

HOSEA

FINDING HOPE IN THE MIDST OF CHAOS



SPRING 2022

HOSEA STUDY

FINDING HOPE IN THE MIDST OF CHAOS

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ABOUT THIS STUDY

Chapters 1–3 use Hosea's own marriage as a parable for the relationship between God and Israel. The central image is of Israel as an unfaithful wife. Chapters 4–14 detail the comparison, with its series of accusations, warnings, appeals, and motivations for God's people to return.

Israel joined in the worship of Baal, a betrayal of God's intimate union with his people. Therefore, Hosea describes it as spiritual adultery, an offense against the marriage between the Lord and Israel. He compares Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness to the ingratitude of a wayward wife. Such unfaithfulness justifies the Lord's coming judgment. But punishment is not ultimately what the Lord wants for his people.

Hosea reminds us that we can't fully understand the depth of God's forgiveness and love without also understanding the weight of judgment that our sin deserves. To show us this, Hosea speaks often of the high cost of Israel's disobedience. But then, time and again, he points Israel to the future where God will show mercy and restore His people.

How This Study is Organized

Each of the sections in this study is broken down into two parts.

From the Message:

To get the most out of this study, attend the worship services or listen to the message online. While you listen, take notes on the pages provided. Include your thoughts, questions, and insights. Make it a goal, whenever possible, to listen to the message before engaging in discussion with your life group.

Group Discussion:

It's challenging to unpack the full meaning of all the questions in this study without other peoples' perspective and insights. Joining together in a Life Group, with other believers will help you grow and develop your convictions and perspective in following Jesus as your leader.

Group discussions are comprised of three parts:



Share Together: Discussions will begin with a question that everyone can relate to; this time is designed to reiterate the unique relationship we share as believers and the importance of *belonging* in community.



Study Together: The depth of our conversations is found in the study of God's Word; this time reminds us of the sufficiency of Scripture and the importance of *believing* it has authority over all areas of life.



Sent Together: This study ends with applying what you have learned; this is a time of reshaping our attitudes and behaviors in *becoming* disciples of Jesus.

IDEAS FOR GROUP TIME

1 be prepared. as students of the Word knowing and understanding the material ahead of time can lead to a vibrant group discussion. Consider underlining passages, making notes and being familiar with the material for when your group meets.

2 listen. we are a church family so be aware of how much you share and leave time for others. Listen closely to others' ideas and remember great conversations include everyone's thoughts and insights.

3 group talk. we are a community of believers and the time we share together should reflect a genuine level of care and concern for one another. Not every question needs to be answered by everyone and it is helpful to avoid getting off topic.

4 prayer. hearing each other's needs and taking them to Jesus is one of the most loving things we can do. Consider writing down prayer requests and following up with one another on how God is working in their life.

CHAPTER ONE



AND IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, "YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE," IT SHALL BE SAID TO THEM, "CHILDREN OF THE LIVING GOD."

FAITHFUL GOD



During this study of Hosea, how are you looking to grow in your relationship with the Lord?

- have a clearer timeline of Israel's history
- to develop a faithful and thankful heart
- better understand the ways of God and His heart
- overcome a doubt/fear or another struggle

Study Together



Why is it important that the Hosea starts with the phrase, "The word of the Lord" (v.1)? Consider, why would God command Hosea to take a "wife of whoredom" (v.2)? How can we interpret this command in light of the fact that God is holy?

Hosea uses the imagery of his marriage to an unfaithful prostitute to symbolize God's relationship with unfaithful Israel (v.2). Why is adultery an appropriate metaphor for Israel's relationship with God?

Think about Israel and their cycles through sin, repentance, obedience, and back to sin. What does this tell you about the purpose of God's discipline? What lesson do you take away from this example?

How is the imagery from Hosea's marriage equally true of every sinner? What important promise is seen in verses 10-11?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 1:1 -The name Hosea comes from the same verb as "Joshua" and "Jesus," meaning "to save or deliver."

HOS 1:2 -The tragedy of Hosea is the tragedy of a marriage that began well but went bad. And so it was with the Lord and Israel.

HOS 1: 8- 9 The birth and naming of another child by Gomer reinforces what was seen with No Mercy's birth. Not My People means he is not Hosea's son. for you are not my people, and I am not your God. The name symbolizes a breaking of the marital bond that God had made with Israel at Sinai.

Sent Together



From your group conversation, in what ways does Hosea's letter help you see the relentless love of God for the lost?

Thank God for pursuing a relationship with us despite our rebellion against Him. Pray that God would help us see the depth of His grace and delight in it.



CHAPTER TWO

1-23

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.

UNFAITHFUL ISRAEL



What are some challenging things you have to face as a parent who is raising children to serve God?

Study Together



In verses 9-13 we see that God has come to a decision. Israel has spurned His many blessings, His gifts, His love. So, He was going to punish her. How specifically would He do this?

You will call me "My Husband" (v.16) – This verse contrasts with verse 2 where Israel said, "You are not my husband." The nation will come full circle in repentance. What does genuine repentance look like – what does it not look like?

I will betroth you (vv.19-20) – God repeats this phrase three times. He will betroth Israel to Himself in “righteousness and justice,” “love and mercy,” and “faithfulness.” And He will betroth Himself to them “forever.” As a group consider God’s mercy and discuss its importance and the role it has in salvation.

God gives mercy and He doesn’t give mercy (v.1,4,19, 23). How can we understand these different messages?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 2: 1– 13 Hosea uses the legal process of an offended husband against his wife as a picture of God’s plans for dealing with Israel’s rebellion.

HOS 2: 8 she did not know. Israel’s failure to “know” the Lord is a key idea in the book that it was I who gave. Israel’s prosperity was a gift from the Lord, not from Baal.

HOS 2: 14– 23 Hosea describes God’s plan to restore his “marriage” with Israel.

HOS 2: 19 I will betroth you to me. The bride price that the Lord will pay for Israel is righteousness, justice, steadfast love, and mercy. Only the Lord can offer such things (Ex. 34: 6– 7).

Sent Together



From your group conversation, consider the ways your view of God has deepened. How can you show God’s love and compassion in the coming week?

Ask God to open your eyes to any spiritual unfaithfulness and to give you courage to confess your sins. Commit to trust in the Lord and live out His justice, love, and compassion in all your relationships.



CHAPTER THREE

1-5

FOR THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL
SHALL DWELL MANY DAYS
WITHOUT KING OR PRINCE,
WITHOUT SACRIFICE OR PILLAR,
WITHOUT EPHOD OR HOUSEHOLD
GODS. AFTERWARD THE
CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SHALL
RETURN AND SEEK THE LORD
THEIR GOD, AND DAVID THEIR
KING, AND THEY SHALL COME IN
FEAR TO THE LORD AND TO HIS
GOODNESS IN THE LATTER DAYS.

RELENTLESS LOVE



As a group share together, what is the hardest thing you have ever had to do?

Study Together



How would you describe Hosea's love for Gomer? How does Hosea's love for Gomer compare to God's love for His people?

Consider why Hosea would have to purchase his own wife and how this redemption is like God's redemption of us. What instruction did Hosea give to Gomer after he redeemed her (v. 3)?

What does the price paid and his willingness to pay that price reveal about Hosea's love for Gomer (v.2)? What does the price Jesus paid for our salvation reveal about His love for us?

Obeying God is not easy. He may ask you to do something you never could have imagined you would be able to do. Forgiving people who have hurt us deeply is one of the most difficult things God asks believers to do. How can you demonstrate God's love to someone who has hurt you or who is living in rebellion against God?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 3: 1– 5 Hosea returns to his marriage, which is still an image for God and Israel. Israel's hope, like Judah's, lies with the house of David.

HOS 3: 3– 4 You must dwell as mine has the force of a command. The separation of Gomer/ Israel will lead to her purification, rededication, and renewal. This separation will mean giving up those things that led to Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness: king and prince, who failed in keeping Israel faithful to the Lord; sacrifice, which they offered to the Baals; the cult pillar, popular in Canaanite religion; the ephod, which was improperly used as a tool for magical ceremonies; and household gods, idols prohibited from Israel's religion. The Lord's removing these things, far from being incompatible with his love, is a major aspect of it.

Sent Together



Who do you know that needs to know that God loves them and sent His Son so they could be free from sin and be restored to Him? How can you use Hosea's story to communicate that to them?

Thank the Lord for loving us in spite of our unfaithfulness to Him. Ask Him to help us remain faithful to Him, being intentional in sharing His love with others.



CHAPTER FOUR

1-19

HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD,
O CHILDREN OF ISRAEL,
FOR THE LORD HAS A
CONTROVERSY WITH THE
INHABITANTS OF THE LAND.
THERE IS NO FAITHFULNESS OR
STEADFAST LOVE,
AND NO KNOWLEDGE OF
GOD IN THE LAND;

ISRAEL INDICTED



As a group share together, one thing you know a lot about, but have very little personal experience with? Can a person's relationship with God be like that? How?

Study Together



From verse 1, discuss the virtues Israel had lost. Could these virtues ever become irrelevant? How does a lack of these virtues destroy someone's relationship with God, self, and others?

Consider how sin affects all aspects of creation, and how sin tends to multiply. What does this tell you about us, and about the nature of sin? According to Israel's experience, what can we say are some of the consequences of sin to a society who lives as they did?

If God is unchanging, yet has declared to punish and repay Israel for their deeds against Him (v.9), what good does it do them to repent?

Where does the knowledge of God begin? God contends with the priests for the lack of knowledge in the land in verse 4. What role does each person have in the church to ensure we abound in our knowledge of God?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 4: 1– 19 The Lord continues to prosecute his case against unfaithful Israel.

HOS 4: 1– 2 The Lord's charges against Israel are presented in the vocabulary of a lawsuit (a controversy), a setting used by other eighth-century biblical prophets (compare Isa. 3: 13– 15; Mic. 6: 2). The charges are offenses against God's law, particularly violations of the Ten Commandments.

Faithfulness and steadfast love are attributes of God in Ex. 34: 6. Genuine knowledge of God in the hearts of his people will produce a character like his.

Sent Together



What is something from our group conversation that gives you encouragement to share your faith openly?

Thank God for His convicting work. Thank Him for pointing out our sins and drawing us to Himself through the gracious and forgiving work of Christ.



CHAPTER FIVE

1-15

I KNOW EPHRAIM,
AND ISRAEL IS NOT HIDDEN
FROM ME;
FOR NOW, O EPHRAIM, YOU HAVE
PLAYED THE WHORE;
ISRAEL IS DEFILED.
THEIR DEEDS DO NOT PERMIT THEM
TO RETURN TO THEIR GOD.
FOR THE SPIRIT OF WHOREDOM IS
WITHIN THEM,
AND THEY KNOW NOT THE LORD.

ISRAEL JUDGED



As a group share together, if you had the ability to fix one problem the world is facing what would it be?

Study Together



What does verse 3 teach us about God's character? How should the knowledge that God always sees change your behavior?

Consider to whom was God's pronouncement of guilt addressed and why this is important (v.1). Why would God withdraw because of Israel's unfaithfulness (v. 5-7)?

How did Israel view God in verse 12? How does God describe Himself in verse 14? How does God help them see their misconception of Him?

Rather than addressing the spiritual issue and turning to God, Israel turned to worldly sources that have no hope to heal their wounds. What worldly sources did Israel turn to (v.13)? What worldly sources do people in the church turn to today?

What was the ultimate purpose of the Lord's judgment on His people? How was God's judgment to turn the Israelites back to Him in the form of love (v.15)?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 5: 1– 14 Israel's rulers have led the way into unfaithfulness.

HOS 5: 10 like those who move the landmark. To move a neighbor's boundary marker is forbidden (Deut. 19: 14; 27: 17). Land-grabbing violates God's intention that all the people are to enjoy the land he gave them, and it creates a wealthy, power-abusing class. my wrath like water. The word for "wrath" suggests the image of overflowing fury (compare Isa. 14: 6).

HOS 5: 13 When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound. Using physical infirmities to describe spiritual corruption is common in the OT prophets. Notice how frequently Hosea links Israel/ Ephraim and Judah: 1: 11; 4: 15; 5: 12– 14; 6: 4; 8: 14;

Sent Together



What is something from your group conversation that you could take and share with someone who has yet to hear the gospel message of Jesus?

Thank God for revealing Himself to us through His Word. Ask Him for wisdom and discernment in making sure our worship is biblical and in line with His character.



"COME, LET US RETURN
TO THE LORD;
FOR HE HAS TORN US, THAT
HE MAY HEAL US;
HE HAS STRUCK US DOWN,
AND HE WILL BIND US UP.

FOR I DESIRE STEADFAST
LOVE[A] AND NOT SACRIFICE,
THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD
RATHER THAN BURNT



As a group discuss, a time you delayed in dealing with an issue in your life that became worse over time (a cavity, an illness, a conflict with another person)?

Study Together



Consider the rewards of repentance and discuss what it means to live in God's presence (6:2). What does it mean to "strive to know the Lord" (6:3)?

Identify what two things the people of Israel neglected? What two things did they participate in (6:6)? What would be the equivalent of "sacrifice" and "burnt offerings" for the Christian today?

Read 7:8-12, what images are used to point out Israel's folly? What image most captures your attention? Which image best portrays your life before Christ?

How are God's love and holiness reflected in this passage (7:13-16)? What was keeping the people from turning to God? What keeps us today from turning to God?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 6: 4– 7: 3 Israel's sins are worse than simply violating the law: they repudiate the gracious covenant that is the foundation of their life and hope.

HOS 6: 6 Rather than burnt offerings, God desires real participation in the covenant by his people, here expressed as steadfast love and knowledge of God

HOS 7: 2– 3 The actions described in ch. 7 illustrate that Israel shows no sorrow for their sin. By their evil they make the king glad describes acts that please royalty, perhaps by assassinating potential rivals.

HOS 7: 4– 16 Hosea compares Israel to an oven (vv. 4– 7), a half-baked cake (vv. 8– 10), a silly dove (vv. 11– 12), and a treacherous bow (vv. 13– 16), thus describing their passion for evil, their foolishness, and their uselessness.

Sent Together



What new opportunities might exist for you to share the gospel with those around you?

As you lead the group in prayer, ask God to help group members understand the depth of their sin and the depth of God's love. Thank God for His grace and faithfulness to forgive us as we turn back to Him.



CHAPTER EIGHT

1-14

URGENT WARNINGS

WITH THEIR SILVER AND GOLD THEY
MADE IDOLS
FOR THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION.
I HAVE SPURNED YOUR CALF,
O SAMARIA.
MY ANGER BURNS AGAINST THEM.
HOW LONG WILL THEY BE INCAPABLE
OF INNOCENCE?
FOR IT IS FROM ISRAEL;
A CRAFTSMAN MADE IT;
IT IS NOT GOD.
THE CALF OF SAMARIA
SHALL BE BROKEN TO PIECES.



As a group discuss, the most effective form of discipline you experienced growing up. How did you tend to respond when you were disciplined?

Study Together



From verses 4-6, what are some ways Israel had rebelled against God? If people really knew God, would they seek prosperity and security in anything other than God? Why or why not?

Verse 2 says, "My God, we know you!" (But they don't). How can you ensure this doesn't happen in your own life? How can our group help one another stay focused on Christ rather than lesser things?

How was the Israelites' dependence on idols and alliances with foreign nations like sowing the wind (v.7)? What whirlwind did they reap?

Despite their total rejection of God and the resulting severe discipline, how did God continue to show faithful love to the Hebrew people (v.10-12)?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 8: 1– 14 The people of Israel may claim to know and love the Lord, but their deeds prove otherwise.

HOS 8: 4 kings . . . princes. The leaders are not the Lord's choice, and these rulers are not godly. I knew it not. The people had never asked God for guidance before choosing these leaders.

HOS 8: 5– 6 I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. These verses respond to v. 3, "Israel has spurned the good." As the calf-idol in Aaron's day was pulverized, so this idol shall be broken to pieces (compare also 2 Kings 23: 15).

Sent Together



How can you use what you've learned today to share Christ with someone in your community?

Close in prayer that your group members will allow God's discipline to make them stronger and bring them closer to Him. Also pray that your group members would have an increased awe of God's holiness this week.



CHAPTER NINE

1-17

LIKE GRAPES IN THE WILDERNESS,
I FOUND ISRAEL.
LIKE THE FIRST FRUIT ON THE FIG TREE
IN ITS FIRST SEASON,
I SAW YOUR FATHERS.
BUT THEY CAME TO BAAL-PEOR
AND CONSECRATED THEMSELVES
TO THE THING OF SHAME,
AND BECAME DETESTABLE LIKE
THE THING THEY LOVED.

SEVERITY OF SIN



As a group discuss, some of the Christian holidays we celebrate and their purpose. Do they really give glory to God? Do these really help us draw close to Him?

Study Together



How does sin affect joy (v. 1)? Then by implication, what is the way to have true joy?

Consider that it took years for “the day of recompense has come” (v.7). What does this seemingly long delay in God’s judgment teach us about God?

Consider how God viewed Israel at the beginning of its nationhood (v.10). What happened at Baal-peor? What is the “thing of shame” and its consequence (Numbers 25:3, 6-18)?

Discuss the severity of sin and the different ways we can minimize or compartmentalize its consequences. What do verses 15-17 communicate to you about God's holiness and His desire for undiluted worship?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 9: 1– 9 God will punish Israel by sending her people away from the land, to a place where they will not be able to make offerings to the Lord.

HOS 9: 10 Like grapes in the wilderness. . . . Like the first fruit on the fig tree. The unexpected discovery of grapes in the desert or the first figs of the season is delightful. I saw your fathers. Another reference to the nation's early history. But like Hosea's marriage, that cherished relationship lasted for only a short time. they came to Baal-peor (see Num. 25: 3; compare Ps. 106: 28).

HOS 9: 14 A miscarrying womb would be the opposite of the fruitfulness the people sought in Baal worship.

Sent Together



What new opportunities might exist for you to share the gospel with those around you?

As you lead the group in prayer, ask God to help group members understand the depth of their sin and the depth of God's love. Thank God for His grace and faithfulness to forgive us as we turn back to Him.



CHAPTER TEN

1-15

SOW FOR YOURSELVES
RIGHTEOUSNESS;
REAP STEADFAST LOVE;
BREAK UP YOUR FALLOW
GROUND,
FOR IT IS THE TIME TO SEEK
THE LORD,
THAT HE MAY COME AND RAIN
RIGHTEOUSNESS UPON YOU.

REAPING & SOWING



As a group discuss, a time you've planted and harvested fruit. How did you determine what fruit to keep and to throw away?

Study Together



In what way is Israel a luxuriant vine (v.1)? How had Israel taken God's blessings and twisted them (v.2-4)?

What were some of the ways their twisted practice of religion was affecting their everyday lives (v.1-8)?

What do we learn about God's timing in the way He deals with us from this passage (v.10)?

What is the difference between threshing and plowing? Which is easier? (v.11) What exhortation does Hosea give the people in verse 12?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 10: 10 When I please, I will discipline them. Israel's discipline and downfall comes from the Lord. To do this, God uses the nations that shall be gathered against them (see Isa. 10: 5–6).

HOS 10: 11– 13 Ephraim was a trained calf is another reference to Israel's beginnings. Israel once loved to thresh in his field (see Deut. 25: 4). But now the Israelites have plowed iniquity . . . reaped injustice. Therefore, the Lord must harness Ephraim so that she will sow the seeds of righteousness and plow and reap a crop of steadfast love (compare Hos. 8: 7). Ignoring the prophet's appeals will result in a military disaster.

Sent Together



What is something from our group conversation that gives you encouragement to share your faith openly?

Spend some time thanking God for His faithful love despite our unfaithfulness. Pray that God will help us communicate the importance of repentance to others.



CHAPTER 11

1-12

WHEN ISRAEL WAS A CHILD, I LOVED HIM,
AND OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.
THE MORE THEY WERE CALLED,
THE MORE THEY WENT AWAY;
THEY KEPT SACRIFICING TO THE BAALS
AND BURNING OFFERINGS TO IDOLS.
YET IT WAS I WHO TAUGHT
EPHRAIM TO WALK;
I TOOK THEM UP BY THEIR ARMS,
BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW
THAT I HEALED THEM.
I LED THEM WITH CORDS OF KINDNESS,
WITH THE BANDS OF LOVE,
AND I BECAME TO THEM AS ONE WHO
EASES THE YOKE ON THEIR JAWS,
AND I BENT DOWN TO THEM
AND FED THEM.

UNFAILING LOVE



As a group share together, the longest you've ever waited in line for something. How would you describe the difference between waiting for something you "want to do" and something you "have to do"?

Study Together



What insights does this father/child dynamic in these verses give us into God's character (v. 1-4)?

What character quality does verse 2 reveal in the Israelites? Have you ever seen a person like this who grows increasingly stubborn and rebellious the more correction he receives?

Consider the judgment Israel was going to face (v. 5-6). Why would God not answer their call in verse 7?

What insights can we gain from these verses into how God's compassion/mercy harmonize and balance with his judgment/justice?

What does it look like when someone "returns home" and comes back to the loving embrace of the Lord?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 11: 2- 4 The Lord never stopped loving Israel. Throughout their history, he taught Ephraim (that is, Israel) to walk, and he healed them, as a father does with his child. led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love. These kind acts provide the basis for a relationship of care, guidance, and obedience. Tragically, the Lord's love was rejected: The more they were called, the more they went away.

HOS 11: 8 How can I give you up? The Lord expresses his unfailing love (compare Isa. 49: 15; Jer. 31: 20). The Lord is filled with compassion, unlike the lifeless Baals. His affection is stronger than Israel's ingratitude. He cannot bring himself to reject his people, even though they refuse him.

Sent Together



What can we do to help others see the love and faithfulness of God?

Thank God for His love toward us. Thank Him for His faithfulness, patience, and for not immediately giving us what our sins deserve.



"SO YOU, BY THE HELP OF YOUR
GOD, RETURN,
HOLD FAST TO LOVE AND JUSTICE,
AND WAIT CONTINUALLY FOR
YOUR GOD."

GRACE REMINDERS



Look back at the reputation you had as a young person, was it deserved or undeserved? Why? How has your reputation changed throughout your life?

Study Together



Consider why the history of Jacob is reviewed in verses 3-5. What is God's point? In what ways could Israel have been able to relate to their forefather, Jacob?

What hope did Hosea extend to God's people through a review of their history? How does this encourage us to "wait continually" for the Lord (v. 6)?

Discuss the imagery of a false balance. How did Ephraim view his own moral integrity in verse 8? What does the context show us about how God viewed their statement of uprightness?

What do you find hopeful about the way the Lord described Himself and His work in verses 9-10?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 12: 2– 14 Hosea recounts incidents from Israel's past in order to display the Lord's enduring kindness and Israel's stubborn ingratitude.

HOS 12: 3– 4 He strove with the angel and prevailed at Peniel (Gen. 32: 24– 31). There the angel touched Jacob's hip socket and put it out of joint. That divine wounding made Jacob into a new man, Israel.

HOS 12: 5– 8 Hosea again reminds Israel of their spiritual heritage, memorial name. See Ex. 3: 15. God's choosing of Israel is the reason Israel can now return and show love and justice to one another. But Israel's deeds and words (Hos. 12: 7– 8) reveal they refuse to hold fast and wait continually for their God (v. 6).

Sent Together



How can you use what you've learned today to share Christ with someone in your community?

Spend some time thanking God for saving us, pouring out our judgment upon Christ instead, and calling us His people as a result.



BUT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD
FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT;
YOU KNOW NO GOD BUT ME,
AND BESIDES ME THERE IS
NO SAVIOR.
IT WAS I WHO KNEW YOU IN
THE WILDERNESS,
IN THE LAND OF DROUGHT;
BUT WHEN THEY HAD GRAZED,
THEY BECAME FULL,
THEY WERE FILLED, AND THEIR
HEART WAS LIFTED UP;
THEREFORE THEY FORGOT ME.



As a group share together, when you face a life crisis or struggle, is your initial reaction to turn to God for spiritual growth or to turn away from Him? Explain.

Study Together



What stands out to you regarding the charge God brought against Ephraim (v.2, 6)?

Consider the judgment and doom Israel faced. What is your initial reaction to the depictions of God in this passage—such as the lion, leopard, and bear (v. 7-8)?

Compare verses 10-11 with 1 Samuel 8:5-9, 20. Why did the Israelites want a king? How did their desire for a king deceive them?

In verse 14, is God promising judgment or deliverance? How can the context give us clues about which God is likely to do?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 13: 1– 8 The man-made gods that Israel worships are nothing compared to their actual God, who is living, active, and true to his word.

HOS 13: 4– 5 But I am the LORD your God from the land of Egypt. This is a solemn statement that recalls Ex. 20: 2. The passing work of the craftsmen who make idols (Hos. 13: 2) is contrasted with the God who sustained Israel in the land of drought by his devoted care.

HOS 13: 9– 16 Ephraim, by its stubborn refusal to return to the Lord, rejects the only hope that God offers. Three figures of judgment are pronounced in these verses: the incompetent king (vv. 10– 11), the unborn child (vv. 13– 14), and the withering wind of God (v. 15).

Sent Together



What would you say to a friend who says a comfortable life is a sure sign of God's blessing?

Spend some time asking God to remove our self-reliance and change our identity to make us more like Him. Pray that He will remind us of His sufficiency and grace this week.



WHOEVER IS WISE, LET HIM
UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS;
WHOEVER IS DISCERNING,
LET HIM KNOW THEM;
FOR THE WAYS OF THE LORD
ARE RIGHT,
AND THE UPRIGHT WALK IN THEM,
BUT TRANSGRESSORS STUMBLE
IN THEM.

REDEEMING GOD



As a group share together, who is someone that has best modeled wisdom and forgiveness to you? What impact has this made on you?

Study Together



How did Hosea say Israel could avoid judgment (v.1-2)? What do you appreciate about Hosea's appeal to the people?

Identify what the Israelites were to take with them when they returned to the Lord (v.2)? Words alone aren't enough—they must express genuine remorse and repentance. What are signs of genuine remorse and repentance?

Why are repentance, love, and justice so important to God? What do these traits look like in the lives of Christ followers?

Consider the imagery used in verses 4-9. Which of the metaphors given by the Lord impacts you the most? How can you say these verses are descriptive of what God has done in your own life?

FROM ESV GLOBAL STUDY

HOS 14: 6 his shoots shall spread out. An expanding kingdom is like the growth of a great tree: Israel's original calling was to spread its influence through the whole world.

HOS 14: 7 they shall flourish like the grain . . . like the vine . . . like the wine. Israel again becomes a choice vine, which was her purpose from the beginning (compare 10: 1). The landscape described here is an Eden-like paradise, illustrating covenant renewal (compare 2: 14–23).

HOS 14: 9 The Lord is justified in punishing Israel for ingratitude and covenant breaking. Yet there is a final appeal for the wise, who understand (compare 4: 14). Most of the book has addressed Ephraim as a corporate body, but these terms focus on the response of individual Israelites. There are some in Israel who really understand the grace that God offers in his covenant.

Sent Together



Discuss some of the sources people in our community depend upon for salvation instead of God? How can you use what you've learned today to share Christ with someone?

Spend some time thanking God for doing whatever it takes to get our attention and draw us back to Himself. Pray that God will use our group to show others the path of forgiveness, healing, and restoration that only comes through Him.



GOSPEL: A SAVING FAITH

Being a Christian is more than identifying with a particular religion or affirming a certain value system. Being a Christian means you have embraced what the Bible says about God, humankind and salvation. Consider the following truths about God.

God is Creator. We were created by a personal God to love, serve and enjoy endless fellowship with Him. The New Testament reveals that it was Jesus Himself who created everything. Therefore, He owns everything and has authority over our lives (read John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).

God is Holy. God is absolutely and perfectly holy; and therefore, He cannot commit or approve of any evil. God requires holiness of us as well (read Isaiah 6:3; James 1:3; 1 Peter 1:16).

Humankind is Sinful. God tells us that “there is no man who does not sin.” That does not mean we are incapable of acts of human kindness. But we are totally incapable of understanding, loving or pleasing God on our own (read Romans 3:10-12).

Sin Demands a Penalty. God's holiness and justice demand that all sin be punished by death. That is why simply changing our patterns of behavior cannot solve our sin problem or eliminate its consequences (read Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23; Psalm 145:20).

Jesus is Lord and Savior. God tells us that “If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” Even though God's justice demands death for sin, His love provided a Savior who paid the penalty and died for sinners (read 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26).

Saving faith is accompanied by repentance from sin. Repentance is agreeing with God that you are sinful, confessing your sin to Him, and making a choice to turn from sin and to follow Christ as your leader (read Luke 13:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; John 17:3).



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