



CHRISTCOMMUNITY
CHURCH
Changed Hearts. Changed Lives. Changed Community.

The **PROPHECY**
of **HOSEA**

The Story of God's Redemptive
Justice and Covenant Love

INTRODUCTION

One of the major sticking points for many people is how to reconcile the tension of God’s justice (or judgment and wrath) with His love (or mercy and grace). We tend to lean too far to one characteristic versus the other. Some see God as perpetually angry with fire in His eyes and blood on His ever falling sword. Others view Him as this grandfatherly type figure who loves indiscriminately as He laughs off our sins as quaint silliness. Maybe we lean one way or the other based on whether we have sinned or been sinned against. As Krish Kandiah observes, “The Hosea Paradox exposes our sloppy thinking; we struggle with a God who accepts the unlovely, but we also struggle with thinking about God coming to a point where there are no more chances – we don’t want to experience the full extent of his judgment. Essentially, we want to play fast and loose with God. We want God’s faithfulness to extend as far as we need, but we want God’s judgment to come into play when other people are unjust to us.”¹ The Prophecy of Hosea grants us a beautiful picture of God’s redemptive justice and covenant love working together for the purpose of returning His people to Him to enjoy His blessings and peace.

We know very little about Hosea as a person. What we do know is that he was a native of the Northern Kingdom (also referred to as Israel or Ephraim²) who prophesied primarily to Israel from about 752/3 B.C. near the end of Jeroboam II’s reign to 722 B.C. when the Northern Kingdom would suffer defeat and exile at the hands of the Assyrians (see **2 Kings 17**). At the start of his prophetic career, the Northern Kingdom convulsed politically and spiritually as 2 kings, Zechariah and Shallum, were assassinated within the first 7 months following Jeroboam II. These convulsions would continue over the next 30 years as each king would continue in the idolatrous sins of Jeroboam (See **Appendix A: Table of Kings During Hosea’s Prophetic Ministry: 2 Kings 15**). The Prophecy of Hosea is the story of God’s pursuit of and call for the people to repent of their spiritual adultery and return to Him. Through Hosea’s lived

¹ Krish Kandiah, *Paradoxology: Why Christianity Was Never Meant to Be Simple* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2014), 133-4.

² Ephraim (a variant of “to be fruitful”) often served as shorthand for the North Kingdom because of the size of the tribe and the leaders that came from this tribe. They include Joshua, the successor to Moses, Samuel, the last judge and first prophet to the nation of Israel, and Jeroboam, the first king of the North Kingdom to rebel against the Davidic covenant and set up the golden bulls for false worship north of the temple. Hosea’s use of Ephraim in place of Israel or the North Kingdom seems to be a condemnation of their idolatry in the lineage of Jeroboam and a call to return in repentance to being faithful and fruitful.

prophecy and Israel's lived reality, we see God's use of redemptive justice and application of covenant love to draw His people back to Him.³

This story continues to be important for us today as we struggle with the distortions of the Angry, Judgmental Old Testament God and the Unconditionally Loving, All-Forgiving New Testament God that pervade our culture both inside and outside the church. Hosea will teach us how God uses His just judgments and discipline to draw us back to Him. We will learn that His justice proves patient and long developing. Hosea will also teach us of God's faithful and forgiving covenant love. We will also learn that His mercy and grace move swiftly and are longsuffering with His people. God's justice became redemptive for us in Christ suffering the wrath of God for the fullness of our sins past, present, and future. Jesus granted us His righteousness in exchange so that we could receive joy, peace, and hope in God's unfailing, eternally faithful covenant love. What the Northern Kingdom failed to discern and walk in, we now have full access to through the person and work of Christ! What the Northern Kingdom lost in its refusal to return and seek the Lord, we have had lavished upon us by our Abba Father through His means of grace!

We will continue to seek nourishment from our historic faith and the Old and New Testaments for our weekly devotion and worship. The calls to worship will come from the Psalms as they frequently speak to God's redemptive justice and covenant love. We will confess together each week **the Belgic Confession, Article 20: The Justice and Mercy of God in Christ** to remind us that the weight of God's justice for our sin so that we could receive God's lavish covenant love in the righteousness of Christ. Our assurances of pardon will come from various places in the New Testament to declare to us weekly that God has loved us freely in Christ who turned His anger away from absorbing Himself on our behalf. Our benedictory blessings each week will come from key texts in Hosea to remind us of God's intentions to bless His children. The goal of these various elements is to show us that God's justice and love are intertwined and serve His redemptive purposes for us as His children.

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities to pray for the various aspects of the Church. On Wednesdays, we will pray for the various missionaries, church plants, and missional ministries that we support at CCC. We also have the opportunity to pray on Saturday for those in our spheres of influence or prepare for the appropriate sacrament, and on Sunday, the Lord's Day Sabbath, to prepare ourselves for worship in the presence of the Lord. Our desire is to continue to facilitate and grow in our dependence on the Lord through prayer.

³ See **Appendix B: Excursus on Masculine and Feminine Imagery in Hosea**

May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek to for the Church to grow in the joy of salvation and unity in Christ for the sake of its mission in the world!

solI Deo gloria!

STRUCTURE of Hosea

PART 1: HOSEA'S LIVED PROPHECY: ^Ꝁ Metaphor of God's Redemptive Justice ^{and} Covenant Love

- 1:1:** Hosea's Historical Context
- 1:2-11:** Hosea's Call ^{and} Burden
- 2:1-23:** God's Redemptive Justice ^{and} Covenant Love
- 3:1-5:** Hosea's Longsuffering ^{and} Gomer's Redemption

PART 2: ISRAEL'S LIVED REALITY: ^{the} Promise of God's Redemptive Justice ^{and} Covenant Love

- 4:1-19:** God's Indictment Against Israel: No Faithfulness, Steadfast Love, ^{or} Knowledge of God
- 5:1-15:** God's Redemptive Justice, Part 1: God Departs ^{from} His People
- 6:1-3:** ^{The} Fruit of God's Redemptive Justice, Part 1: ^{The} Call to Return the Lord
- 6:4-7:16:** Israel's Adultery, Part 1: ^{The} Political Pursuit of Lesser Lovers
- 8:1-14:** Israel's Adultery, Part 2: ^{The} Spiritual Pursuit of Lesser Lovers
- 9:1-17:** God's Redemptive Justice, Part 2: ^{The} Loss of Blessings ^{and} Land
- 10:1-15:** Israel's Devastating Diagnosis: ^Ꝁ False Heart ⁱⁿ Need of God's Redemptive Justice
- 11:1-12:1:** God's Gracious Cure: ^{The} Declaration of His Covenant Love ^{for} His People
- 12:2-13:3:** God's Indictment Against Judah ^{and} Ephraim: ^Ꝁ Lack of Love ^{and} Justice
- 13:4-16:** God's Redemptive Justice, Part 3: ^{The} Devouring Lion
- 14:1-9:** ^{The} Fruit of God's Redemptive Justice, Part 2: ^{The} Call to Return ^{the} Lord's Covenant Love

SERMON SCHEDULE

Date	call to worship	ASSURANCE OF PARDON	Benediction	Sacrament
Sunday, 4/30: Hosea 1:1	Psalm 25	Revelation 19:6-9	Hosea 2:19-20	baptism
Sunday, 5/7: Hosea 1:2-11	Psalm 40	1 Peter 2:9-10	Hosea 2:19-20	the Lord's table
Sunday, 5/14: Hosea 2	Psalm 33	Ephesians 2:11-16	Hosea 2:19-20	
Sunday, 5/21: Hosea 3	Psalm 34	Luke 15:1-7	Hosea 2:19-20	
Sunday, 5/28: Hosea 4	Psalm 19	Hebrews 4:14-16	Hosea 6:1-3	the Lord's table
Sunday, 6/4: Hosea 5	Psalm 27	Revelation 21:1-8	Hosea 6:1-3	
Sunday, 6/11: Hosea 6:1-3	Psalm 85	Romans 5:1-5	Hosea 10:12	
Sunday, 6/18: Hosea 6:4-7:16	Psalm 36	Matthew 9:10-13	Hosea 10:12	the Lord's table
Sunday, 6/25: Hosea 8	Psalm 127	Colossians 3:1-11	Hosea 10:12	
Sunday, 7/2: Hosea 9	Psalm 81	Ephesians 1:3-10	Hosea 10:12	
Sunday, 7/9: Hosea 10	Psalm 126	1 Corinthians 15:42-49	Hosea 10:12	the Lord's table
Sunday, 7/16: Hosea 11:1-12:1	Psalm 139	Hebrews 10:11-18	Hosea 14:4-7	
Sunday, 7/23: Hosea 12:2-13:3	Psalm 62	Titus 2:11-14	Hosea 14:4-7	the Lord's table
Sunday, 7/30: Hosea 13:4-16	Psalm 49	1 Corinthians 15:54-58	Hosea 14:4-7	
Sunday, 8/6: Hosea 14	Psalm 86	Ephesians 2:1-10	Hosea 14:4-7	

Weekly CONGREGATIONAL CONFESSIO

We believe that God—who is perfectly merciful and also very just—sent His Son to assume the nature in which the disobedience had been committed, in order to bear in it the punishment of sin by His most bitter passion and death. So God made known His justice toward His Son, who was charged with our sin, and He poured out His goodness and mercy on us, who are guilty and worthy of damnation, giving to us His Son to die, by a most perfect love, and raising Him to lie for our justification, in order that by Him we might have immortality and eternal life.

the (BELGIC CONFESSIO, ARTICLE 20:

The Justice and Mercy of God in Christ

The Week of April 30th

MONDAY, 4/24: Psalm 25: Give thanks for the various ways in which the Lord has instructed and lead you in the paths of His steadfast love and faithfulness.

TUESDAY, 4/25: Revelation 19:6-9: What do you look forward to most about the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?

WEDNESDAY, 4/26: Pray for First Care Women's Clinic in Marietta that the Spirit would continue to draw abortion-minded men and women to their various services so as to have their hearts and minds changed to the glory of God.

THURSDAY, 4/27: Hosea 1:1: Pray for the word of the Lord to continue to come to His people in history through those who are called to speak it to His people. Pray for Cameron, Matt, and Robby as they preach through the Prophecy of Hosea.

FRIDAY, 4/28: Hosea 2:19-20: How have you been blessed by being wed to God in Christ?

SATURDAY, 4/29: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for baptism. Give thanks for God's provision of Christ as the redemptive bridegroom.

SUNDAY, 4/30: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY sabbath** ^{with} **baptism:** Pray for the means of grace to bear fruit that will be celebrated in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb to come.

The Week of May 7th

MONDAY, 5/1: Psalm 40: What are some ways that you have been blessed by putting your trust in the Lord instead of the prideful?

TUESDAY, 5/2: 1 Peter 2:9-10: Praise God for bringing you into His family and showing you mercy though you at one time were not worthy of either. Pray for an opportunity to share this with someone this week.

WEDNESDAY, 5/3: Pray for Joehann Guadalupe serving Campus Outreach at Dalton State that the Spirit would grow the ministry there for the glory of God.

THURSDAY, 5/4: Hosea 1:2-11: Do you struggle with relating to people you don't trust? Consider how hard Hosea's call and burden were given the circumstances. Give thanks for his obedient example for the Church.

FRIDAY, 5/5: Hosea 2:19-20: What are some ways in which you have been blessed by the faithfulness of the Lord?

SATURDAY, 5/6: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Give thanks for God's redemptive justice in the broken body of Christ and the covering of His covenant love in His shed blood.

SUNDAY, 5/7: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY SABBATH** ^{with the} **LORD'S TABLE:** Pray for the means of grace to nourish our faith so that we would remain faithful to the Lord.

The Week of May 14th

MONDAY, 5/8: Psalm 33: What are some things that have displayed the steadfast love of the Lord to you?

TUESDAY, 5/9: Ephesians 2:11-16: What are some ways in which you have experienced Christ's breaking down of the dividing walls of hostility that separate us from each other? Pray for our church to display this truth in greater ways to the glory of God.

WEDNESDAY, 5/10: Pray for the Larsens serving MTW NEXT that the Spirit would bear redemptive fruit among the youth in various parts of the world where they serve.

THURSDAY, 5/11: Hosea 2: What are some ways in which you have experience God's redemptive justice through His hedging you in and taking away the pleasures of your sinful desires?

FRIDAY, 5/12: Hosea 2:19-20: Pray for the Spirit to bless someone in our midst who has not previously known God's steadfast love and mercy with the effectual knowledge of His redeeming grace in Christ.

SATURDAY, 5/13: Pray for the Spirit to display God's steadfast love in and through your life for the benefit of those in your spheres of influence.

SUNDAY, 5/14: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to grant us a deeper understanding of God's redemptive justice and covenant love.

The Week of May 21st

MONDAY, 5/15: Psalm 34: What are some ways in which you have sought the Lord and He has answered you?

TUESDAY, 5/16: Luke 15:1-7: Give thanks to God for pursuing you in Christ through the Spirit and for the party that broke in Heaven when you were found.

WEDNESDAY, 5/17: Pray for those who volunteer at the Women's Extension that the Spirit would continue to forge edifying relationships and bear redemptive fruit to the glory of God.

THURSDAY, 5/18: Hosea 3: Praise God for His patient and perseverant pursuit of His people despite their repeated pursuits of lesser lovers.

FRIDAY, 5/19: Hosea 2:19-20: What are some ways in which you are blessed by the eternal nature of being betrothed to God?

SATURDAY, 5/20: Pray for someone you know that desperately needs to know that God has not given up on them.

SUNDAY, 5/21: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to display God's persistent love to us.

The Week of May 28th

MONDAY, 5/22: Psalm 19: What are some ways in which God's word has revived you and caused rejoicing in your heart?

TUESDAY, 5/23: Hebrews 4:14-16: Do you regularly draw near to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find help in a time of need?

WEDNESDAY, 5/24: Pray for the Stocks serving with MTW in SE Asia that the Spirit would continue to provide all that they need to continue the ministry to which they have been called.

THURSDAY, 5/25: Hosea 4: What proves to be the people of Israel's main problem? Do we struggle with these issues today?

FRIDAY, 5/26: Hosea 6:1-3: Give thanks to the Lord for providing a way to return to Him.

SATURDAY, 5/27: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Give thanks for the Lord not punishing and repaying us for our sinful deeds.

SUNDAY, 5/28: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY SABBATH** ^{with the} **LORD'S TABLE:**
Pray for the means of grace to nourish us in faithfulness, steadfast love, and knowledge of the God.

The Week of June 4th

MONDAY, 5/29: Psalm 27: What are some ways that you have been blessed by the gathering together of God's people to worship in the presence of the Lord?

TUESDAY, 5/30: Revelation 21:1-8: What do you most look forward to in the new heavens and new earth?

WEDNESDAY, 5/31: Pray for Mike Kennamer, MNA Disaster Response TAG Region, as he seeks to serve those in Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia affected by natural disasters.

THURSDAY, 6/1: Hosea 5: What does God take away from His people in this chapter? What is the intended result?

FRIDAY, 6/2: Hosea 6:1-3: What are some ways in which you have been blessed by the wounding grace of God?

SATURDAY, 6/3: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Give thanks for God's unwillingness to leave you lost and orphaned.

SUNDAY, 6/4: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY sabbath:** Pray for the means of grace to bear fruit worthy of celebration both in our midst and before the throne above.

Hosea 6:1-3

The Week of June 11th

MONDAY, 6/5: Psalm 85: Give thanks to God for the ways in which He has restored and revived you from your sin.

TUESDAY, 6/6: Romans 5:1-5: What grants you the ability to endure sufferings in this life to the glory of God?

WEDNESDAY, 6/7: Pray for Jody Stancil and Riverside Community Church as they continue to share and live out the Gospel in Cartersville, Georgia.

THURSDAY, 6/8: Hosea 6:1-3: How does this passage display God's redemptive justice and covenant love?

FRIDAY, 6/9: Hosea 6:1-3: Praise God for the blessing of His faithfulness to and nourishment of His people.

SATURDAY, 6/10: Pray for the Spirit to draw those you know who feel torn and struck down to return to the Lord.

SUNDAY, 6/11: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to refresh us as the spring rains that water the earth.

Hosea 6:4-7:16

The Week of June 18th

MONDAY, 6/12: Psalm 36: What are some ways in which you feasted on the abundance of God's house and drank from river of His delights?

TUESDAY, 6/13: Matthew 9:10-13: Pray for the Spirit to grant you opportunities to build relationships with those who need Jesus.

WEDNESDAY, 6/14: Pray for Daniel and Meredith Chen serving with Campus Outreach at KSU that the Spirit would continue to grant them discipleship opportunities.

THURSDAY, 6/15: Hosea 6:4-7:16: What are some pragmatic ways in which you have been unfaithful to God?

FRIDAY, 6/16: Hosea 10:12: What are you regularly sowing in righteousness?

SATURDAY, 6/17: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Give thanks for God's provision of the sacrifice necessary for our salvation in Christ.

SUNDAY, 6/18: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY sabbath** ^{with the} **LORD'S TABLE:**
Pray for the means of grace to provide what we need to offer ourselves a living sacrifice to the Lord.

The Week of June 25th

MONDAY, 6/19: Psalm 127: Who has built or is building your house (i.e. career, marriage, family, identity)? What is the result?

TUESDAY, 6/20: Colossians 3:1-10: When you are stressed out or in need where do you normally look for help?

WEDNESDAY, 6/21: Pray for the Robertsons serving with MTW in Chile that the Spirit would grow the number of churches in South America for the glory of God.

THURSDAY, 6/22: Hosea 8: What are some spiritual ways in which you have been unfaithful to God?

FRIDAY, 6/23: Hosea 10:12: Give thanks to God for being faithful to bless what you have sown in righteousness so that you would reap His steadfast love.

SATURDAY, 6/24: Pray for the Spirit to convict those you know who are seeking salvation by some other means than Christ.

SUNDAY, 6/25: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to write His word ever deeper upon our hearts and minds.

The Week of July 2nd

MONDAY, 6/26: Psalm 81: What best helps you to listen to and hear the Lord?

TUESDAY, 6/27: Ephesians 1:3-10: Give thanks to your Abba Father for adopting you and giving you access to all of the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places.

WEDNESDAY, 6/28: Pray for Wes and Kelly Calton serving with Reformed University Fellowship at KSU that the Spirit would continue to draw students to hear the Gospel.

THURSDAY, 6/29: Hosea 9: What does the Lord from Israel in this chapter? What was the intended purpose?

FRIDAY, 6/30: Hosea 10:12: What are some ways in which you are cultivating your heart and mind to receive the blessed refreshment of the Lord?

SATURDAY, 7/1: Pray for those you know who the Lord has removed His blessing from their lives in order to draw them back to Him that they would repent and return.

SUNDAY, 7/2: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Give thanks to the Lord for the opportunity to gather corporately and worship in His presence through His blessed means of grace.

The Week of July 9th

MONDAY, 7/3: Psalm 126: What could others see in your life that would cause them to say, “The Lord has done great things for them”?

TUESDAY, 7/4: 1 Corinthians 15:42-49: Praise God for sowing the imperishable Christ to rise and offer us to reap His image unto newness of life.

WEDNESDAY, 7/5: Pray for Chris Foglesong and Mount City Church that the Spirit will bring fruit to bear from the preaching and living out of the Gospel in Jasper, Georgia.

THURSDAY, 7/6: Hosea 10: What are some sinful things that you have sown? What did you reap as a result?

FRIDAY, 7/7: Hosea 14:4-7: Give thanks to the Lord for the blessing of Him loving you freely and turning His anger from you.

SATURDAY, 7/8: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord’s Table. Give thanks for Jesus’ willingness to suffer and die on our behalf so that we could drink deep of the cup of the new covenant.

SUNDAY, 7/9: ^{the} **LORD’S DAY SABBATH** ^{with the} **LORD’S TABLE:** Pray for the means of grace to nourish us to not grow weary in cultivating good things in our spheres of influence.

The Week of July 16th

MONDAY, 7/3: Psalm 139: Give thanks to God for your inability to truly escape His presence as His child.

TUESDAY, 7/4: Hebrews 10:11-18: What are some ways in which the finished high priestly work of Christ assures you in your faith?

WEDNESDAY, 7/5: Pray for Zach Wagoner serving with CO at KSU that the Spirit would grant him the opportunity to build relationships with those who don't yet believe.

THURSDAY, 7/6: Hosea 11:1-12:1: How does this chapter display God's covenant love for His people?

FRIDAY, 7/7: Hosea 14:4-7: What are some ways in which God loving you freely has blessed you?

SATURDAY, 7/8: Pray for those in your spheres of influence who need to experience God's covenant love.

SUNDAY, 7/9: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to shed God's love broadly in our hearts so that we may share this love with others.

Hosea 12:2-13:3

The Week of July 23rd

MONDAY, 7/10: Psalm 62: What is the only way in which we can be saved?

TUESDAY, 7/11: Titus 2:11-14: What should be the evidence of God's grace appearing and bringing salvation to our lives?

WEDNESDAY, 7/12: Pray for the Mills serving with MTW in Thailand that the Spirit would help them raise up native born disciples who help make disciples.

THURSDAY, 7/13: Hosea 12:2-13:3: What did the people of God lack as evidence of their failure to wait for the Lord?

FRIDAY, 7/14: Hosea 14:4-7: How have you been blessed by God turning His anger away from you?

SATURDAY, 7/15: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Give thanks for God's salvation through His grace alone in Christ alone by faith alone.

SUNDAY, 7/16: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY sabbath** ^{with the} **LORD'S table:**

Pray for the means of grace to help us hold fast to love and justice as we wait continually for God.

The Week of July 30th

MONDAY, 7/17: Psalm 49: What ultimately makes us all the same apart from the Lord?

TUESDAY, 7/18: 1 Corinthians 15:54-58: Give thanks to God for the defeat of sin and death in the resurrection of Christ.

WEDNESDAY, 7/19: Pray for Morgan Rogers serving with CO at KSU for the Spirit to provide relationships with girls on campus who need to walk in newness of life.

THURSDAY, 7/20: Hosea 13:4-16: What is the purpose of God's relentless judgment of Israel? Why is it necessary?

FRIDAY, 7/21: Hosea 14:4-7: What are some ways in which you have been blessed by your life being changed by God's transforming love?

SATURDAY, 7/22: Pray for God's relentless pursuit of those you know to come to redemptive fruition with the defeat of sin and death in their life.

SUNDAY, 7/23: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY sabbath:** Pray for the means of grace to remind us of the defeat of sin and death in the person and work of Christ.

The Week of August 6th

MONDAY, 7/24: Psalm 86: What are some ways in which the Lord is teaching you to walk in His ways?

TUESDAY, 7/25: Ephesians 2:1-10: Praise God delivering you from death and wrath to the sure salvation of life and good works in Christ.

WEDNESDAY, 7/26: Pray for the new ministry year at CCC that the Spirit would continue to draw people who need to hear of God's redemptive justice and covenant love.

THURSDAY, 7/27: Hosea 14: Meditate on this last chapter paying particular attention to the grace, mercy, and covenant love of God.

FRIDAY, 7/28: Hosea 14:4-7: What are some ways in which you are blessed by the flourishing that comes from being restored to God?

SATURDAY, 7/29: Pray for opportunities to share God's plea for His children to return to Him to receive His covenant love.

SUNDAY, 7/30: ^{the} **LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to reveal again to us how freely the Lord loves us and how His anger has been turned away from us in the sacrifice of Christ.

Table of Kings During Hosea's Prophetic Ministry: 2 kings 15

king of israel	Dates	END OF REIGN	king of judah	Dates
Zechariah, Son of Jeroboam	752 (6 mos.)	Assassinated by Shallum	Uzziah (Azariah)	792-39
Shallum, Son of Jabesh	752 (1 mo.)	Assassinated by Menahem		
Menahem, Son of Gadi	752-742	Slept with his fathers	Jotham	750-31
Pekahiah, Son of Menahem	742-740	Assassinated by Pekah		
Pekah, Son of Remaliah	740-732 ⁴	Assassinated by Hoshea	Ahaz	735-14
Hoshea, Son of Elah	732-722	Exiled by the Assyrians	Hezekiah	726-697

⁴ **2 Kings 15:27** states that Pekah ruled for 20 years which is inconsistent with the historical record which indicates he reigned only 8 years. It was a common practice of usurpers to date their reign according to their familial house evidencing possible favor from the gods. Pekah was from Menahem's familial house, thus the reign of the house would have been roughly 20 years from 752-732. See Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos, John Rea, eds., *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999, 3rd Printing), 1302-3.

Excursus ^{on} Masculine ^{and} Feminine Imagery ⁱⁿ the PROPHECY of HOSEA

One aspect of the Prophecy of Hosea that has been problematic for some is the use of masculine and feminine imagery as critical to the plot. It is almost impossible for us not to read our current cultural contexts and baggage back into these ancient Biblical texts. For Hosea, the male prophet and faithful husband, to be presented as the redemptive figure free from worldly passions and lust, seems to equate masculinity with goodness and righteousness; for Gomer, the female harlot and unfaithful wife, to be presented as everything that is wrong with humanity and enslaved to her passions and lust, seems to equate femininity with sin and failure. These conclusions, however, prove to be an overly simplistic reading of text and interpretation of the imagery that is inconsistent with the intentions of the story.

While this subject is complex and nuanced, there are four simple points that should prove helpful to us as we engage the Prophecy of Hosea. First, we must note that Gomer represents disobedient and adulterous Israel which is in the condition that it is in because of the moral and spiritual failings of its kings, prophets, and priests all of which are men throughout this portion of history. They are not being accused of acting like women; they are being accused of acting like their fallen father Adam (or humanity in general or dirt depending on your interpretation) in **Hosea 6:7**. Second, Hosea pursues Gomer not because of his great righteousness (in fact, no aspect of Hosea's character receives mention or commendation in his prophecy), but because of Gomer's great value to him as his wife despite her failure to be faithful. This serves to show Gomer's role in the story as far more complex and valuable than merely a 2-dimensional interpretation. Third, **Hosea 4:14** reveals that God will not directly punish the daughters nor the brides for their adulterous sins, but He will punish the men for their sins. This means that God's judgment will fall first and hardest on the men who were expected to lead in fidelity and faithfulness as covenant servants. Lastly, in the broader context of the Bible, there are a number of instances where feminine imagery is equated with goodness

and righteousness such as wisdom being portrayed in feminine terms in the book of Proverbs and both God and Christ using mother images to display their care for Israel (see **Isaiah 49:15-18** and **Matthew 23:37-39**). These four brief points at minimum show that it is far too simplistic a reading to do those characters and the broader issue of masculinity/femininity justice to equate Hosea/masculinity with goodness and righteousness and Gomer/femininity with sin and evil.

May we, both male and female, come away with a greater appreciation for God's redemptive justice and covenant love for us all through our study of the Prophecy of Hosea!