

HOSEA GLOSSARY

The book of Hosea includes many references to names and places that are unfamiliar to us, but would have been very meaningful to the original readers and hearers. We've included a glossary of terms to help you as you study. Note that this is not an exhaustive glossary and we have tried our best to remove any personal interpretation from the entries. Each entry includes Scripture references for further study.

Achor - a valley in northern Judea. This is where Achan, an Israelite who stole plunder from Jericho, was stoned to death. The prophets predict that this valley will turn into a place of hope and life. Achor sounds like the Hebrew word for "trouble." See *Hosea 2:15; Josh. 7:1-26, 15:7; Isa. 65:10.*

Admah - one of the rebel cities of the plain that was totally destroyed; associated with Sodom and Gomorrah. See *Hosea 11:8; Gen. 10:19, 14:1-10; Deut. 29:22-28.*

Ahaz - a king of Judah; son of Jotham, father of Hezekiah. The prophets Hosea, Micah and Isaiah prophesied during his sixteen-year reign (743-727 BC). He followed pagan practices (including child sacrifice) and was caught up in conflict with neighboring nations. He did not trust God or walk in his ways. See *Hosea 1:1; 2 Kgs. 16; 2 Chr. 28; Isa. 7:1-17, 14:28.*

Aram (Paddan-aram) - the "plain" of Aram; a region in northwestern Mesopotamia. Abraham and his descendants are described as "Arameans" from this region. Isaac told Jacob to go to Paddan-aram to find a wife from the family of Laban, and there he found Rachel (and Leah). It was the birthplace of all of Jacob's children except Benjamin. See *Hosea 12:12; Gen. 25:20, 28:2-7.*

Assyria - an ancient empire to the north of Israel. Hosea prophesied during the golden age of Assyrian rule and predicted an exile. As predicted, Assyrian ruler Tiglath-pileser III took control of Israel and began exiling rebellious subjects. Militarism was at the heart of Assyrian culture. Assyrian religion was polytheistic and influenced by Babylonian beliefs and practices. Common practices included divination, astrology, witchcraft and magic. See *Hosea 5:13, 7:11, 8:9, 9:3, 10:6, 11:5, 11:11, 12:1, 14:3. See also 2 Kgs. 16-18, 2 Chr. 28, Isa. 7.*

Aven - see entry for Beth-aven.

Baal - a weather and war idol; the main fertility god in Canaan. Baal means "lord." Baal was said to control the weather and provide the precipitation for crops to grow. King Ahab of Israel and King Manasseh of Judah officially sponsored Baal as worthy of worship during their reigns. This blatant disregard for God's decree to worship him alone led to Israel's exile. See *Hosea 2:8, 2:13, 2:16-17, 9:10, 11:2, 13:1; 1 Kgs. 16:31-33; 2 Kgs. 10:18-27, 17:16.*

Baal-peor - a Moabite city, also called “Baal of Peor,” referring to a local manifestation of Baal in the city of Peor. The Israelites worshiped Baal and participated in sexual immoral acts in this region while camped at Mount Peor. Baal-peor is used as an example of Israel’s sin and God’s judgment, as idol-worshippers were publicly executed and the whole congregation subject to a plague. *See Hosea 9:10; Num. 25; Deut. 4:3; Josh. 22:17; Psalms 106:28-31.*

Benjamin - a reference to the tribe of Benjamin, the youngest son of Jacob and Rachel. Known as a tribe of great warriors. *See Hosea 5:8; Gen. 49:27; 1 Chr. 8:40,12:2. See also the entry for Gibeah.*

Beth-arbel - a city which appears in the bible only once, in Hosea. The city was apparently a place where a tragic judgement occurred on mothers and children. *See Hosea 10:14.*

Beth-aven - a city near Ai and Bethel. The name of the city means “house of wickedness.” Hosea uses this as a play on words when referring to the city of Bethel (meaning “house of God”) that had become a center of idol worship. *See Hosea 4:15, 5:8, 10:5,8; Josh. 7:2.*

Bethel - a location in Israel with many springs, at the intersection of major ancient highways. Bethel means “house of God.” Abram camped at Bethel and set up an altar there. Jacob gave Bethel its name and had his famous dream there. Bethel was later given to the tribe of Benjamin. It was one of the chief sanctuaries of the northern kingdom and idol worship happened there (most notably a golden calf) alongside worship of God. The city was destroyed by the Assyrians around the time they captured Samaria (722 BC). *See Hosea 10:15, 12:4; Gen. 12:8, 13:3, 28:10-19; Judg. 20-21.*

Egypt - one of the earliest ancient civilizations. Egypt is situated south of Israel and is the place where the Israelites were held captive as slaves for 400 years. God delivered the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt by saving their lives during the last of ten plagues, parting the Red Sea, and leading them to the Promised Land. The mention of Egypt in the Scriptures is often a reminder to the Israelites of their deliverance and God’s faithfulness. *See Hosea 2:15, 7:11, 7:16, 8:13, 9:3, 9:6, 11:1, 11:5, 11:11, 12:1, 12:9, 12:13, 13:4. See also the book of Exodus.*

Ephraim - In Hosea, the name Ephraim is used interchangeably with Israel, as it was the prominent and centrally located tribe in the northern kingdom of Israel. Ephraim was Joseph’s second son, whose descendants formed the tribe of Ephraim. Ephraim was a large and powerful tribe in the hill country. This area included cities like Shechem, Shiloh and Timnath-Serah. *See Hosea 4:17 (first of 35 uses in Hosea). See also Gen. 46:20; Deut. 33:13-17.*

Gibeah - a city within the borders of the tribe of Benjamin. Gibeah is known as the setting of a brutal rape of a Levite concubine by some Benjaminites and the battle and judgment that followed. Gibeah was also Saul’s hometown. Like Hosea, Isaiah references Gibeah in connection with the coming invasion of Assyria. *See Hosea 5:8, 9:9, 10:9; Judg. 19-20; 1 Sam. 10:10; Isa. 10:29.*

Gilead - the southern section of the Transjordan, along the Jordan River. A high, fertile region, famous for its healing balm, spices, pastures and livestock. Jacob named Gilead after the heap of stones that witnessed his covenant with Laban. These areas were some of the first gained in the conquest and the first lost. Gilead was highly sought after land and often fought over. Hosea condemns Gilead's sinfulness, but other prophets look forward to a day when Gilead's conquerors would be punished and its richness restored to Israel. *See Hosea 6:8; Gen. 31:21-55; Jer. 50:19; Amos 1:3,13; Obad. 1:19; Mic. 7:14; Zech. 10:10.*

Gilgal - a city not far from Jericho where Israel first camped after crossing the Jordan. Joshua set up the twelve stones from the Jordan River here to remind the people of God's faithfulness. Gilgal sounds like the Hebrew word for 'to roll away' (as a stone). Gilgal was Israel's base camp; here they were circumcised and celebrated the first Passover in the Promised Land. A generation later, the Israelites at Gilgal were already being confronted with their sinfulness by the angel of the Lord. Samuel judged the people at Gilgal and proclaimed Saul king there, and Saul eventually forfeited his kingship there. David, Elijah and Elisha all passed through Gilgal. By the eighth century BC, Gilgal was a notorious center of idol worship. *See Hosea 4:15, 9:15, 12:11; Josh. 4:19-20, 5:10; Judg. 2:1; 1 Sam. 7:16, 11:14-15, 13:1-15:35; Amos 4:4,5:5.*

Hezekiah - a king of Judah from 727-698 BC, son of Ahaz. Hezekiah reversed his father's idolatrous policies and promoted true worship of God. He was not perfect, but is remembered with Josiah as one of the best kings to rule Judah. Israel was under the shadow and threat of Assyria during Hezekiah's rule. *See Hosea 1:1; 2 Kgs. 18,20; 2 Chr. 32; Isa. 36-39.*

Israel - the term "Israel" can refer to the historic Jewish nation, the northern kingdom specifically (also called Ephraim) or it can extend to include all of God's people. It also has political, ethical and spiritual connotations. God chose the family of Israel (Jacob) to be his people and invited them into covenant with Him. God's chosen people disobeyed and broke the covenant over and over, but God continues to pursue relationship with them, even today. *See Hosea 1:1 (the first of 46 uses in Hosea). See also Exod. 3:6-10, 19:5-6.*

Jehu - a king of Israel, son of Jehoshaphat, ruling from 842-814 BC. Jehu started a family dynasty that was the longest in the history of the northern kingdom, which included Jeroboam. Jehu wiped out Baal worship from Israel during his reign, but did not remove all of the idols in Israel. Jehu was also responsible for wiping out the house of Ahab in Jezreel. *See Hosea 1:4. 2 Kgs. 9-10.*

Jeroboam - a king of Israel from the family of Jehu, also referred to as Jeroboam II. During his prosperous reign, Israel expanded its borders due to the weakness of Assyria and Aram. Life was good for the upper classes, but the lower classes were oppressed. *See Hosea 1:1; 2 Kgs. 14:23-29.*

Jezreel - a fertile valley and a city both bear the name Jezreel. Jezreel means "God will sow." This is the location of Gideon's attack on the Midianites. God calls Hosea to name his son symbolically after this valley, pointing to the massacre of the Jehu dynasty that happened in Jezreel. *See Hosea 1:4-5, 2:22-23; Judg. 6:33.*

Jotham - a king of Judah, son of Uzziah (Azariah). He reigned 16 years and did "what was right in the eyes of the Lord." *See Hosea 1:1; 2 Kgs. 15:32-38.*

Judah - the name of the southern kingdom. The southern kingdom began when the northern tribes of Israel seceded from David's kingdom. The kingdom is named after the prominent tribe of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob. Judah was involved in ongoing conflicts with the northern kingdom of Israel. It was eventually controlled by Assyria and Babylon at times. *See Hosea 1:1 (the first of 17 mentions in Hosea). See also Gen. 35:23; 1-2 Sam.; 1-2 Kgs.; 1-2 Chr.*

Lebanon - a region in northern Israel whose boundaries are very close to modern day Lebanon. Lebanon is well known for its lumber industry, specifically its cedar trees. Lebanon cedars were used to build the first and second temple in Jerusalem. The Old Testament also describes its fruits, wine, waters and animals. Lebanon evokes images of glory, fertility and abundance. *See Hosea 14:5-7; 1 Kgs. 4:33,5:6-10; Ezra 3:7; Psalms 72:16; Songs 4:8-15.*

Memphis - an ancient Egyptian city. Memphis was the site of the palaces of most of the pharaohs mentioned in the Bible. Hosea uses the name interchangeably with Egypt. *See Hosea 9:6.*

Mizpah - a city that was once an influential place of government and gathering. Mizpah means "watchtower." Mizpah was on the border of Israel and Judah and became part of Judah when the kingdoms split. It was the site of Jephthah's victory over the Ammonites and the place where Samuel judged the people and anointed Saul. *See Hosea 5:1; Judg. 10-11, 20-21; 1 Sam. 7:5-16, 10:17; 2 Kgs. 25:23-25.*

Ramah - a fortified city in ancient Israel. Ramah means "high place." Located near Gibeon and Mizpah, close to the border of the northern and southern kingdoms. Possibly the same Ramah where Samuel lived. Ramah was in Assyria's path of destruction predicted by Hosea and Isaiah. *See Hosea 5:8; 1 Sam. 1; Isa. 10:29.*

Samaria - the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel. The people in Samaria worshipped the God of Israel alongside other gods. Hosea refers to the golden calf built in Bethel as the "calf of Samaria," which was not removed by any of the kings who reigned in northern Israel. Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 721 BC and most of the citizens were exiled to Assyria. Hosea and several other prophets pronounce judgement on Samaria. The name "Samaria" is also used as a name for the whole northern kingdom. *See Hosea 7:1, 8:5-6, 10:5-7, 13:16; 2 Kgs. 17:6-41.*

Shalman - an otherwise unknown biblical name, but may refer to the name Shalmaneser, the name of several Assyrian kings. His armies apparently destroyed the city of Beth Arbel. *See Hosea 10:14.*

Shechem - a crucial town in the hill country on the border of Ephraim. It is located between Mt. Gerazim and Mt. Ebal. God revealed himself to Abraham at the oak of Moreh near Shechem and Abraham built an altar there. Jacob later settled in Shechem, buried his foreign gods there and is himself buried there. Joshua renewed the covenant on the mountains there and proclaimed it a city of refuge. Shechem became a religious and civic center for the Samaritans, which meant it was a place of idol worship at times. *See Hosea 6:9; Gen. 12:6, 50:25; Josh. 8:30-35, 20:7, 24:32; Judg. 9.*

Sheol - an underworld place (under the authority of God) where all people in the Old Testament were inevitably destined after death. Sheol means “the grave.” Sheol itself is not characterized as the place where judgment happens, but it is connected with God’s wrath. *See Hosea 13:14; 1 Kgs. 2:6; Psalms 141:7.*

Tabor - a mountain located in the valley of Jezreel. Tabor means “broken”. It was a significant military strategic point with political significance. Barak was victorious over Sisera there. *See Hosea 5:1; Judg. 4:14.*

Uzziah - a king of Judah, also known as Azariah, ruling from 783-742 BC. He likely ruled as coregent with his father, Amaziah, starting in 792 BC. He became king at age 16 when his father was assassinated. Much of his reign overlapped with Jeroboam of Israel. Uzziah was relatively faithful and led a prosperous kingdom. He tried at one point to offer incense in the temple and God responded by giving him leprosy. His son Jotham took over kingly duties at that time. *See Hosea 1:1; 2 Kgs. 14:21-22, 15:1-7; 2 Chr. 26.*

Zeboiim - one of the rebel cities of the plain that was totally destroyed; associated with Sodom and Gomorrah. *See Hosea 11:8; Gen. 14:2,8; Deut. 29:23.*

Sources:

ESV Study Bible

The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary