

Hosea 11 - 14

God's Love for Israel; Exhortation to Return;
Judgment and Future Restoration

Day 1

Read Hosea 11:1 -11

God's love for Israel

1. What impresses you the most about the description of God's love for Israel in 11:1,3,4? (Compare Jeremiah 31:20)
2. What does the idea of "*drawing*" with cords and bonds of love (11:4) convey? (Compare Jer. 31:3)

For Your Information: "Even though Israel had played the harlot, God never forgot that He had made a covenant with her...forever. God is faithful, even when His people are not." - Charles Swindoll (9)

"This chapter is one of the boldest in the Old Testament – indeed in the whole Bible – in exposing to us the mind and heart of God in human terms...Even when we speak of God as Father we may hesitate in case we read too much into the word...God as a father rebuffed, torn between agonizing alternatives, may seem too human altogether; but this is the price of bringing home to us the fact that divine love is more, not less, ardent and vulnerable than ours." Derek Kidner (100)

3. Underline other descriptions of God's love for Israel.
 - Isaiah 49:13-16 Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me." "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. NIV
 - Deuteronomy 1:31 and in the desert. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place." NIV
 - Isaiah 40:11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. NIV
 - Exodus 19:4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. NIV
4. In spite of God's loving care, record the phrases that describe how Israel responded to Him.
 - 11:2 (Cf. Judges 2:11-13)
 - 11:3
 - 11:5 (Compare Zechariah 7:11-12)
 - 11:7

5. What picture do the verbs in 11:6 give you of the destruction to come? (What do you think “*because of their counsels*” means? Compare 10:13)

For Your Information: “When Assyria attacked, swords would bring death in the cities, the gate bars (i.e. the cities’ defenses) would be broken, and all the plans for survival would be frustrated.” - Expositor’s Bible Commentary

“Those to whom Israel pledged allegiance will turn out to be its oppressors. In seeking freedom from God, it ends up in bondage. This was true for Adam and Eve in the garden; it is true for us today. Sin results in separation and a broken relationship.” - Africa Bible Commentary (1024)

6. How would you describe God’s feelings about chastening Israel? 11:8

For Your Information: “We are in sin, and guilty before God. Yet He says, **How can I give you up?** Justice demands that He do this, yet in His heart He must find a way of salvation. In this, God sends Jesus Christ, and on the cross Jesus was ‘given up’ in our place.”

“**Admah** and **Zeboim** were two cities near Sodom and Gomorrah that were also destroyed (Deuteronomy 29:23). God says, ‘I can’t bear to allow My people to be caught up in the destruction that will come upon all the nations, as **Admah** and **Zeboim** were caught up on the destruction that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah.’” - David Guzik

7. Underline how God feels about those who stray from Him:
- Lamentations 3:32-33 Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men. NIV
 - Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?’ NIV
 - Matthew 23:37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. NIV
 - Luke 19:41-42 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. NIV

God promises a remnant

8. What promises did God make to Ephraim?
- 11:9 (Compare His promise in Deuteronomy 4:27-31)
 - 11:10,11 (Compare Ezekiel 37:21-23; Amos 9:14-15)

For Your Information: “**I will not again destroy Ephraim**”: “Though their sin deserves it, God will not wipe out Israel. He will leave a remnant, and will restore the nation.” - David Guzik

9. What does the word “*trembling*” (11:11) indicate about their return?

Food for Thought: “God is just and God is love...We need to proclaim the truth that He does judge and will judge sin. But there is the further truth that His love led Him to pay the penalty for our sins. The cross of Christ is the place where justice and forgiveness meet. We dare not proclaim a cheap grace.” - The Africa Bible Commentary (1020)

Applying the Word: How do you picture God looking when you sin? Has this chapter in Hosea altered that image?

Day 2

Read Hosea 11:12 – 12:14

Charges against Ephraim

10. How does God’s character contrast Israel and Judah’s? 11:12 (Compare Isaiah 59:3,4f)

11. What characterized Ephraim’s social and domestic policies? 12:1 (Review how these treaties had been portrayed: 7:11, 8:9)

Optional Digging Deeper
Mark the word “*covenant/ treaty*” in Hosea (2:18, 6:7, 8:1, 10:4, 12:1). What covenant would have saved them?

For Your Information: “The idols and foreign alliances Israel trusts in are useless. They are like trying to feed **on the wind**. (Clarke) ‘The *east wind* was, and still is, in all countries, a *parching, wasting, injurious* wind.’” – David Guzik
“The E wind crosses the sandy wastes of the Arabian Desert before reaching Palestine...It blows with violence and is hence supposed to be used generally for any violent wind.” - The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary

Recalling the Past

12. How was Jacob’s life transformed? 12:3b,4 (For the account of Jacob’s struggle see Genesis 32:22-32)

For Your Information: “Jacob’ is probably a reference to both Judah and Israel combined; he was the ancestor of all the Israelites and so becomes the subject of vv. 3-4.” - Expositor’s Bible Commentary

“In ancient Israel, a “heel-catcher” was a double-dealer, someone who achieved their goals through crafty and dishonest means...How can it be said that Jacob **prevailed**? He **prevailed** in the only way anyone can when they struggle against God. We prevail when we lose and know it, surrendering to God. Jacob **wept**? It helps us understand how desperate and broken he was as he hung on the LORD, now pleading only for a blessing.” - David Guzik

13. What significant events happened at Bethel? 12:4b,5 (See Gen. 28:12-22; 35:1-7, 9-15)

- Compare Hosea 12:5 with Exodus 3:14-15.

For Your Information: "For once, [Hosea] has called the chief shrine of northern Israel by its right name, Bethel, 'house of God', instead of by its savage nickname Bath-aven, 'house of wickedness'. For it was God whom Jacob had met there: God, not a golden calf; and if Israel would learn from Jacob, this was the first lesson it must face." - Derek Kidner (109)

"The Lord is His name" (12:5) "Israel was always to think of God in this way. Because he was all that this name implied, the people could be sure that he would keep every promise he had ever made to them." - The Expositor's Bible Commentary

14. Because of the example of God's gracious dealings with Jacob, what was Israel urged to? 12:6

For Your Information: "Jacob came to the place where he knew God had beaten him, and all he could do was hang on to God and plead for a blessing. [Israel] should return to God the same way." - David Guzik

"God, who was [Jacob's] God, and their God, would be gracious and merciful to them...especially since He is the everlasting and unchangeable Jehovah." - Gills Exposition of the Bible

Israel's injustice and pride

15. What characterized Israel's economic policies? 12:7 (See Leviticus 19:36,37; Amos 8:5-6)

For Your Information: Dishonest merchants sometimes rigged their scales so that they could give buyers less than what the buyers thought they were purchasing." - The Nelson Study Bible (1460)

16. How did the Israelites view their success? 12:8a (Compare Deuteronomy 8:17)

- Why do you think they couldn't see/admit their sins? 12:8b (Compare Psalm 36:1-2; Malachi 2:17b)

For Your Information: "***Surely I have become rich***: Hosea prophesied during a time of great prosperity, but spiritual and moral decadence in Israel. When things are good financially, it's hard for people to believe that their society is in trouble (***in all my labors they shall find in me no iniquity that is sin***)." - David Guzik

17. What was going to happen? 12:9,11

- Why were they without excuse? 12:10

For Your Information: "***Their altars shall be heaps in the furrows of the field***: Pagan altars were built high and stately to add dignity to the pagan god. When God's judgment comes, all those altars will be brought low, so the only altars will be the hills made by the ***furrows of the field***." - David Guzik

18. How do you think God's past protection and guidance in the lives of the patriarchs and prophets should have motivated the people? 12:12,13 [*In verse 12:12,13 Hosea is referring to Jacob (later named Israel) and Moses ("a prophet").*]

- Why was God going to hold Ephraim accountable? 12:14 (Compare 2 Kings 17:13-14; Ezekiel 33:4)

Optional Digging Deeper

What did God want for the people of Judah even during their captivity? Jeremiah 29:4-7

What result did God bring about through captivity? Deut. 30:1-10

For Your Information: "Though God send prophets to Israel, they still rejected His word. They provoked Him to anger most bitterly. so God will leave them in

Applying the Word: Take time today to do some grateful remembering of ways that God has guided and protected you. What helps you to develop an "attitude of gratitude" on a regular basis?

Day 3

Read Hosea 13

Ephraim judged

19. What reputation did the tribe of Ephraim have? 13:1a (See Genesis 48:19-20)

For Your Information: "When Ephraim was born to Joseph in Egypt, he gave him his name meaning 'fruitful' because 'God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction' (Gen 41:52)...Later this same theme of fruitfulness and blessing was echoed by Joseph's father, Jacob, as he accepted Ephraim as his grandson (Gen 48:5). Eventually Ephraim's thousands of descendants settled in the land of Canaan as one of the most numerous of the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen 48:19; Num 1:10)." - Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

20. What caused Ephraim/Israel's demise? 13:1b (See 1 Kings 16:29-33)

- How far down did that lead? 13:2 ("*kiss the calf-idols*" Cf. 1 Kings 19:18)

For Your Information: "Viewed together, the sin is a total perversion of values. A craftsman's work is elevated to divine status; human beings sacrifice their offspring to a metal object from whose lifeless form they also beg help; persons embrace with adulation the images of the very animals that they use for ploughing, threshing and hauling." (Hubbard)" - David Guzik

"There is a powerful jolt administered in verse 2 by the sudden change of focus, from the spectacle of skilful craftsmen and precious metals to that of the religious idiocy they served. The end...is presented in three scandalized words" 'Humans ('adam) kiss calves!'" - Derek Kidner (115)

21. What picture do the images in 13:3 give of Ephraim's fate?

22. Of what did God remind the Israelites? (*Consider: What responses should this have produced?*)

- 13:4 (Cf. Exodus 20:1-3)
- 13:5

Optional Digging Deeper
How did God provide for the Israelites in the desert? Deut. 2:7; 8:3-4,15-16

23. What trap did they fall into? 13:6 (Compare Deut. 8:13-14)

24. How complete would the nation's destruction be? 13:7-8

- What choice did God give Israel when He made a covenant with them? Deuteronomy 30:11-20

For Your Information: "The appropriateness of the terrible figures here employed arises from the fact that Israel had been compared in the previous verse to a flock fed and filled in a luxuriant pasture; the punishment of that flock is now fitly compared to 'the tearing in pieces and devouring of that fattened flock by wild beasts.'" - Pulpit Commentary

25. What reasons are given for Israel's coming destruction? 13:9

26. How effective had their leaders been? 13:10

- How had kings been given (See 1 Samuel 8:4-8) and taken away? 13:11

27. What did Ephraim need to recognize about their sin? 13:12 (Cf. 9:9; Compare Romans 2:5)

- What is the only solution for sin? Romans 8:1; Colossians 2:13,14

Food for Thought: "Life seems darkest when we see the reality of our sin. How dark it is in the light of God's holiness!...But we have hope because we have forgiveness. We know that Christ shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins, ... And we know our consciences are cleansed by this same blood. Rejoice!" - Kay Arthur (60)

28. How was Ephraim like an “unwise son”/“a child without wisdom?” 13:13 (Compare Isaiah 26:16-18)

29. What ultimate hope is given in 13:14? *The NIV version reads: “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. “ Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:55*

Optional Digging Deeper

For other passages in the Old Testament expressing hope of resurrection see: Job 19:25-27; Psalm 17:15; 49:15; 71:20; Isaiah 26:19

For Your Information: “God broke in to sound a note of encouragement and promise to the people. They had severe punishment ahead of them in Hosea’s time, but there would come a day when wondrous blessing would be their portion.”
– The Expositor’s Bible Commentary

30. In spite of Israel’s material prosperity, how vulnerable were they? 13:15a

- List the terms describing the process of their downfall. 13:15b

31. What verdict was pronounced and why? 13:16

For Your Information: “For Israel the time of thriving [13:15] must in particular be the time of Jeroboam II, when prosperity was marked. The destroying east wind [13:16] must be Assyria—a power that came from the east and effected Israel’s fall in 722 B.C. Moreover, Assyria did indeed plunder Israel’s ‘storehouse’ at that time...The shocking brutalities described in v. 16 are in keeping with the character of the Assyrians as revealed by archaeology.”
– The Expositor’s Bible Commentary

Applying the Word: *It has been said that sin is an effort to problem solve that doesn’t solve the problem; i.e. self-destructive behavior. How have your own efforts and desires and paths that were contrary to the Lord’s way proven to be self-destructive?*

Day 4

Read Hosea 14

For Your Information: “In beauty of expression these final words of Hosea rank with the memorable chapters of the OT. Like the rainbow after a storm, they promise Israel’s final restoration. Here is the full flowering of God’s unfailing love for his faithless people, the triumph of his grace, the assurance of his healing--all described in imagery that reveals the loving heart of God.”
– Expositor’s Bible Commentary

God's call to return

32. What tone do you read in the words of 14:1-2a? Mark the words “return”/“turn.” (Compare Joel 2:12,13)

33. List the phrases that describe the attitudes that kept Israel from turning to God.

- 4:1,6
- 5:4
- 7:10
- 11:5
- 2:13; 13:6

34. List the “words” that Israel needed to say (i.e. the things they needed to acknowledge).

- 14:2b (Contrast 12:8: Compare Isaiah 55:6-8)
- 14:3a
- 14:3b

(“For in You the orphan finds mercy”/“the fatherless find compassion.” (14:3) See Exodus 22:22,23)

God's promise of redemption

35. List the 3 phrases that describe how God promised to respond. 14:4 (Compare Matthew 9:12-13)

36. What do each of the images given in 14:5-7 indicate about the restoration that God will give to the nation?

- e.g. “like the dew” - restored sustenance/health/growth

37. Underline the phrases that describe the extent of God's mercy and forgiveness:

- Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 2 Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. NIV
- Psalm 130:7-8,12 O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. 8 He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins... 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. NIV
- Psalm 103:3-4 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, NIV
- Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. NIV
- Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. NIV
- Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. NIV
- John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! NIV
- 2 Corinthians 5:19a God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them...NIV
- 1 John 1:7b and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. NIV
- 1 John 2:1-2 Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. NIV

38. What would God be to the people? 14:8

For Your Information: "In God's sight idols are absolutely nothing...God, not the idols, is the one who will answer and 'care for' (*sur*, 'look on') Israel in her time of need. He is like a 'green pine tree'; all Israel's fruitfulness comes from him. "It is as though God turns to reason with the hearer for the last time...The plea rests on the incomparable claims of God. Can He any longer be spoken of, even thought of, in the same breath as idols? Can Egypt's or Assyria's protection compete with His? Do they answer when you call? Do they care as He cares?" - Derek Kidner (125)

39. What final plea does God make in 14:9? Compare Proverbs 10:29; Isaiah 40:31

40. Review the verses in Hosea that promise salvation and restoration. (1:10-2:1; 2:14-23; 3:5; 6:1-3; 10:12; 11:8-11 and 14:1-8) Mark these verses in a distinctive way. What does this convey about God's heart toward us in the midst of our sin?

Food for Thought:

“What’s really amazing in these accounts of Israel’s history is that God never gives up on His people. His anger burns only enough to turn them back to Him, never to destroy them completely.

So it is with us today. When we stray, God uses whatever means are necessary to draw us back because He has promised never to forsake us. [Heb. 13:5] He has placed us in the palm of His hand, and no one can pluck us out. [John 10:28,29] Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. [Romans 8:38,39] We have hope because God promises us hope, and His promises are sure. [2 Thess. 1:24] Unlike man, God does not renege on promises. His Word is constant. He is constant – the same yesterday, today, and forever.

This is how we have hope.”

- Kay Arthur (59)

Applying the Word: *How can you apply the message of Hosea to your own understanding and walk with the Lord?*

What has the story of Hosea told you about God? What has the story of Hosea told you about what sin does to you? About what sin does to God? What does it tell you about His love?

THE TIME IS NOW

The urgent plea echoes across the pages of the prophets:

This is the day of salvation.

He waits for you this very minute.

Turn your heart back to God.

Now.

Until the final tick of judgment’s clock, God waited for His people to return. Like the prodigal’s father scanning the horizon refusing to give up hope. He stood ready to extend grace and mercy to those who would repent and return.

Though centuries and circumstances have changed, the Savior still waits for His children. He lingers at the front door searching every shadow on the road, leaving the porch light on all night . . . every night. He’s waiting to welcome you back — it doesn’t matter how long you’ve been gone or where you’ve been.

Come on home – *now*.

You’ve not a moment to lose.

- Charles Swindoll (Introduction to God’s Masterwork: Hosea through Malachi)