

THE BOOK OF HOSEA

Lesson 01, Introduction

It is not possible to properly teach the fascinating and important Book of Hosea without establishing a historical and theological background as context. That is what we shall begin with today in our Introduction to the Book of Hosea.

If you haven't studied the Torah with me (or someone else), beginning with Genesis, you will be at a decided disadvantage to those who have because no matter which Bible books you might study, not beginning at the beginning of the Bible leaves you unprepared. Each book assumes you already have certain knowledge of what came earlier; there is no remedial training in the Scriptures. Hosea is no different especially because Israel's historical, religious, and political situation at the time he wrote is nearly as important to grasp as is Israel's problematic relationship with God that had developed.

I will indeed offer you some of that historical information to build the context of Hosea's writings; but it will be relatively brief and necessarily incomplete. So, if you have the time and interest, and have not studied the Torah, I urge you to stop now and go do so and then come back in the future to this study of Hosea. However, if you prefer to continue without that foundation... then welcome!

The best place to start is probably by defining what Hosea was; he was known as a Prophet of Yehoveh... the God of Israel; although nowhere in the book named for him does he or anyone else make that claim. In fact, his name is only mentioned twice in the entire book. Rather he is called prophet because he ticks off the boxes necessary for his peers and for those who followed him to rightfully declare him a prophet of God. What's a Prophet? That may sound rather basic and simplistic for those who have spent at least a little time in Church or Synagogue, but I assure you it is not. What a Prophet was and did evolved over the centuries.

From a purely theological viewpoint the term prophet speaks of someone who has a special connection with the divine that is well beyond the ordinary. Most of

the known pagan religions had prophets, so the office wasn't limited to the Hebrew faith. Sometimes that divine connection seems as basic as but a good relationship between a human and their god or gods. Biblically it often comes at times when such a relationship is in short supply. Sometimes it can be the prophet used as that divinity's earthly mouthpiece to deliver a message, or as one who carries out certain actions on the divinity's behalf. At other times a prophet is a teller of the future; a seer. The first person called Prophet in the Bible was Abraham; let's see in what way he was a prophet.

CJB Genesis 20:1-7 *Avraham traveled from there toward the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. While living as an alien in G'rar, ² Avraham was saying of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister"; so Avimelekh king of G'rar sent and took Sarah. ³ But God came to Avimelekh in a dream one night and said to him, "You are about to die because of the woman you have taken, since she is someone's wife." ⁴ Now Avimelekh had not come near her; so he said, "Lord, will you kill even an upright nation? ⁵ Didn't he himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In doing this, my heart has been pure and my hands innocent." ⁶ God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in doing this, your heart has been pure; and I too have kept you from sinning against me. This is why I didn't let you touch her. ⁷ Therefore, return the man's wife to him now. He is a prophet, and he will pray for you, so that you will live. But if you don't return her, know that you will certainly die- you and all who belong to you."*

Here the term prophet indicates Abraham's close personal one-on-one relationship with his God, and therefore whatever Abraham is doing he and his family will be divinely protected and directed by his God. If we were to read a little more about Abraham we'd find that he has audible 2-way conversation with God, and that God instructs Abraham to do certain things, and Abraham even debates with Him.

Next (chronologically speaking) we read of Aaron, Moses's brother, being described as a prophet.

CJB Exodus 7:1-2 *But ADONAI said to Moshe, "I have put you in the place of God to Pharaoh, and Aharon your brother will be your prophet. ² You are to say*

everything I order you, and Aharon your brother is to speak to Pharaoh and tell him to let the people of Isra'el leave his land

So, at this point (perhaps 500 years after Abraham), Aaron is described as Moses's prophet and not God's except by indirect means. Moses has the close divine connection, and not Aaron. In this particular case Moses tells Aaron what to say to the Pharaoh. Moses, as a Mediator, has his own prophet... his brother (well before Aaron became High Priest). What does this prophet do? He simply passes along what Moses, God's Mediator, tells him to pass along. So, Aaron as prophet is quite different from Abraham.

Skipping forward (chronologically) we read in Deuteronomy a general instruction from God through Moses about prophets. The broad implication is that prophets of all kinds and varieties are going to arise and begin to play an increasing role in the lives of God's people, Israel.

CJB Deuteronomy 13:2-4 ² ***"If a prophet or someone who gets messages while dreaming arises among you and he gives you a sign or wonder,*** ³ ***and the sign or wonder comes about as he predicted when he said, 'Let's follow other gods, which you have not known; and let us serve them,'*** ⁴ ***you are not to listen to what that prophet or dreamer says. For ADONAI your God is testing you, in order to find out whether you really do love ADONAI your God with all your heart and being.***

As Bible history unfolds we are led to the person who would transition Israel from the time of Judges (which was shortly following Israel's arrival to Canaan) to the time of the Kings a few hundred years later: Samuel is introduced. Raised by a priest, and at times operating like one, we read this about Samuel:

CJB 1 Samuel 3:20-21 ²⁰ ***All Isra'el from Dan to Be'er-Sheva became aware that Sh'mu'el had been confirmed as a prophet of ADONAI.*** ²¹ ***ADONAI continued appearing in Shiloh, for ADONAI revealed himself to Sh'mu'el in Shiloh by the word of ADONAI.***

Samuel's role is a strange hybrid of priest and prophet. Not quite a mediator like Moses, but of a much higher recognized status than a strange new group of men

that had sprung up called the **Nevi'im**. **Nevi'im** (which in biblical Hebrew is usually translated as prophets) were men whose roles in Israelite society are hard to pin down. They weren't prophets like Samuel, Moses, Aaron or Abraham. There's no actual mention of direct communication between them and God, nor are they like Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah or the more familiar prophets that would come later. The **Nevi'im** tended to operate in groups, and their main calling card was to go into trances or to speak ecstatically (that is, speaking in very mystical ways while in a state of high emotion). They were considered the holy men of the time, lived in communes, and they were respected by the people. What religious authority they carried isn't clear, and how someone was selected and accepted into the community of **Nevi'im** isn't clear either.

CJB 1 Sam. 10:5-8 ***⁵ After that, you will come to Giv'ah of God, where the P'lishtim are garrisoned. On arrival at the city there, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place, preceded by lutes, tambourines, flutes and lyres; and they will be prophesying. ⁶ Then the Spirit of ADONAI will fall on you; you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man! ⁷ When these signs come over you, just do whatever you feel like doing, because God is with you. ⁸ Then you are to go down ahead of me to Gilgal, and there I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and present sacrifices as peace offerings. Wait there seven days, until I come to you and tell you what to do."***

Whatever the purpose and function of these "groups of prophets" were, clearly at least some of them were doing the will of God and had some type of relationship with Him. By the time of David these **Nevi'im** seemed to play an increasing role in worship, spiritual discernment, and in bringing the word of truth to Israel's leaders. In fact, at this point we find prophets like Nathan being assigned to specific Israelite Kings to bring them God's instructions.

After the reigns of Kings David and Solomon, and the immediate civil war that followed Solomon's death, Israel was split apart into 2 Kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom was called Israel (although it was more often called Ephraim), and the Southern Kingdom was called Judah. The Northern Kingdom consisted of 10 of the 12 Israelite tribes, with the Southern Kingdom representing the remaining 2. It is at this time, during the reigns of Kings Ahab and Ahaziah, that the very strange and enigmatic Elijah appeared. Elijah was also called prophet.

Elijah was quite different from any preceding person called prophet. He was not assigned to be a source of Godly wisdom to an Israelite king. He also wasn't at all like the mystical men of the *Nevi'im*. He didn't perform priest-like duties nor did he fade away into trances. Rather, Elijah's job was to forcefully and bluntly tell Israel that God was very unhappy with them because they had forsaken Him and were worshipping Canaanite gods; particularly Ba'al. And that as such Israel was on a collision course with Yehoveh that would result in a catastrophe.

Next we come to the group of prophets that most Bible students are familiar with. Men like Jonah, Amos, Isaiah, Ezekiel... and Hosea. These are called by scholars "the writing prophets". In other words, these men wrote down their prophetic words for posterity. The writing prophets have Bible books named for them. The writing prophets are further divided into the minor and the major prophets. What's the difference? Only in the length of their writings; their importance, religious status, or significance plays no role. The shorter books are called minor; the longer books called major. So, our Hosea is, on that basis, classified as a minor prophet.

Although prophets that came later, after Hosea, also had different roles than their predecessors we won't go any further as it isn't pertinent to our study. The important point is that Prophet is a very broad term and cannot be easily shoved into a common mold or definition. Hosea was most similar to Elijah, and probably could be called Elijah's successor, because he was tasked by God with bringing Israel a message they didn't want to hear; a strong message of chastisement followed with guaranteed impending doom. It was a doom brought about from their faithlessness to Yehoveh. A doom that was already in motion and from which nothing they could do could prevent it; in God's judgment of them they had passed the point of no-return. All they could do was to accept it, prepare for it, and understand why it was going to happen.

I'll take a few minutes to pause and hope to impress upon you something that I think is critical for our day and time, and I believe you will agree with me that it **is** important. Before I do that, in order to conclude the general subject of prophets, let me say that although in no way do I classify myself as a prophet, in some ways (especially as we see it applied in the New Testament) I am. This is because by New Testament times the terms prophet and prophesy had continued

to evolve until it eventually came to mean a person of faith in the God of Israel who studied, interpreted, and spoke about the Holy Scriptures. So, today while most any Bible teacher could legitimately be thought of as a prophet in that narrow New Testament sense, because that term is much too often misused, misunderstood, and misappropriated, it is my opinion that a Pastor, Rabbi, or Bible teacher is best to steer clear of anointing oneself with such a title; and further he or she shouldn't allow others to call them prophet.

For hundreds of years Christians, due to misunderstandings of the New Testament and with little knowledge of the Old, have a belief (or at least a feeling) that God will somehow always strive with us personally as individuals, and also on a larger scale with mankind in general, and avoid pouring out His wrath upon us. This line of thinking is primarily due to the doctrine that "God is love", and therefore how could a loving God ever intentionally cause harm to humans, which He created? Especially to those individuals who claim to worship Him? Further, that whatever outpouring of God's disfavor and wrath might theoretically ever come, it will always be well into some hazy future or happen to some other people or nation than ours because we're good enough that it ought not to happen to us... at least we're good when compared to others. Another almost instinctive belief is that sufficient repentance, or even just being especially compassionate, can always deter God's anger and the consequences of past sins. The Bible tells us that God deals with humanity in two distinct but related spheres: first He weighs out our individual lives, and second He judges according to whatever group (corporate) associations we might have, with the entire group receiving a common judgment. The most common "group association" that the Bible deals with is one's tribe, kingdom or nation.

Another mistaken belief (that in no way is backed up biblically) is that with the advent of Christ, the way God deals with disobedient and faithless humanity has changed. His severity has changed to mercy. That is, since the divine Messiah Yeshua is considered as the epitome of love and mercy, then how God dealt with Israel in the Old Testament era (harshly) has no bearing on how God will deal with us in the present or the future.

If we will open our minds and our hearts to God, what we will learn in Hosea is that we are today living in an era that is nearly identical to the condition of Israel

in Hosea's era. God's wrath is near and inevitable (exactly how near none of us know); and on a corporate level His wrath is not going to be satisfied by a community of any size or nature simply being nicer people. That is, while our individual repentance along with trust in Jesus is most certainly welcomed by God and indeed turns away His anger from us at Judgment Day, humanity as a group is already judged as faithless and idolatrous; doomed just as was the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom. Humanity's improvement from an earthly perspective has cyclically inched up and slid back down over the ages, but always the overall trajectory seems to be downward. As a race, we have not become less violent, less greedy or more moral. God's judgment is not based on human standards or how we judge ourselves, but rather by His standards that never change. His judgment for our entire planet is already written in stone because of humanity's persistent failings. There is no holding off His wrath and the time of it has already been determined in Heaven. No amount of our pleading or the newfound goodness of a relative few will ward it off (even if that few amounts to a few millions).

What we will learn from Hosea is that even what was thought to be the community of the Hebrew faithful... a community of 10 Israelite tribes... that insisted it worshipped Yehoveh and lived their lives righteously, had thoroughly deceived themselves and instead were living a wicked lie. They had drifted so far from God's laws and commands, and had instead taken up the worthless manmade doctrines of their leaders, that they were living lives of immorality and faithlessness all the while steadfastly believing they were in God's good stead. In fact, it's not as though the 10 tribes Hosea is speaking to even thought about it much. No one told another "We need to examine what we believe and see if it is in accordance with the Torah and the Law of Moses". Rather, they told one another how good they knew they were and how their worship was pleasing to God.

The vast spectrum of the Judeo-Christian faith today as religious institutions (not necessarily as individual houses of worship) is equally self-deceived in many ways. I'm speaking in general of course, always acknowledging that there are pockets of God worshippers everywhere who do diligently seek Him and strive to be obedient as **biblically** prescribed as opposed to doctrinally prescribed. The two main branches of these ancient religious institutions today operate primarily

on manmade traditions, not necessarily realizing it. The nearly universal action of a gentile-led Christianity so long ago severing itself from the Torah would inevitably lead to this faith-calamity because the standard for Godliness was set aside and no longer known. That one event of stripping the Torah from our faith (that was formalized in the 4th century) left Believers rudderless, with each person and denomination determining to do what was right in their own eyes while always, of course, thinking it "good". Likewise, the nearly universal action of Judaism (beginning well before the birth of Christ) in creating untold volumes of manmade religious rules that very often collide with or even usurp God's plain commands in the Scriptures, have resulted in the same problematic muddle as Christianity finds itself. Neither religious institution really serves Yehoveh as He demands, even though both insist they do. Instead, both serve only themselves having become disobedient and idolatrous. Why idolatrous? I choose that term because we're going to find that idolatry is the primary offense of Israel against God (in Hosea) that results in God's wrath of exiling them from the Land by means of invasion from Assyria. In modern times God worshippers think of idolatry only as worshipping wooden or stone figurines of various gods. But to God it means something far broader. Today in the name of Jesus many serve the gods of humanism and populism all the while pleading that we don't. We do that due to a self-induced blindness to the Holy Scriptures and because the Church and Synagogue have been all too happy to accommodate our trendy personal wants, desires, dreams and pleasures by concocting doctrines that seem to make our behavior acceptable to God.

From our diet, to our observances of holy days, to the definition of marriage, to gender issues, much of the Church and Synagogue has decided to set aside biblical ordinances and instead has adopted the latest fashionable demands of our ever-evolving national cultures in order to keep the seats and treasuries of our houses of worship sufficiently filled with happy people. We will learn quickly in the Book of Hosea that this is precisely what the 10 tribes that formed the Northern Kingdom had done and as a result their fate was sealed without them having an inkling of it.

Another thing we'll see in our Hosea study is that when a prophet of Yehoveh attempts to tell his Israelite brothers such things, the prophet is despised for it. His warnings fall mostly upon deaf ears and hardened hearts. People of all eras

like what they like. People of all walks of life sin because they like to sin. People nearly universally don't want true change in ourselves, we just want our circumstances to improve. People generally get angry when told we are wrong. And especially religious people don't want to be told that so much of what we might believe and practice isn't of God, but rather it is of men. My prayer as we go forward in this study is for God's words through Hosea to fall upon listening ears and softened hearts. And that we make the message personal and contemporary; not merely an intellectual recollection of a stark warning meant for an ancient people in a long- ago time (even though it was that as well).

There is one outstanding difference (terrifying, really) between Hosea's message to Israel and what God was about to bring upon them, versus what God is soon going to bring upon us, as part of the entire global community of men. God's intention for Israel was to purify them from the fatal germ of Ba'al worship that had so deeply infected them that it destroyed their relationship with God. He would do this by punishing them severely for breaking His covenant, and removing them to far off places from the now ruined Land of Promise that he had given to them centuries earlier. But... He also reassured Israel that (after a long time) He would redeem them and draw them back to a regenerated Land. This drama reveals God battling for the very soul of Israel.

On the other hand, God's intention for global humanity in the near future is to purify the earth from those human beings who are infected with the fatal germ of humanism and idolatry. It will be very much like the Great Flood. Most of mankind was not in Noah's time, and will not in the near future, be saved from the purification of God's wrath. The Lord will not push humanity away for a while in order to draw them back later, as He did with the 10 tribes. So rather than redeem and return, God will destroy. The only exceptions to that destruction will be the remnant of mankind which, through sincere repentance and an acceptance of the Lordship of our Messiah Yeshua, are redeemed on a spiritual level individual by individual. Although many of these redeemed exceptions may still die a physical death as collateral damage during the time of divine planet-wide purification (God's wrath), nonetheless these relative few... the repentant faithful... will live on eternally in the closest possible relationship with God. That last part is the only hope there is. This is the hope that we are to strive for and cling to as the End Times calamity draws nearer and when we finally allow

the reality of its certainty and its horror to penetrate our dulled senses. I suspect that of the many people listening to this lesson right now, this may not be what you had hoped to hear. This is not particularly uplifting and joyful, is it? It was not intended to be. It was intended to be sobering and to be the truth. That is the tone of Hosea's message, and so that is the tone I mean to impart to us all of the 21st century. Let's talk now about the era and the circumstances that Hosea lived in that led to this message of doom.

The era and circumstances in which we (and every generation) live are enormous influencers of how we think, how our worldviews are shaped, and thus how we live our lives. In our busy lives we probably don't contemplate it very often because our current reality is what it is, even if we might wish it was something else. We only infrequently pause long enough to think about how we got here from there in our lives as individuals, let alone reflecting on the far larger picture about the long journey our nation or global society has taken to get to where it is at this moment. Nor, when it comes to our faith, do we usually ask ourselves the all-important question: **why** do we believe what we believe? But, Hosea is acutely aware of how historically and religiously Israel's current circumstances came to arrive at such a sorry state, and he explains it.

Hosea lived and prophesied during the 8th century B.C. Israel (meaning the 10 tribes forming the Northern Kingdom) was extremely prosperous and generally at peace with its neighbors. This peace was enabled by the kings of Israel in the few decades prior to, and during, Hosea's lifetime by making treaties with their gentile neighbors. They also encouraged intermarriage for the sake of a happy co-existence, and adopting their neighbors' gods (along with many of their worship practices) because it was a very attractive religion that these pagans practiced. The Israelites were perfectly happy to accept and assimilate all these things into their Hebrew culture because of the peace and prosperity that derived from those policies. Yehoveh remained Israel's national god, but the Israelites bowed down to other gods as well. These other gods seemed to be of practical use for them. One god was for rain; another for victory in battle; another for fertility, and so on. Jeroboam II was the King of Israel when Hosea first prophesied. That would have been in the range of 793 – 753 B.C.

It is critical that when reading Hosea (or anything in the Old Testament after the time of Solomon) that we grasp that Israel had ceased to be a single united nation under one king. In fact, Israel as a single unified nation only ever existed under Kings David and Solomon...for the very short time span of about 70 years. By Hosea's day, Israel had been existing for more than 150 years as two separate nations (Kingdoms in reality) under 2 separate governments with 2 separate kings. In biblical terms 150 years doesn't seem all that long to us. But to get a better sense for just how long 150 years is, that's about how long it has been from the time of the American Civil War until today. And who can relate to much of anything about that war? We only know what little we might know about that war and era if we were to read a history book. So, by Hosea's day all that any living Israelite had experienced was that some of their tribes made up one kingdom, and the other tribes another. It was normal; it's how it was.

The Southern Kingdom of Judah and the Northern Kingdom of Israel didn't have particularly good relations with one another. Skirmishes broke out occasionally, and more serious confrontations from time to time. Judah tended to remain a little more isolated in their dealings with their gentile neighbors, while Israel in the north readily embraced their local neighbor's ways and even more important they sought to appease Assyria.

Another crucial bit of knowledge we need as we prepare to study Hosea is that Israel (the Northern Kingdom of 10 tribes) more often than not went by the name of Ephraim. This was because of the 10 tribes of the North; Ephraim was by far the most dominant one. So, Hosea will switch back and forth between calling it Israel or Ephraim. It's no different than our switching back and forth (even in one conversation) between the terms America and The United States. While they might technically mean something different, in common usage they are just 2 ways of expressing the same thing.

Hosea lived in the Northern Kingdom; where exactly we don't know. Due to its peace and prosperity, Israel was a satisfied and complacent population. However, when their King, Jeroboam II, died in 753 B.C. it ended Israel's longest serving dynasty that had begun with King Jehu nearly a hundred years earlier. When a dynasty ends, it leaves a power vacuum that someone is going to fill, usually through violence. The first to fill it was Zechariah (not the Prophet). He became

the new king of the Northern Kingdom but was never able to implement his family as a dynasty. Instead of his sons and grandsons ascending to the throne in succession as it was with Jehu's dynasty, Zechariah was assassinated within only months after taking office. No fewer than 6 Israelite kings ruled over Israel during the next 30 years, each being murdered by the one to follow. This produced chaos and instability and along with it, Israel's economy sank. Thus, Israel went from prosperity to desperation within a generation. Hosea prophesied during the last few years of Jeroboam II's reign and then throughout this period of rapid deterioration of Israel; we can see this progression reflected in his words.

So, one thing we must take from this is that Hosea wrote over a long period of time; decades. No doubt he wrote narratives about whatever the current situation was, then time would pass and he would write more, but in light of the changed situation. This would repeat a few times. The result is that we see a number of what language scholars call "styles" of writing reflected in his prophetic book. These style changes have caused much consternation and disagreement within the Bible academic community. Some conclude that each different style reflects a change to a different author. Others say different editors over the years redacted what was originally written and this accounts for the different styles. Yet some Bible commentators like Douglas Stuart and James Luther Mayes take a little more balanced view that naturally Hosea's writings over the course of perhaps 35 years would look and sound a little different as they went along, often with many years passing between segments. I agree with that. I can look back only 20 years to my own writings and compare them to my most recent and notice a definite difference in style. But more, it is unthinkable that there had not been some level of redaction over the centuries because all the ancient biblical writings were hand copied. And it is clear that as history progressed language terms and their meanings changed, even place names changed, and so an editor might take the liberty to change some of the original words to reflect that; this process likely happened more than once.

The good news is that we do have some manuscript fragments from the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls to make some comparisons. The bad news is that these fragments are not from the Book of Hosea itself but rather from a commentary made on the book probably by some Essene writer well before the time of Christ.

In Hebrew such a work is called a *peshet*. It is not so much that this *peshet* gives us information of exactly how the Book of Hosea existed in those days, but rather simply that it DID exist at that time, it was already well circulated, and it was considered as authoritative Holy Scripture.

Since intellectual honesty and frankness about what the Bible tells us has always been a fundamental principle of Seed of Abraham Torah Class (wherever it might lead us), then it is important to discuss another controversial aspect about Hosea. It is this: many fine Bible scholars claim that Hosea was written before the Book of Deuteronomy, and perhaps even before the Law of Moses was established as we find it in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. In fact, this view extends to a contention that the Book of Hosea very likely affected the creation of the Torah and Books of Law. This notion is also generally applied to all the OT prophets including Amos (who wrote about Judah's situation around the same time as Hosea was writing about Ephraim/Israel). Of course, such an understanding completely obliterates any notion of the history and evolution of Israel as we find it in the Scriptures as being accurate or true. So, to be clear: the notion is that the legal principles, morals, and the fundamental idea of a covenant relationship (The Covenant of Moses) being established between Israel and Yehoveh did not (in their view) come centuries **before** Hosea's era. Rather it is that the mere thought of these legal principles, societal morals, and of a special covenant relationship was actually an original thought of Hosea, and only later on was that thought adopted and expanded upon by other Israelites, eventually winding up as a complete, written legal code called the Law of Moses. The evidence simply doesn't validate this worldview. Rather this belief comes from a couple of notions that became quite popular among theologians as early as the late 19th century. Those notions are that the Bible is mostly religious fiction and myth disguised as actual history. And, even though these scholars are arguing from a position of 2 to 4 thousand years after the fact, some modern academics believe that due to their unquestionably high intellect and advanced education, they may just understand more of what these ancient biblical writers believed and meant by what they said, more of what was actually happening to them and around them during those times, and have a better grasp of the language nuances than some who wrote and lived at that time. When a person believes that way, then the evidence for them amounts to others of their respected profession agreeing with them. Yet the only hard evidence that exists is that the Old Testament Prophets...

and as concerns us presently, the Prophet Hosea... wrote their prophecies within the precepts of the already long-standing background of the Covenant of Moses, and not the other way around.

This matters because as we will see, Hosea bases his prophecies on the principle that Yehoveh and Israel had an existing covenant agreement (The Covenant of Moses). And that, as typical of all ancient covenants, there were good consequences for following the covenant terms and bad consequences for breaking them. The Holy Scriptures calls these the blessings and the curses. We are going to see that Hosea will take every divine complaint and attach it to one of the Laws of Moses... or more accurately... to one and then another of the 10 Commandments. Hosea will then proceed to explain God's response to Israel's violation of these various covenant terms by referring to the appropriate curse that each violation brings on.

There's still more we need to know to be prepared to study Hosea's words, but this is enough for today.