (1) God expresses to Israel His desire for loving loyalty (*hesed*) over formalistic sacrifices so that the nation could see how she broke the covenant (6:4-7).
      - (2) God proves the lack of loving loyalty among the people by citing their murder and prostitution (6:8-11).
    - b) The internal vices and external alliances of Israel both show a lack of loving loyalty to God's covenant and God's right to judge (7:1-16).
      - (1) God deplores Israel's internal actions of deceit, thievery, lying, adultery, drunkenness, lust, and murder, all of which show a lack of loving loyalty to God's covenant (7:1-7).
      - (2) God deplores Israel's external alliances with Egypt and Assyria and will destroy the nation for refusing to seek Him (7:8-16).
  2. God describes a judgment of dispersion to come upon Israel for replacing loving loyalty with idolatry and alliances (8:1–11:11).
    - a) God describes the dispersion coming upon Israel for forsaking loving loyalty for idolatrous worship and alliances to justify His impending judgment (Hosea 8–9).
      - (1) God shows how Israel has replaced dependence upon His law with reliance on idolatry and alliances to explain why He will soon judge the nation (Hosea 8).
        - (a) Israelites claim to know God but reject loving loyalty to His covenant by appointing godless kings and by idolatry (8:1-4).
        - (b) Israelites engage in calf worship at Samaria (8:5-7).
        - (c) Israel's alliance with Assyria will bring them under foreign oppression (8:8-10).
        - (d) The people will return to Egypt because of their idolatry (8:11-14).
      - (2) God describes the dispersion coming upon the people for lacking loving loyalty shown in rejecting Hosea and participating in false worship (Hosea 9).
        - (a) Israel should not cheer over being spared from Damascus' defeat by Assyria [733 BC], as lacking loving loyalty will send them to Egypt and Assyria (9:1-6).
        - (b) Israel's rejection of God's prophets brought them deep into corruption (9:7-9).
        - (c) Israel's land will be barren because of false worship at Baal-peor and Gilgal, so that God will vindicate Himself for His chastening (9:10-17).

- b) God compares Israel with a luxuriant vine, trained heifer, and loved son to illustrate the nation's idolatry and wickedness instead of loving loyalty (10:1–11:11).
  - (1) God compares Israel with a luxuriant vine that credits idolatry for its prosperity and as a result became increasingly faithless (10:1-10).
  - (2) God compares Israel with a heifer (a young cow that has not produced a calf) that God designed to show loving loyalty, but showed wickedness instead (10:11-15).
  - (3) God compares Israel to a loved son whose father could not reject despite his idolatry and murder (11:1-11).
- D. God warns Israel of judgment for its faithlessness to the covenant to motivate the people to seek God as Jacob did at Bethel (11:12–13:16).
  - 1. God warns Israel against faithlessness to the covenant shown in its pride to motivate the people to seek God as Jacob did at Bethel (11:12–12:14).
    - a) God warns the nation that its lying shows faithlessness in covenants with Assyria and Egypt as well as with God (11:12–12:2).
    - b) God reminds the people how Jacob met Him at Bethel to motivate them to also return to faithfulness to the covenant (12:3-6).
    - c) God warns that material prosperity is not a result of righteousness and promises that the nation will again live in tents [rather than houses] (12:7-9).
    - d) God reminds Israel that it has historically rejected God's prophets with idolatry and bloodshed that the nation might recognize God's anger leading to judgment (12:10-14).
  - 2. God warns that the people's unfaithfulness to the covenant, as evidenced by their false worship throughout history, will result in a coming destruction (Hosea 13).
    - a) Israel's obvious faithlessness to the covenant, seen in Baal worship, idol craftsmanship, human sacrifice, and kissing calf-idols, will cut short the nation's life span (13:1-3).
    - b) God warns of impending destruction for being faithless throughout its history despite His constant faithfulness shown since the Exodus (13:4-16).
- E. God calls the wise and righteous in Judah to turn to Him and promises fruitfulness that can only come from Him (Hosea 14).
  - 1. The nation must repent and turn to Him rather than to idols or alliances (14:1-3).
  - 2. God promises to heal Israel's apostasy and make the nation fruitful again (14:4-7).
  - 3. Since He alone provides prosperity, there is no value in clinging to idols (14:8).
  - 4. The wise and righteous who understand the prophecy must obey the ways of the LORD (14:9).

## Gomer's Children

Hosea and Gomer were not the only object lessons of God's faithful love towards Israel in the prophecy of Hosea. As their children grew up and friends and family spoke their unusual names, this also continually reminded others that God would replace His seemingly heartless judgments with a compassionate restoration of the nation to the land as God's chosen people.

<b>Text</b>	Hosea 1:2-5	Hosea 1:6-7	Hosea 1:8
<b>Name</b>	Jezreel	Lo-Ruhamah	Lo-Ammi
<b>Sex</b>	Boy	Girl	Boy
<b>Hebrew</b>	יִזְרְעֵאל	לֹא רַחֲמָה	לֹא עַמִּי
<b>Translation</b>	"He [God] scatters"	"No compassion"	"Not my people"
<b>Meaning</b>	God will <i>scatter</i> Israel by Assyria just like Jehu scattered (killed) Ahaziah at the valley of Jezreel	God will not have <i>pity</i> as Assyria conquers Israel but He will protect Judah from these invaders	God will not call Israel His <i>people</i> for a long time
<b>Past Judgment</b>	Assyria <i>scattered</i> Israel among Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Russia, etc. for 2000 years (starting in 722 BC)	God <i>destroyed</i> Samaria in 722 BC but allowed Jerusalem 136 more years before its 586 BC destruction	Intermarriage with pagans hindered Israel from being called God's <i>children</i>
<b>Future Hope</b>	God will <i>regather</i> Israel with Judah (1:10a, 11b) prior to Christ's return	God will compassionately show his love by restoring the nation under Messiah (1:11, 2:1b)	After Israel trusts in Messiah (1:11a), she will once again be deemed God's people (2:1a)
<b>Play on words</b>	Jezreel also means "plants" so God's "scattering" will be His way to replant the nation in the land again (1:11c)	As Lo-Ruhamah is feminine (girl's name), so God will show the compassion of a mother on His own children	As Lo-Ammi is masculine (boy's name) and men alone bore the family name, so God will give His fatherly name to both Israel and Judah



## Did Hosea Divorce Gomer?

As divorce and remarriage become more common in the church, people are asking if biblical support can be granted to the practice (especially in the case of adultery). Sometimes the example of Hosea and Gomer is cited to defend divorce and remarriage, as alluded to with support by Jay E. Adams in *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible*, 29. Similarly, if God “divorced” Israel for spiritual adultery, why cannot believers do the same for physical adultery? “After all,” it is argued, “God even *commanded* Hosea to divorce his unfaithful wife.” But is this true? Did Hosea divorce Gomer?

### Evidence Cited for Divorce

1. God commanded individual Israelites to rebuke their “mother”—the apostate nation of Israel as a whole—which is followed by the Lord’s declaration, “for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband” (Hos. 2:2; cf. 1:9). This seems to indicate a broken marriage (divorce).
2. God claims to betroth Israel again three times (Hos. 2:19-20). Why would such language be used if no divorce ever occurred?
3. Gomer says, “I will go and return to my first husband” (Hos. 2:7, NASB, KJV), showing that the first marriage had been dissolved.
4. “God divorced Israel for adulterous fornication” (Adams, 56; cf. Jer. 3:8).
5. God asked Israel, “Where is the certificate of divorce, by which I have sent your mother away?” (Isa. 50:1).

### Evidence Cited for Separation (No Divorce)

*Correlate point-by-point with each point above*

1. In Hosea 2:2, God never claims to have divorced Israel. “The point God is making is that as adultery destroys marriage, so idolatry destroys the intimate and unique relationship between God and His people” (J. Carl Laney, *The Divorce Myth*, 104).
2. Hosea 2:19-20 uses the word “betroth” only in the sense of the relationship between God and His people being renewed (Laney, 104).
3. God prohibits remarriage to a woman who has been divorced and remarried, then divorced again (Deut. 24:1-4; Jer. 3:1), so this cannot be the meaning of the “first husband” of Hosea 2:7. Rather, the NIV renders it correctly: “I will go back to my husband as at first” which recalls the beauty of her marriage to Hosea before her adultery.
4. Jeremiah 3:8 states that God married both Israel *and her sister Judah*. Therefore, if one wants to establish theology based on an allegorical hermeneutic, this will also advocate polygamy (William A. Heth, *Jesus and Divorce*, 136). Besides, God declares a few verses later that the people should return, since He was still their husband (Jer. 3:14).
5. Isaiah 50:1, noted above, expects a *negative* answer to the question. The point is that God never did give the nation a bill of divorce.
6. God Himself says, “I hate divorce” (Mal. 2:16), so why would He command Hosea to do something here which He prohibits elsewhere?
7. God told Hosea to “show your love to your wife again” (Hos. 3:1). Note that she is still called his wife and no remarriage is mentioned or even implied.

Hosea’s marriage tragedy illustrates God’s continued loyal love of covenant faithfulness while unfaithful Gomer persisted in her immorality. Thus, Hosea serves as God’s ideal in the case of a broken marriage, for he shows covenant faithfulness rather than divorce (Heth, 125). This is consistent with Paul’s advice to believers not to divorce but to remain unmarried to facilitate reconciliation (1 Cor. 7:10).

The issue of divorce and remarriage is complex, with reputable scholars supporting a range of positions. The perspectives are laid out in H. Wayne House, ed., *Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1990) where scholars interact with another from four angles: No Divorce & No Remarriage (J. Carl Laney), Divorce but No Remarriage (William Heth), Divorce & Remarriage for Adultery and Desertion (Thomas Edgar; cf. Jay Adams above), and Divorce & Remarriage under a Variety of Circumstances (Larry Richards). These four views are already listed in order of priority as they relate to the scriptural data.