

Women of the Word

But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
~Amos 5:24 (ESV)

And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice,
in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness.
And you shall know the LORD.
~Hosea 2:19-20

Unfaithfulness of the Israelites, God's judgment and His redeeming love are all part of our reading for this month in the books of Amos and Hosea. These two prophets spoke and wrote around the same time frame (Amos: 760-755 BC | Hosea: 753-725 BC). About 200 years had passed since the Ten Tribes set up the northern kingdom with calf worship as its religion (1 Kings 12:25-33). Idolatry, sexual immorality, oppression of the poor, and other wicked behavior were rampant in Israel. God had already sent Elijah, Elisha, and Jonah to warn the nation but to no avail. Amos and Hosea were then sent and directed their messages to Israel in a final effort to stop Israel's seeming collision course for destruction and ruin. Both prophets preached messages of the "cycles of redemption" of Israel's unfaithfulness, divine judgment Israel would and did face, and God's invitation for their restoration. Despite the centuries that have elapsed since these texts were written, cycles of redemption still occur today. However, God's message of redeeming love for sinful people has been made even more available today through the person of Jesus Christ who has broken the cycle once and for all by paying the debt for our rebellion through his death on the cross.

General Suggestions & Tips

- Schedule an appointment each day to read God's Word.
- Begin with prayer and ask the Lord to speak to you through His Word.
- Follow the schedule and read the scripture passage listed.
- Read your Bible with a notebook and pen beside you. Make note of words, phrases, and verses that stand out as you read each day's passage.
- Look for points of *personal application*.
 - How is God speaking to me (instruction, call to obey, warning)?
 - What does this passage teach me about God?
 - Are there specific truths God wants me to apply to my life?

Questions to ask yourself as you read the books of Amos & Hosea:

1. Look for the cycles of redemption as you read these books: Israel's unfaithfulness, God's judgment, & Restoration/redemption
2. Examine your own heart and life for any "idols" standing in the way of complete worship and faithfulness to the Lord.
3. Do you believe God loves you with a redemptive love?

A Recommended Spring Break Read: *Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers (a fictional depiction of the book of Hosea)

Reading Schedule for Amos & Hosea

- March 1 Amos 1:1-15
- March 2 Amos 2:1-16
- March 3 Amos 3:1-11
- March 4 Amos 3:12-4:13
- March 5 Amos 5:1-27
- March 6 Amos – Review Chapters 1–5
- March 7 Amos 6:1-14
- March 8 Amos 7:1-17
- March 9 Amos 8:1-14
- March 10 Amos 9:1-15
- March 11 Amos – Review Chapters 6–9
- March 12 Hosea 1:1-11
- March 13 Hosea 2:1-13
- March 14 Hosea 2:14-23
- March 15 Hosea 3:1-5
- March 16 Hosea 4:1-19
- March 17 Hosea 5:1-15
- March 18 Hosea – Review Chapters 1–5
- March 19 Hosea 6:1–7:2
- March 20 Hosea 7:3-16
- March 21 Hosea 8:1-14
- March 22 Hosea 9:1-17
- March 23 Hosea 10:1-15
- March 24 Hosea 11:1-11
- March 25 Hosea – Review Chapters 6–11
- March 26 Hosea 11:12–12:14
- March 27 Hosea 13:1-16
- March 28 Hosea 14:1-9
- March 29 Hosea – Review Chapters 12–14

This Easter as you reflect on Jesus and His Ultimate Sacrifice, we invite you to review the Cycles of Redemption in the book of Hosea. Remember, He pursues us with His everlasting love and offers complete forgiveness and total acceptance. Hallelujah! What a Savior!

- March 30 Review Cycles of Redemption – Hosea 1:10—2:1; 2:14-3:5
- March 31 Review Cycles of Redemption – Hosea 5:15-6:3; 11:8-11; 14:1-9