

Hosea

God's Unchanging Love



Student Workbook

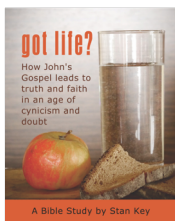


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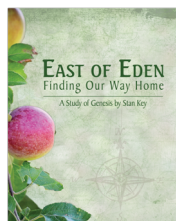
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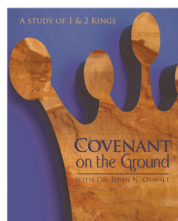
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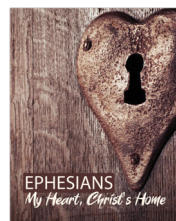
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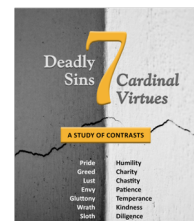
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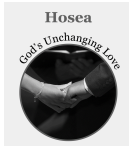


*7 Deadly Sins
& 7 Cardinal Virtues*



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HOSEA: BACKGROUND AND SETTING

1. Place
Israel—"The northern kingdom" extending from Dan, at the foot of Mt. Hermon, to Bethel, about six miles north of Jerusalem, and from the Mediterranean to the edge of the Arabian desert some thirty miles east of the Jordan

2. Time
Seems extended, from at least 755 BC until about 725 BC

3. Political Setting
 - a. At the beginning of the period, Israel and Judah were enjoying a level of wealth and power unlike any time since that of Solomon.

 - b. Previously, Assyria (centered in what is now north-central Iraq) had exercised control over Israel especially and demanded large tributes. That had been relaxed for about 40 years (thanks to Jonah?).

 - c. That was about to end: a new king, Tiglath-Pilezer III, came to the throne of Assyria in 745 BC and inaugurated a century of unbroken aggression, conquest, and oppression.

 - d. Assyria's ultimate prize was the rich culture of Egypt. They had to subdue Syria, Israel, and Philistia to reach Egypt. Eventually, Judah, Tyre, and Sidon would have to be taken too, but they were not directly in the path of conquest.

- e. By the end of the period, Israel was “on its last legs.” The Assyrians had taken almost all its territory, and Samaria itself was under siege.

- f. Samaria was captured and destroyed in 722 BC. The leadership and artisans were exiled to several places in the Assyrian homeland, and people from other areas were transported into the Israelite territory.

4. Religious Setting

- a. Since the beginning of the Israelite kingdom (after Solomon's death in 930 BC), Israel had been worshipping bull idols of Yahweh at Bethel in the South and Dan in the North and other gods at other places.

- b. At one time it had appeared that they might even go beyond that and abandon the worship of Yahweh altogether for the worship of the god of the storm: Baal.

- c. The ministry of Elijah and Elisha put an end to that, with Elisha's anointing of Jehu to destroy the dynasty of Omri (Omri, Ahab, Jehoram), but the fundamentally idolatrous and polytheistic religion of the kingdom persisted.

- d. How much Yahweh loved this northern three-fourths of Abraham's family can be seen in the number of prophets he sent them: Ahijah, the man from Judah, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah (early ministry), and apparently many others.

- e. The covenant called for primarily two things: 1) absolute loyalty to Yahweh, who is not part of this cosmos, and 2) self-denying care for others, especially those who cannot repay you.

- f. The ultimate goal of the covenant was intimate fellowship between Yahweh and his people made possible by his people's sharing his character:

Good (constructive, building up)

True (utterly dependable)

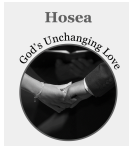
Right (doing the right thing no matter the cost)

Pure (complete integrity)

Just (doing unto others what you want done to yourself)

Love (choosing the best for others at whatever cost to yourself)

- g. The clearest metaphor for this intimate fellowship enabled by character sharing is marriage. Thus, Israel is regularly pictured as Yahweh's wife, and Yahweh as Israel's husband. As a result, going after other gods and manipulating other people, especially the poor, is pictured as adultery. This metaphor dominates his book as Hosea tries to get Israel to see herself in these critical last moments of her existence as a nation.



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HOSEA 1

Background: The Judean kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in total cover roughly 100 years, from 791 BC until 696 BC. Jeroboam II of Israel ruled from 796–742 BC. No one thinks that Hezekiah was writing for 100 years; rather, he wrote during the reigns of those kings: Jeroboam died in 742 BC and Uzziah died in 739 BC, whereas Hezekiah began his reign (as co-regent with his father) in 728 BC. Presumably Hosea began to write sometime in the 740s and concluded sometime not long after 728 BC. The fact that there is no mention of the siege and fall of Samaria (724–722 BC) suggests that he ceased writing no later than 725 BC.

Jeroboam's son Zechariah was assassinated shortly after his reign began (he only reigned in parts of two years). His murderer only ruled six months before he was murdered. That man (Menahem) made it for ten years, although he had a rival across the Jordan who also styled himself as king of Israel (Pekah). Eventually, when Menahem died and his son Pekahiah succeeded him, Pekah killed him and took everything. Then, a few years later, he too was killed by the man who turned out to be Israel's last king, Hoshea. Thus, in Israel's last twenty years, they had five different dynasties.

Jehu was rewarded for obeying God in destroying the family of Ahab with a promise that he would have descendants on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation. That was fulfilled in Zechariah. He had no more descendants than that because he did not destroy the bull idols of Yahweh (see 2 Kgs 10:30–31).

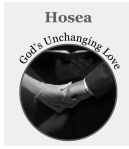
1. If Hezekiah was a prophet to Israel, why might he have chosen to date his book primarily on the basis of Judean kings? Furthermore, why did he not include the names of Israelite kings after Jeroboam II?
2. Why would God command his prophet to commit an immoral act? What does this tell us about God? Do you think he would do something like this today? Why or why not?
3. What does "children of prostitution" suggest about the fatherhood of these children? What would that say about Israel? (This is theology through imagery, so don't push it too far?)
4. Why is the dynasty of Jehu punished for "the blood of Jezreel" (vv 4–5) when Jehu had been commanded to destroy all the descendants of Ahab (and Jezebel). Read 2 Kings 9:24–10:31

and see if you can find a possible reason. How might we carry out God's will in the wrong ways? Can you think of some examples?

5. The name of this second child is "Lo-Ruhamah" (v 6), which means "no compassion." When do we reach the point where Yahweh no longer feels compassion for us (see Rom 9:15)?

6. On the strange promise for Judah in verse 7, see Isaiah 37:35–38.

7. How can we "square" verses 10 and 11 with the preceding verses? Is God just going to ignore their sin?



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HOSEA 2–3

Background: In the Hebrew Bible, chapter 2 begins with what is 1:10 in the English Bible. Thus, 1:10–11 and 2:1, all of which speak positively of the children are grouped together. The English division follows the Septuagint, which is evidently reacting to the difference in style between 1:10–11 and 2:1.

1. It is often said that parables “do not walk on all four feet” meaning that you cannot make a 1 to 1 transference of every detail in a parable to the realities of life. We see that at various points here.
2. The Semitic word *ba`al* means “lord.” Just as Yahweh came to be called *Adonai* “Lord,” so the god Hadad came to be called *Ba`al* “Lord.”
3. 1. Suggest reasons why 2:1, though sharing the same general tone as 1:10–11, should yet be considered to be the introduction to what follows in 2:2ff. Notice how 2:23 forms an *inclusio* with 2:1.
4. Who are the “children” and who is their “mother”?
5. How has the “mother” been unfaithful to God (verses 5, 13)? This is spelled out in verses 3–13, indicating the sin and the results.
6. What is verse 5 saying? Compare verse 8. How does that constitute adultery in regards Yahweh?

7. How is the punishment of verses 3 and 6 appropriate to the sin (verse 5). Compare v. 9, 10, 12.

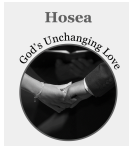
8. Look at the "Therefore" at the beginning of verse 14. That word normally introduces the effect of a prior cause. How is that working here? What is the cause? How is what follows an effect of that?

9. What does this action on the part of Yahweh tell us about Yahweh's character and nature?

10. Why wouldn't Yahweh let the Hebrews use the common noun *ba`al* anymore (verses 16-17)?

11. Where does natural abundance come from and how do we get it? What's wrong with the pagan approach?

12. Note how chap. 3 "lives out" chap. 2. What historic event is verse 4 referring to? Will that be the end of Israel (verse 5)? Why not?



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HOSEA 4

Background: There are more textual uncertainties in the book of Hosea than in almost any other OT book. Several suggestions have been put forward why this is the case, but there is no real consensus. One of them surfaces in this chapter in 4:4. The KJV faithfully reproduces the Hebrew: “Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people *are* as they that strive with the priest.” But it is virtually certain that the original read “Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest.” as in the ESV and NRSV.

Remember that the priests’ “income” was the sacrifices of the people. So, it went something like this: the more sins, the more sacrifices, the more income. So, it was not to the benefit of the priests to try to get the people to sin less.

One of the duties of the priests was to teach Torah. This was not remunerative.

Remember what we have said in the past about “idolatry” being the attempt to manipulate the world for our benefit.

“Beth-aven” (verse 15) is a mocking reference to Bethel (“house of God”). This place has now become “house of evil.”

1. Recall our labeling of the three divisions of the book after chapters 1–3. Now look at verse 1. What are your observations? How do these three relate to each other?
2. Why do the actions and conditions reported in verse 2 follow from verse 1? Is this necessarily the case? Why or why not?
3. We have labeled 4:1–6:4 “No knowledge of God.” What does it mean to “know” the God of the Bible? How does the marriage metaphor relate?
4. If humans are out of fellowship with the Creator, what is the result for creation (verse 3)? To what extent is this a natural result and what extent divine judgment?

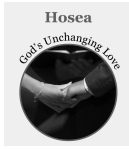
5. Verses 4–9 lay the blame for the condition identified in verses 1 and 2 at the feet of the priests and the temple prophets. How is the people's lack of knowledge of God a result of the temple functionaries' failure? (See especially verses 6–7.) How does that relate to the present?

6. Verses 10–14 speak of the people's worship of other gods as "harlotry, prostitution, or whoredom," putting false worship within the orbit of marriage. Why has Hosea done that, and what "flavor" does it give to worship of other gods. What practices and attitudes compare to worship of idols in America today?

7. If you do not remember the historic associations of Gilgal and Bethel (verse 15) look them up. They are very important places in Israel's history. Why would people be inclined to make pilgrimages there, and why would Hosea tell them not to? Again, what are the connections with our behavior today?

8. The implication of verses 16–19 is that God would like to "feed and water his flock/herd" but that he cannot. Why not? What are the results of this in the people's thinking? What about us?

9. Think about "shame" and the artful way Hosea uses the idea in verses 18 and 19.



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HOSEA 5

Background: originally the tribe of Benjamin broke off from Judah with the other nine northern tribes. Their territory extended from just north of Jerusalem for another six or seven miles north. However, very early Judah conquered much of Benjamin and the border between the northern and southern kingdoms was almost the same as the border between Benjamin and Ephraim.

Ephraim was the dominant tribe among the ten in the northern kingdom. Its territory was in the central highlands just north of the territory of Judah (and Benjamin). Thus, that name comes to be used as a synonym for the kingdom of Israel.

Gibeah, Ramah, and Bethel (Bethaven) (verse 8) were at the southern border of Israel, just over the line from Judah.

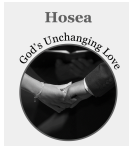
“Bethaven” is a mocking name for Bethel (where one of the two golden calves was located). Instead of “house of God” (beth-el), the prophet calls it “house of wickedness” (beth-aven).

1. Who does the prophet hold responsible for the sinful condition of the Israelites (verse 1). What is the significance of this charge?
2. Why is our turning from God to the world comparable to prostitution (verse 3). How does a “spirit of prostitution” (verse 4) manifest itself? How does that phrase express the nature of original sin? Look up Psalm 78:8.
3. How is it that one's choices and behavior can prevent him or her from returning to God (verse 4)? Note that this is related to the spirit of prostitution.
4. How does arrogance (verse 5) relate to a spirit of prostitution?
5. How many times does Hosea couple Judah with Israel (Ephraim) in this chapter? What is the significance of this? After all, it is Israel that is about to be devoured by the Assyrians while Judah is going to be delivered.

6. Verses 6 and 7 refer to the Israelites' participation in the Biblically-prescribed festivals. What is Yahweh's attitude toward this behavior? Why? What is the parallel for us today? How do we correct it?

7. The Israelites (and Judeans) expect Yahweh to be their deliverer from their enemies. What will he be (verses 7, 10, 12, 14)? Why is this the case? See verses 7, 10, 11, 13. What does this catalog of behaviors tell us about their attitude toward Yahweh?

8. What is the purpose of God's destructive behavior toward his people (verses 14–15)? Fill in the blanks of this well-known Oswalt quote: "God's _____ last _____ is never _____." That may be the _____, but that is up to _____. It is not his - _____."



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HOSEA 6

Background: Remember that Hebrew poetry (in which virtually the entire book is written), is characterized by the two lines saying the same thing in similar words. Usually, the second line moves the thought forward in some way.

Notice that Judah is not excluded from the pronouncements of doom. They are following their northern sister, but just a few steps behind.

It is not necessary to assume God had some unmentioned covenant with Adam (verse 7). Rather, it is the Israelites who were unfaithful to their covenant, just as Adam was unfaithful in his relationship with God. Both were unfaithful, but in different ways.

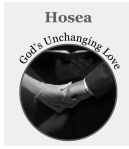
It is not clear why Gilead is singled out. It was a wealthy city on the Highway of the Kings in Transjordan. Perhaps they were claiming that their wealth was a sign of divine blessing, whereas Hosea says it is simply a result of evil acts.

1. Remember that I have suggested that the section No Knowledge of God (chaps. 4–5), is divided from the next section: 6:4 – 10:15, No Steadfast Love for God, by 6:1–3. If you were going to give a title to 6:1–3, what would it be? Why did you choose that?
2. What is the reason for turning to God and not away from him? What is unusual about that?
3. Recall my frequent statement: "God's intended _____ word is never _____. It may be his _____ word to you, but that is up to _____." How is that statement illustrated in these first three verses?
4. According to verse 3, why should we want to know the Lord?
5. How do prophetic words slay (verse 5)?

6. In what way are *hesed* (steadfast love) and the knowledge of God synonymous (verse 6, see background above)? See Matthew 25:34–46.

7. Verse 8 once again lays much of the fault for Israel's sorry condition at the feet of the priests. Presumably they did not actually murder people. If so, what point is Hosea making about their behavior and their motives?

8. Almost certainly, the "harvest" referred to in verse 11 is negative. How do you put that together with the reference to restoration? Compare to 6:1–3. What was God's purpose in the exile, first by Assyria and then in Babylon?



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HOSEA 7

Background: remember that four of Israel's last five kings were assassinated (in a matter of thirty years). The last king was Hoshea, who assassinated his predecessor, Pekah, in 730 BC. He submitted to Assyrian overlordship, but then made a secret alliance with Egypt. This was too much for the Assyrians, and they destroyed the last vestiges of the Israelite kingdom (722). (See 2 Kings 17:2–6.)

The Hebrew text of verses 3–7 is very difficult. The general idea is clear enough, but the specific statements leave a good deal of room for doubt. Consult different versions to see different renderings.

The party referred to in verse 5 may be a celebration of the assassination of the previous king.

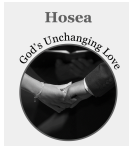
1. According to verses 1 and 2, why can't God heal his people? What is the problem? What are they apparently thinking? How does this relate to our own day?
2. What is the theme of verses 3–7? What is the repeated imagery? What is the significance of those figures? How does this relate to the nature of sin? Why is this?
3. Why would a king be delighted with the lies and wickedness of his people (verse 3)?
4. How does verse 7 relate to their situation? (See Background above.) Do you see any parallels to our own day?
5. Faced with the present political crisis, what does Israel do (verses 8–12)? What should they do? What is the significance of the reference to "gray hair." What is Hosea saying about their condition?

6. In verses 10–16, what don't the people do in respect to God? Practically speaking, what is the lesson for us? How do we put this into practice, both individually and as a church?

7. What is God's purpose in foiling all their political schemes (verse 12)? (See 5:15, etc.)

8. What do you imagine were the "false" things they were saying about God (verse 13)? Have you or I ever been guilty of such things?

9. What do they do? What should they do (14–15)? Why do they do this? How do we act thus?



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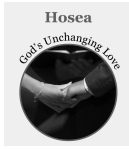
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HOSEA 8

Background – the first part of verse 4 reflects the chaotic political situation in Israel between 750 and 722 with one royal assassination following another.

8:1 – 9:9 is a single unit containing a catalog of Israel's sins.

1. Verses 1–3 are the introduction to the list of sins. According to verse 1, why is disaster facing them?
2. What kind of behavior does the covenant call for (think 10 commandments!) Reflect on the contents of the commandments and talk about their overall meaning.
3. How do we know Israel does not know God? If they did know him what would be the evidence?
4. What is their first sin (4a)? Why is that a problem in their relationship with God? Think of God's philosophy of government (e.g. Romans 13).
5. What is the second sin (4b–6)? What impression do these verses give you?
6. Verses 7–10 detail the third sin. What is it? What is the problem with this? How does this relate to us? America is not ancient Israel – the chosen people, so does this have any relevance for us?
7. The fourth sin is presented in verses 11–13. What is it? What in the world is an “altar for sinning”? Is there such a thing as a “church for sinning”?



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HOSEA 9

Background: Threshing floors were typically bare hilltops. The cut stalks would be carried there, and an ox or two would be driven round and round on the pile of grain, sometimes pulling a heavy sled behind them, to separate the grain from the husks. Then, on a particularly windy day, winnowing forks, something like a loosely woven basket with a long handle on it, would be used to toss the mixture of husks and grain in the air, and the wind would blow the husks away, leaving the heavier grain to fall to the ground. Especially if it had been a good harvest, this would be a good place and time to praise the fertility gods (assisted by a good bit of wine! See Ruth 3:7)

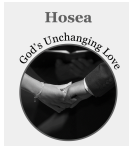
Wine presses, on the other hand, tended to be in low places. Sometimes, especially if people were poorer, the grapes would be put in a large stone depression and trampled with bare feet. For those with a little more wealth, the grapes would be put in loosely woven baskets and a stack of these baskets would be put in a press. This was a long wooden lever fastened in a yoke of some sort at one end and with a bag of heavy stones at the other. The lever would be lifted up, the stack of baskets put underneath it, and the lever released to press heavily on the stack.

Grain was typically harvested in May and June, and grapes at the end of September and early October. Both were times of happy celebration. But the grape harvest was at the end of the harvest season, and there was a great temptation to celebrate by drinking a lot of new wine, freshly fermented grape juice.

1. We observed four of the expressions of Israel's sinful behavior in chapter 8. There are three more in chapters 9:1–9. The first is found in verses 1–3. What is it? Why won't these places "feed the people"?
2. What is the expression in verses 4–7? Why will those who "eat them be unclean"? Look at Jesus' words in Matthew 15:8–11. How do we make ourselves clean?
3. Remember that they were expecting Egypt to help them against Assyria. What does Hosea say about Egypt (verse 6). What is the problem with human alliances?
4. What is the expression of their condition in verses 7–9? What is the connection between the three expressions in this chapter? Relate this to our present situation.

5. Throughout the book, Hosea is attacking Israel's tendency to revere the past and to think of themselves as proof against any trouble because their ancestors were so holy. We see this again here in verses 9–15. Hosea says their ancestors were not holy, and that they are just like them. For Gibeah (9), see Judges 19–21. For Baal Peor (10), see Numbers 25:1–9. We do not know for sure that something sinful happened at the Conquest campsite of Gilgal (15), but it is clear something did.

6. God here twice repeats what he said in chap. 1: he will reject their children (12, 13, 16). But look at it another way; how likely are people doing what these people are doing to produce children who love Yahweh? How do we reverse this trend? (See Deut 6:1–9)



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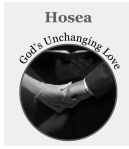
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HOSEA 10

Background: The Shalman referred to in verse 14 is probably the Assyrian emperor Shalmanezar (727–722) who ultimately captured Samaria in 722. Beth-arbel is a steep pass up through a cliff overlooking the plain on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It should be a strong defensive position against an enemy coming from the north, but the Assyrians had clearly overwhelmed the defenders. (This was also the place where Saladin and his army, also coming from the north, dealt the Crusaders a final devastating defeat.)

By 730 BC, the Assyrians had already captured Dan and its calf-idol, and it is very probable that they had captured Bethel (Beth-aven, not “house of God,” but “house of wickedness”) as well. They might have taken the idols to be displayed in the temples of their gods, or they may have simply dismantled them and taken the gold and silver.

1. For an understanding of 10:1–2, see 2:8–9. Who gave the rich harvests? What have the Israelites then done with that produce? How do we do similar things? For a similar take and a slightly different conclusion, but one leading in the same direction, see Deuteronomy 6:10–12.
2. What do verses three and four tell us about their political situation and their political attitudes? What should have been their attitude? How might this apply to us in our present situation?
3. Verses five through eight refer to the religious situation. Why was the carrying off of the “Calf” (see Background above) such a devastating experience for the Israelites? What is the problem when our faith gets wrapped up in religious objects? How might this relate to us?
4. The final statement in verse 8 is quoted in the NT (Luke 23:30; Rev 6:16). What is the sense here? Why would these people be saying this?
5. Verse 9 refers to the sinful conditions that existed in Gibeah (Judges 19) all the way back in the Judges period, fully six hundred years before Hosea's day. If the nations gather against Israel, why is it happening according to verse 10. Who rules history?



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HOSEA 11

Background: “loved” in verses 1 and 4 is the Heb. word connoting affection, not *hesed*. Affection is more personal.

The Heb. of verse 2 says “They called them, thus they went away from them.” Note the variety of translations in the attempt to convey what the translators think the passage means. The Septuagint reads “As I called them, so they went away from me to him.” The NLT and the NRSV follow this reading, which seems to follow verse 1 more clearly.

Verse 4 says “with cords of *‘adam*,” probably “human cords.” Most translators think this connotes gentleness (humane) rather than brutal harshness.

For Admah and Zeboim (verse 8), see Deuteronomy 29:23.

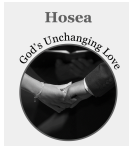
1. What is the sense of verse 1 (see Exod 4:22–23)? What is the significance of God’s use of this metaphor? What does it mean for Israel to be a beloved child?
2. Matthew 2:15 makes use of this passage to speak of Jesus. Obviously, Hosea is not predicting Jesus here. What use of the passage is Isaiah making-analogical/typological, allusion, illustrative, literary?
3. On verse 2 see the Background above. From all that we have talked about thus far in the study why in the world would Israel give up its status as “beloved child” of Yahweh and turn to “the Baals” as represented by “carved images”? Relate this to the exodus from the church today of “20’s and 30’s” who grew up in church youth groups.
4. How should we understand “healed” in verse 3 in the context of tenderly teaching a child to walk?
5. Probably verse 4 changes the metaphor from familial to agricultural. How is this farmer treating his young ox? As a thing, an object?

6. Why will exile into Assyria occur (verses 5–7)? How do the reasons in verses 5 and 7 relate to the one given in verse 6.? What is the relation between thought and action?

7. In spite of how Israel has treated Yahweh, what is his attitude toward them (verse 8; see Exod 34:6; 30:5)? If he regretfully sends them into exile, what won't he do?

8. What does it mean for Yahweh to be "God and not a man"? What would a human's attitude be toward someone who treated them as Israel treated Yahweh?

9. What historical event are verses 10 and 11 talking about? Relate this to Hosea's experience with Gomer.



Hosea: God's Unchanging Love

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HOSEA 12

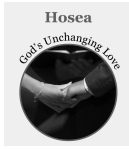
Background: The word translated “merchant” or “tradesman” in verse 7 is *kana`an*, “Canaan”.

“Dishonest scales” (verse 7) appears very frequently in the OT. It refers to using one set of weights when buying and another when selling. It is an excellent example of defiance against God’s *mishpat*, his unchanging order for life.

The prophet in verse 13 is Moses. Cf. Deut 34:10

Verse 12 might speak of Israel having to go off to the east (in exile) and having to work for someone else there.

1. As we look at 11:12 and 12:1, what sorts of lies were Israel and Judah telling about God? How do these relate to our own lives and behaviors?
2. Verses 2–6 are a summary of Jacob’s experience. Browse through Genesis 27–35 and think of the ways Jacob’s life and experience could be instructive to Israel and Judah. Particularly look at 33:18 – 35:15. What is the lesson to be learned?
3. There are five theologically important words in verse 6. What are they? Cf. Micah 6:8. The word translated “justice” is Hebrew *mishpat*. Do you recall what I have said about this term and its larger meaning?
4. Look at background above, and think of verses 7 and 8 in regard to the Jacob story. Cf. Genesis 32:4. Look also at Luke 12:16–20. Practically speaking, how do the Hosea passage and this parable apply to us?
5. Verses 9–14 contain a number of reminiscences of Israel’s past arranged in no particular order. As you look at them what is your overall impressions?



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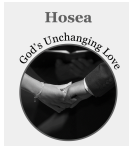
HOSEA 13

Background: Verses 10 and 11 are a reference to the chaotic political situation in the Northern kingdom between 740 and 720 with one royal assassination after another.

Verse 14 is another example of what I have called a “literary” use of the OT by the New. Hosea evidently is calling for Death and the Grave to drag Ephraim down. Paul turns that idea on its head when talking about the work of Christ. He has defeated Death and the Grave.

The East wind (verse 15) is a cold, dry wind off the northern end of the Arabian desert. It can dry out plants completely in a matter of hours, depending on its speed (Arabic *khamisin*). Here it is a metaphor for the Assyrian hordes.

1. Verse 1a speaks of the influence that Ephraim had at one time. What happened? Are what is said in 1b and 1c related to each other? If yes, how? If no, why not?
2. What is the impression gained from verse 2? Contrast that with the impression gained from verse 3. What is the relationship between the two verses?
3. According to verses 4 and 5, why shouldn't Israel have turned to idolatry?
4. Why did they make such a turn according to verse 6? What is the process, according to the verse? How does this relate to modern life? How does the aphorism “There are no atheists in foxholes” relate to this?
5. Why is the destruction described in verses 7 and 8 not merely the fury of a frustrated tyrant? Look at verse 9. What are we actually doing when we worship the forces of the cosmos and the works of our hands?



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HOSEA 14

1. In the light of 14:1 and 2, look up 3:5; 5:4; 6:1; 7:10, and 12:6. What are your observations?
2. How do “words” (verse 2) relate to repentance?
3. Study verses 2–4 and identify what repentance consists of?
4. How are the two divine actions announced in verse 4 related? On Yahweh’s attitude toward his people see Malachi 3:6–7. What are your reflections?
5. Compare and contrast verses 5–7 with such passages as 2:5–7; 4:3; 8:7; 9:2; and 13:15. Why did Israel worship idols? What will be the result? What is the lesson for us?
6. At first glance, verse 8 seems to be strangely worded. Assuming the text is correct (Gk says “As for Ephraim, what more has *he* to do with idols?”), what is it saying? In what sense does our fruit come from God?
7. The flavor of the final verse (9) seems a little different from the rest of the book. What do you think it is doing here? Why should we walk (conduct our life) in God’s ways? Why is that a wise thing to do? Summarize what the book of Hosea tells us about God’s ways.



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