

Pursue Love and Justice

Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14

SS Lesson for 05/31/2020

Devotional Scripture: Micah 6:6-8

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: Hosea 12:6

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS (HOSEA 11:1-2, 7-10)

God's faithful love (1)

- Faithful love because He is love (1 John 4:8)
- Faithful love because He is rich in it (Eph 2:4)
- Faithful love because He quiets us with it (Zeph 3:17)
- Faithful love because nothing can separate us from it (Rom 8:39)
- Faithful love though the sacrifice of His Son (John 3:16)
- Faithful love because of His grace (2 Thess 2:16)
- Faithful love while we were still sinners (Rom 5:8)

God's faithfulness in spite of Israel's hypocrisy (2, 7)

- Hypocrisy of neglecting important things (Matt 23:23-24)
- Hypocrisy of saying one thing, but doing another (Matt 23:2-7)
- Hypocrisy of acting like one is earnest (Isa 58:2-4)
- Hypocrisy that will one day be totally exposed (Luke 12:1-3)
- Hypocrisy that shuts the kingdom of heaven from others (Matt 23:13)
- Hypocrisy that fails to see own sin (Luke 6:42)

God's faithful forgiveness (8-9)

- Forgiveness that does not remember sins any more (Heb 8:12)
- Forgiveness that sanctifies (Acts 26:17-18)
- Forgiveness that rescues from a dominion of darkness (Col 1:13-14)
- Forgiveness through Jesus' blood (Matt 26:28)
- Forgiveness that is in accordance with God's grace (Eph 1:7)

God's faithfulness leading to Israel's return to God (10)

- Returning that will result in growth in knowing God (Jer 24:7)
- Returning that could bring blessings from God (Joel 2:13-14)
- Returning that is a sign of growth in faith (Luke 17:17-19)
- Returning that brings healing of the spiritual and physical man (2 Chron 7:14)
- Returning that brings restoral (Deut 30:2-3)
- Returning that brings answered prayers and forgiveness (1 Kings 8:47-50)

GOD'S RESOLUTION (HOSEA 12:1-2, 6-14)

God's judgment of Sin (1-2)

- Judgment that one should be prepared for (Amos 4:12)
- Judgment for stubbornness and unrepentant hearts (Rom 2:5)
- Judgment because all must appear before the judgment seat of God (2 Cor 5:10)
- Judgment because it is destined for man to face judgment (Heb 9:27)
- Judgment of pride (Luke 20:45-47)

Ephraim's repentance and observing of love and mercy (6)

- Repentance because it is from God's kindness (Rom 2:4)
- Repentance because of godly sorrow (2 Cor 7:9-10)
- Repentance so that God will lead to the knowledge of the truth (2 Tim 2:24-26)
- Repentance because God wants everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9)
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- Because pride causes destruction (Prov 16:18)
- Because pride never makes sense (Isa 10:15-16)
- Because pride makes one think more highly of himself than he ought (Rom 12:3)
- Because pride is an abomination to God (Prov 16:5)
- Because pride keeps one from seeking God (Ps 10:4)

Because pride makes one a fool (Prov 26:12)
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Reconciliation because Jesus became our peace (Eph 2:14-16)
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Resistance will cause trials and discipline to become heavier (Isa 28:22-23)
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Resistance through despising God's Word (Isa 30:12-13)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM THOMAS CONSTABLE
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

One hot summer day, the cool green watermelon was as appealing as gourmet ice cream. A swift stroke of a knife later, though, and everyone gathered around the table winced in disgust. The watermelon had rotted from the inside out. The rind was perfect, but the dead white insides reeked of decay. Disappointment quickly gave way to revulsion as we tried to escape the nauseating stench. The beautiful fruit was rotten at the core. The northern kingdom of Israel of the mid-eighth century BC looked beautiful on the surface as well, like the nation had it all together. But it too was rotten at the core. And God had had enough of Israel's revolting behavior.

A general time line for Hosea's prophetic ministry is 755-725 BC. This is computed with reference to the reigns listed in Hosea 1:1, as well as the fact that the northern kingdom of Israel, Hosea's primary focus, ceased to exist in 722 BC. Israel's King Jeroboam II, listed in Hosea 1:1, reigned from about 793 to 753 BC. He was a strong ruler politically. He expanded Israel's borders and made Israel the leading nation in Palestine and Syria (see 2 Kings 14:23-29). Israel was wealthy and proud of its success. Turning their backs on God, the people also found it all too easy to shift allegiance to the fictitious deity known as Baal (Hosea 2:8, 13); this went hand in hand with injustice (4:1, 2). In confronting this idolatry, God called Hosea to live out a unique and difficult parable of God's love for Israel (see chap. 1-3). Hosea's style did not involve pronouncing what we might call highly directed prophecies—those beginning with the command “Hear,” followed by named addressees—the way other prophets did (contrast Jeremiah 10:1; 22:2). Two exceptions are found in Hosea 4:1 and 5:1. Following those pronouncements, Hosea simply continued his generalized prophetic pronouncements on wayward Israel. For this reason, the organization of the book can be difficult to determine.

Key Verse: Hosea 12:6

So you, by the help of your God, return; Observe mercy and justice, and wait on your God continually

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

11:1-2. Once again the Lord recalled Israel's early history to contrast the past with the present (cf. 9:10; 10:1). At the beginning the Lord's relationship with **Israel** had been like that of a father to a **son** (cf. Ex. 4:22-23). (On the quotation of this passage, see Matt. 2:15.) The Lord displayed His love toward the nation by summoning her from **Egypt** (cf. Deut. 7:8; also cf. Hosea 12:9, 13; 13:4). However, when God subsequently called them (11:2) to covenant obedience through His prophets, the people rejected Him (cf. Jer. 7:25-26) and turned instead to false gods (cf. 2 Kings 17:13-17) including **the Baals** (cf. Hosea 2:13, 17). Hosea 11:2a is literally, “**The more** they [i.e., the prophets] **called** them, the more they [the Israelites] **went from them**” (NASB; cf. KJV, NIV marg.).

11:3-4. The Lord's goodness to Israel is further illustrated. Like a father patiently teaching a young child to **walk**, the Lord had established and sustained Israel (cf. Deut. 1:31; Isa. 1:2). He also restored (**healed**) the nation's strength after times of judgment, though she failed to acknowledge His intervention. In Hosea 11:4

Israel is compared to a work animal (cf. 10:11). The Lord is likened to a master who gently (in **kindness** and **love**; cf. 11:1) leads his animal and removes (or perhaps repositions) its **yoke** so that it might eat with greater ease the food he kindly provides. The Lord treated Israel with compassion and love.

11:5-7. Astonishingly Israel had responded to the Lord's kindness with ingratitude (cf. vv. 2, 3b). Even when the Lord called her to repentance through His prophets **they refused to repent** (cf. v. 7). Therefore inescapable judgment would fall in the form of military defeat and exile (vv. 5a, 6). Once again **Egypt** is named as a symbol of slavery and exile (cf. 8:13; 9:3, 6). The wording **bars of their gates** (11:6) is supported by the parallel term **cities**. Another possible translation of the Hebrew for "bars of their gates" is "braggarts" (cf. Wolff, *Hosea*, p. 192). In favor of this is the following line (v. 6c) which literally reads, "on account of **their plans**." "Plans" refers to rebellious attitudes and practices (cf. Micah 6:16). **Put an end** literally reads "eats, devours." The same Hebrew verb (*'ākal*) appears in Hosea 11:4 ("feed"). The repetition of this word in verses 4 and 6 emphasizes the contrast between the Lord's past blessing and His future judgment. In the past He had given Israel food to eat. Now, ironically, He was about to send **swords** to eat Israel! For a similar wordplay involving the same Hebrew term, see Isaiah 1:19-20. The Hebrew text of Hosea 11:7b is so obscure that any translation must remain tentative. The problem is evidenced by the variations in the English versions. According to the NIV rendering, God refused to hear the desperate prayer of His obstinate people. But the NASB translates the text, "Though they call them to the One on high, none at all exalts Him," with "they" referring not to Israel but to the prophets. In that view Israel rejected the prophets' calls to repentance. As in earlier sections of this prophecy, Hosea's message of judgment concludes with an abrupt shift to a message of salvation (cf. 1:10-2:1; 2:14-3:5; 5:15-6:3). These verses should not be understood as a decision to withhold the judgment threatened uncompromisingly throughout the book. Instead, the words are a divine response to Israel's suffering and exile. The Lord would not totally abandon Israel. The effects of His wrath would be tempered by His compassion, and He would ultimately call His people back from exile.

11:8-9. One of the Bible's strongest expressions of divine emotion is in these verses. As God reflected on the severe judgment that His wrath would bring on **Israel**, He suddenly burst out with four rhetorical questions. They indicate that He would never completely desert His people. **Admah** and **Zebaiim**, which were annihilated along with Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut. 29:23; cf. Gen. 10:19; 14:2, 8), were symbols of complete divine destruction. **Changed** (lit., "overturned") is the same word (*hāpak*) used to describe the overthrow of these cities (cf. Gen. 19:25; Deut. 29:23). Wolff comments on the wordplay, "Israel will not be completely 'overturned' as the cities mentioned here; rather, there will be an 'overturning,' that is, a change, in Yahweh's heart" (*Hosea*, p. 201). Instead of carrying out His **fierce** (lit., "burning") **anger** to the fullest, God's **compassion** would be **aroused** (lit., "grow warm"; cf. "kindled" in KJV, NASB). The burning flame of God's anger would be replaced, as it were, by the fire of His compassion. **Ephraim** would never **again** experience the judgment of **God**. This promise is reliable because it was made by **the Holy One** (cf. Hosea 11:12) Himself, who condescends to dwell with His people (**among** them) and yet continues to transcend all that is human and fallible (He is **not man**; cf. 1 Sam. 15:29).

11:10-11 In the day of national restoration Israel will follow the LORD, who will lead the people back to their homes. His lion-like roar, often associated with judgment and destruction (cf. 5:14; 13:7; Amos 1:2; 3:8), will become a summons to return from exile. The people will again demonstrate a healthy respect for the LORD; they will come trembling (cf. Hosea 3:5 for a similar idea), as an earlier generation did when God appeared in theophanic might at Mount Sinai (cf. Ex. 19:16, where the same Heb. word is used). The comparison to **doves** is significant in light of Hosea 7:11, where Israel's naiveté in seeking foreign alliances is likened to that of a dove. Here the force of the simile is positive, the reference being to the swiftness with which the dove returns to its nest (cf. Ps. 55:6-8; Isa. 60:8). Again **Egypt** represents exile (see Hosea 8:13). Restoration **from Assyria** is also mentioned in

Once more Israel's guilt is established and her punishment predicted. These verses introduce the final section with a formal accusation (11:12-12:2a) and an announcement of judgment (12:2b).

11:12. The entire nation (**Judah** included) had broken her covenant with the Lord. **Lies** and **deceit** refer to hypocrisy and unfaithfulness. The latter (*mirmâh*; cf. 12:7) is especially appropriate in light of the following comparison with the patriarch Jacob (cf. 12:3-4, 12). The same term was used to describe Jacob's deception in stealing Esau's blessing (cf. Gen. 27:35). Ironically the nation was unfaithful to **the faithful Holy One**, who had always demonstrated fidelity to His covenant promises (cf. Hosea 12:9; 13:4-6). **Is unruly** (*rûd*) means to stray or roam restlessly, an apt picture of Israel's wandering off from God to Baal and to foreign nations for help. "Holy One" is plural here, emphasizing the magnitude of this divine

characteristic. In this context God's holiness refers primarily to His transcendence over fallible people (cf. 11:9).

12:1-2. Israel's unfaithfulness found expression in social injustice (she **multiplies lies and violence**; cf. 4:2; 7:1) and in foreign alliances with **Assyria** and **Egypt** (cf. 5:13; 7:8, 11; 8:8-9; 2 Kings 17:3-4). **Olive oil** was either used in the covenant-making ceremony or given as a token of allegiance. All this activity was futile and self-destructive, as the references to feeding on and pursuing **the wind** suggest (cf. Hosea 8:7; 13:15). **The LORD had a charge** (*rb*; cf. 4:1; also see 2:2) **against Judah** and was about to **punish** His people for their evil ways.

Before further developing the themes of guilt and judgment (cf. 12:9-13:16), Hosea reminded the nation of her need to repent (12:5-6). In doing so he drew a lesson from the life of Jacob (vv. 3-4).

12:3-4. Jacob's birth gave a hint of the kind of person he would be. His grasping Esau's **heel** (cf. Gen. 25:26) foreshadowed his deception of his brother in stealing his birthright and blessing (cf. Gen. 27:35-36). However, Jacob eventually came to a turning point. When he faced the prospect of death at Esau's hand on his return to the land of Canaan he wrestled **with God**, refusing to let go till he received a blessing (Gen. 32:22-32). Later **at Bethel**, the site of his dream years before (cf. Gen. 28:10-22), God appeared to Jacob again. God changed his name to Israel, blessed him, and renewed His covenant promise (cf. Gen. 35:1-14).

12:5-6. Like Jacob, the deceitful nation (cf. 11:12) needed to **return** (12:6) **to her covenant Ruler, the LORD God Almighty** with tears and prayers (cf. v. 4). Genuine repentance would involve a commitment to **love** (*hesed*) **and justice**, as well as a dependence on the Lord (**wait for your God always**; cf. Ps. 27:14), rather than on herself.

12:7-8. Israel's repentance (v. 6) would necessitate a complete reversal in her dealings and attitudes. The nation was permeated by economic dishonesty (*mirmâh*; cf. 11:12 for the same word), oppression (**defraud**), pride (**Ephraim boasts**), and insensitivity to her sin, thinking that her **wealth** would hide her **sin**. The Old Testament frequently spoke against using **scales** that were rigged to weigh out less merchandise than the buyer thought he was getting (cf. Lev. 19:36; Deut. 25:13-16; Prov. 11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23; Amos 8:5; Micah 6:11).

12:9. **The LORD**, however, would not overlook such blatant disobedience and ingratitude. As their **God**, He had guided the nation since her days in **Egypt**, leading her through the wilderness to the Promised Land. As part of His coming judgment He would bring Israel into the wilderness **again**, making her **live in tents**. The wilderness experience, which the people commemorated in the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. Lev. 23:33-43), would be realized once more in the Exile.

12:10-11. Though the Lord had communicated His will to Israel through **the prophets**, the people had repudiated those messages (cf. 9:7 and 11:2). The wickedness and hypocrisy manifested in **Gilead** (cf. 6:8) and **Gilgal** (cf. 4:15; 9:15) epitomized that of the nation. In the coming invasion the **altars** located there would be reduced to **piles of stones** (*gallm*; cf. 10:8, "the high places... will be destroyed"). The use of this Hebrew word, which is a play on the name Gilgal facilitated by the repetition of the "g" and "l" sounds, is another example of Hosea's poetic techniques. Gilgal would become *gallm*.

12:12-13. The Lord's past goodness is again recalled. Going back to Jacob's experience once more (cf. vv. 3-4), Hosea reminded the people of their humble beginnings. Their famous ancestor was once a refugee who had to tend **sheep** in order to acquire **a wife** (cf. Deut. 26:5). Later Jacob's descendants served the Egyptians till God delivered them **from Egypt** (cf. Hosea 11:1; 12:9; 13:4) and protected them through His **Prophet** Moses.

12:14. However, Israel had **provoked** the Lord **to anger** with her sin. Hosea probably was alluding here to idolatry because *kā'as*, the verb rendered "provoked to anger," is frequently used in reference to idols (cf., e.g., Deut. 4:25; 9:18; 31:29; 32:16, 21; Judges 2:12; 1 Kings 14:9, 15). In response to this the **LORD** would not extend forgiveness (He would **leave upon** the nation its **guilt**; cf. Hosea 10:2; 13:12, 16); He would **repay** her for her evil.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

God's Faithfulness (Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10)

1 "When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.
2 As they called them, So they went from them; They sacrificed to the Baals, And burned incense to carved images.
7 My people are bent on backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, None at all exalt Him.
8 "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred.
9 I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror.
10 "They shall walk after the Lord. He will roar like a lion. When He roars, Then His sons shall come trembling from the west;

God's faithful love (1)

Faithful love because He is love (1 John 4:8)

8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Faithful love because He is rich in it (Eph 2:4)

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

Faithful love because He quiets us with it (Zeph 3:17)

17 The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

Faithful love because nothing can separate us from it (Rom 8:39)

39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Faithful love though the sacrifice of His Son (John 3:16)

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Faithful love because of His grace (2 Thess 2:16)

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,

Faithful love while we were still sinners (Rom 5:8)

8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God's faithfulness in spite of Israel's hypocrisy (2, 7)

Hypocrisy of neglecting important things (Matt 23:23-24)

23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices — mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law — justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. 24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

Hypocrisy of saying one thing, but doing another (Matt 23:2-7)

2 "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. 4 They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. 5 "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7 they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'

Hypocrisy of acting like one is earnest (Isa 58:2-4)

2 For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them. 3 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?' "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. 4 Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.

Hypocrisy that will one day be totally exposed (Luke 12:1-3)

1 Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. 3 What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.

Hypocrisy that shuts the kingdom of heaven from others (Matt 23:13)

13 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

Hypocrisy that fails to see own sin (Luke 6:42)

42 How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

God's faithful forgiveness (8-9)

Forgiveness that does not remember sins any more (Heb 8:12)

12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Forgiveness that sanctifies (Acts 26:17-18)

17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

Forgiveness that rescues from a dominion of darkness (Col 1:13-14)

13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Forgiveness through Jesus' blood (Matt 26:28)

28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Forgiveness that is in accordance with God's grace (Eph 1:7)

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

God's faithfulness leading to Israel's return to God (10)

Returning that will result in growth in knowing God (Jer 24:7)

7 I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

Returning that could bring blessings from God (Joel 2:13-14)

13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. 14 Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing — grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God.

Returning that is a sign of growth in faith (Luke 17:17-19)

17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

Returning that brings healing of the spiritual and physical man (2 Chron 7:14)

14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Returning that brings restoral (Deut 30:2-3)

2 and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, 3 then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.

Returning that brings answered prayers and forgiveness (1 Kings 8:47-50)

47 and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their conquerors and say, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly'; 48 and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their fathers, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name; 49 then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause. 50 And forgive your people, who have sinned against you; forgive all the offenses they have committed against you, and cause their conquerors to show them mercy;

God's Resolution (Hosea 12:1-2, 6-14)

1 "Ephraim feeds on the wind, And pursues the east wind; He daily increases lies and desolation. Also they make a covenant with the Assyrians, And oil is carried to Egypt.

2 "The Lord also brings a charge against Judah, And will punish Jacob according to his ways; According to his deeds He will recompense him.

6 So you, by the help of your God, return; Observe mercy and justice, And wait on your God continually.

7 "A cunning Canaanite! Deceitful scales are in his hand; He loves to oppress.

8 And Ephraim said, 'Surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself; In all my labors They shall find in me no iniquity that is sin.'

9 "But I am the Lord your God, Ever since the land of Egypt; I will again make you dwell in tents, As in the days of the appointed feast.

10 I have also spoken by the prophets, And have multiplied visions; I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets."

11 Though Gilead has idols-- Surely they are vanity-- Though they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal, Indeed their altars shall be heaps in the furrows of the field.

12 Jacob fled to the country of Syria; Israel served for a spouse, And for a wife he tended sheep.

13 By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, And by a prophet he was preserved.

14 Ephraim provoked Him to anger most bitterly; Therefore his Lord will leave the guilt of his bloodshed upon him, And return his reproach upon him.

God's judgment of Sin (1-2)

Judgment that one should be prepared for (Amos 4:12)

12 "Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel."

Judgment for stubbornness and unrepentant hearts (Rom 2:5)

5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

Judgment because all must appear before the judgment seat of God (2 Cor 5:10)

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Judgment because it is destined for man to face judgment (Heb 9:27)

27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

Judgment of pride (Luke 20:45-47)

45 While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, 46 "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. 47 They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

Ephraim's repentance and observing of love and mercy (6)

Repentance because it is from God's kindness (Rom 2:4)

4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

Repentance because of godly sorrow (2 Cor 7:9-10)

9 yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Repentance so that God will lead to the knowledge of the truth (2 Tim 2:24-26)

24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Repentance because God wants everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9)

9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Repentance that brings God's refreshing (Acts 3:19)

19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

Ephraim's ceasing of being prideful (7-8)

Because pride causes destruction (Prov 16:18)

18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Because pride never makes sense (Isa 10:15-16)

15 Does the ax raise itself above him who swings it, or the saw boast against him who uses it? As if a rod were to wield him who lifts it up, or a club brandish him who is not wood! 16 Therefore, the Lord, the Lord Almighty, will

Because pride makes one think more highly of himself than he ought (Rom 12:3)

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Because pride is an abomination to God (Prov 16:5)

5 The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.

Because pride keeps one from seeking God (Ps 10:4)

4 In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

Because pride makes one a fool (Prov 26:12)

12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

God's plan for reconciliation (9-10)

Reconciliation through justification (Rom 5:1-2)

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Reconciliation through Jesus' death (Rom 5:10)

10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Reconciliation because Jesus became our peace (Eph 2:14-16)

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Reconciliation through Jesus' blood (Col 1:19-22)

19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. 21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

Reconciliation through forgiveness of sins (Heb 2:17)

17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

God's punishment of resistance to plan (11-14)

Resistance through ignoring God's advice and not accepting His rebuke (Prov 1:24-26)

24 But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, 25 since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, 26 I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you —

Resistance will cause trials and discipline to become heavier (Isa 28:22-23)

22 Now stop your mocking, or your chains will become heavier; the Lord, the Lord Almighty, has told me of the destruction decreed against the whole land. 23 Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say.

Resistance will cause God's anger to burn (Isa 5:24-25)

24 Therefore, as tongues of fire lick up straw and as dry grass sinks down in the flames, so their roots will decay and their flowers blow away like dust; for they have rejected the law of the Lord Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel. 25 Therefore the Lord's anger burns against his people; his hand is raised and he strikes them down. The mountains shake, and the dead bodies are like refuse in the streets. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.

Resistance through backsliding (Jer 15:6)

6 You have rejected me," declares the Lord. "You keep on backsliding. So I will lay hands on you and destroy you; I can no longer show compassion.

Resistance through despising God's Word (Isa 30:12-13)

12 Therefore, this is what the Holy One of Israel says: "Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression and depended on deceit, 13 this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable

Verse 1

The Lord reminded His people that when Israel was in its early days as a nation, like a youth, He loved the nation (cf. Exodus 4:22-23). As often, loving refers to choosing (cf. Genesis 12:2-3). God chose Israel for special blessing among the world's nations and in this sense loved him. He called and led His "son" Israel out of bondage in Egypt (cf. Deuteronomy 14:1; Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 1:2-20; Jeremiah 3:19; Jeremiah 3:22; Jeremiah 4:22; Jeremiah 31:9; Jeremiah 31:20).

"We need not find the slightest difficulty in Israel's being called Jehovah's son and not His wife. In a book of so many brief and normally unconnected oracles, with their wealth of metaphors and pictorial imagery, it is worse than pedantic to see a contradiction." [Note: Ellison, p143.]

Matthew wrote that Jesus Christ fulfilled this verse (Matthew 2:15). Jesus did so in that as the Son of God in another sense God the Father called and led Him out of Egypt when He was a child. Matthew did not mean that Hosea had Jesus Christ in mind or predicted His exodus from Egypt when he wrote but that Jesus' experience corresponded to what Hosea had written about Israel. He saw the experience of Jesus as analogous to that of Israel. Jesus' experience completed the full meaning of Hoses statement and in this sense fulfilled it. [Note: See Dyer, pp733-34, for several comparisons and contrasts between the history of Israel and the history of Jesus Christ.]

"This is a reference not only to the exodus of Israel from Egypt but also to the fact that all of God's dealings with Israel were based upon the love that He would show in calling His Song of Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ, back from the comparative safety of Egypt in order that He might suffer and die to accomplish His great redemptive work." [Note: The New Scofield . . . , p925.]

A Israel's rebelliousness (11:1-7)

Verse 1

Again this section, which is all divine speech, begins with a reference to something in Israel's history to contrast the past with the present (cf. Hosea 9:10; Hosea 10:1; Hosea 10:9).

"The passage at its outset has similarities to the form of the legal complaint made by parents against a rebellious child (Deuteronomy 21:18-21; cf. Isaiah 1:2-20 where hope is held out that the child [Israel] may yet repent and receive compassion rather than death)." [Note: Stuart, p175]

Verse 2

God continued to call the Israelites after they left Egypt. He did so through His prophets. But the more the prophets appealed to the people to follow the Lord, the more the people turned aside from following Him. They kept sacrificing to Baal and kept burning incense to idols (cf. Judges 2:11-13).

Verse 3

Israel demonstrated this ungrateful apostasy even though it was Yahweh who taught His son Israel to walk (behave, cf. Deuteronomy 1:31; Isaiah 1:2), provided tender loving care, and healed him when he needed restoration.

Verse 4

The restraints that the Lord had placed on Israel in its youth were cords of love designed to protect and preserve the people rather than robbing them of freedom. The Lord freed them from oppressive bondage and made special provision to feed them. The image of a loving herdsman taking care of his animal is in view here. Often a cattleman would lift the yolk from an ox's shoulders so when it bent over to eat it would not slide down over its face and impede its feeding. [Note: Wood, "Hosea," pp212-13.]

Verse 5

Because Israel refused to return (Heb. *shub*) to Yahweh after so many appeals by His prophets (Hosea 11:2), He would return (Heb. *shub*) the nation to captivity. Yet the place of exile would not be Egypt but Assyria. In other messages Hosea identified Egypt as the place of Israel's future exile (cf. Hosea 8:13; Hosea 9:3; Hosea 9:6), but here it becomes clear that He was only using Egypt as a metaphor for a place of captivity. Assyria would be the geographical location of Israel's exile. Thus "Egypt" is an atbash for Assyria (cf. Hosea 4:15).

Verse 6

Enemy soldiers would swarm around Israel's cities and break down the gate bars that secured them against foreign attack. They would consume the Israelites because of the decisions the Israelites had made to depart from the Lord (cf. Micah 6:16). These were the result, in part, of false prophets' advice. Yahweh had fed His people (Hosea 11:4), but now the sword would feed on them (cf. Isaiah 1:19-20).

Verse 7

The Israelites' resolve to abandon Yahweh was firm. In spite of the prophets' appeals to return to Him, none of them exalted the Lord by doing so. The Hebrew text of the last part of Hosea 11:7 is very difficult to understand. The NIV translators thought it meant God refused to hear the desperate cry of His people.

Verse 8

The Lord asked four rhetorical questions that reveal how hard it was for Him to turn Israel over to an enemy for punishment. They are strong expressions of divine emotion, specifically, love for His chosen people. Admah and Zeboiim were cities that God annihilated along with Sodom and Gomorrah (cf. Genesis 10:19; Genesis 14:2; Genesis 14:8; Deuteronomy 29:23). God could not bring Himself to deal with the cities of Israel as He had with those towns. He would not totally destroy them. His heart of judgment was turned upside down into a heart of compassion. All His compassion flamed up in Him as judgment emotions had done before.

"Israel will not be completely "overturned" as the cities mentioned here; rather, there will be an "overturning," that Isaiah, a change, in Yahweh's heart." [Note: Wolff, p201.]

B. Another assurance of restoration (11:8-11)

Verses 8

As previously, a series of messages assuring Israel's judgment (Hosea 6:4 to Hosea 11:7) ends with assurance of future restoration. God would definitely bring devastating judgment on Israel, but His compassion for the nation and His promises to the patriarchs required final blessing after the discipline (cf. Deuteronomy 4:25-31).

"These verses are like a window into the heart of God. They show that his love for his people is a love that will never let them go." [Note: Ibid," p214.]

Verse 9

God did not change His mind about bringing judgment on Israel, but He promised not to apply the full measure of His wrath or to destroy Ephraim again in the future. He would show restraint because He is God, not a man who forgets His promises, is arbitrary in His passions, and might be vindictive in His anger (cf. 1 Samuel

15:29). He was the Holy One in the midst of the Israelites, so He would be completely fair with His people. He would not descend on them with unbridled wrath.

"Some theologians argue that God does not possess emotions. Of course, to make such an assertion they must dismiss as anthropopathic the many biblical texts that attribute emotions to God. Hosea 11:9 demonstrates that this view of God's nature is erroneous and unbiblical. God, like human beings whom he made in his image, is capable of a wide range of emotions, but God, unlike human beings, expresses his emotions in perfect balance. The distinction between God and human beings does not lie in some supposed absence of divine emotion, but in God's ability to control his emotions and express them appropriately." [Note: Chisholm, Handbook on . . . , p362.]

Verse 10

In the future the Israelites would follow the Lord (cf. Hosea 11:2; Hosea 11:5). He would again announce His intentions like a roaring lion (cf. Hosea 5:14; Hosea 13:7; Amos 1:2; Amos 3:8). However this time it would not be as a lion about to devour its prey but as a lion leading its cubs to safety. The Israelites would follow Him trembling from the west (cf. Hosea 3:5; Exodus 19:16).

Since Assyria lay to Israel's east, it seems that this reference to regathering from the west does not refer to return from Assyrian captivity. Apparently it refers to return from another worldwide dispersion. Presently the Israelites live dispersed all over the world. This verse then probably alludes to a still future restoration from our perspective in history. It may refer to the restoration that Antichrist will encourage (Daniel 9:27), but it probably refers to the streaming of Israel back into the land following Jesus Christ's return to the earth (cf. Isaiah 11:11-12).

Verse 11

The idea of a universal return finds support in the references here to return from both Egypt (the symbolic place of exile) and Assyria (the literal place; cf. Zechariah 10:10-11). Yahweh promised to settle the Israelites in their houses, namely, in the places that they formerly left, in the land of Israel. The Israelites had been as silly as pigeons seeking foreign alliances (Hosea 7:11), but now they would return as vulnerable and as swift as doves to the land (cf. Psalm 55:6-7; Isaiah 60:8).

An introductory accusation and announcement of judgment (11:12-12:2)

Verse 12

VI. THE FIFTH SERIES OF MESSAGES ON JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION: HISTORICAL UNFAITHFULNESS (11:12-14:8)

A tone of exhortation and instruction marks this fifth and last collection of messages.

This is Hosea 11:1 of chapter 12 in the Hebrew Bible. The Lord complained that Ephraim (Israel) had consistently lied and tried to deceive Him. He described Himself as surrounded and under attack by His own people. Wherever He looked all He saw was cheaters. Deception (Heb. *mirmah*, unfaithfulness) had also marked Israel's ancestor, Jacob (cf. Hosea 12:3-4; Hosea 12:12; Genesis 27:35). But the kingdom of Judah had also been unruly (Heb. *rud*, wayward) in its relationship with the Holy One (cf. Hosea 11:9) who is faithful. Yahweh was always faithful to His covenant promises even though these groups of His people had wandered from Him and sought out Baals and foreign allies. Both kingdoms had been unfaithful to the covenant the Lord had made with them.

Verses 12-14

1. The deceitfulness of Israel (11:12-12:14)

Several comparisons of Israel and the patriarch Jacob point out the deceitfulness of the Northern Kingdom in this apparent mosaic of messages. Israel had cheated on its covenant with Yahweh. The form of the passage is again that of a lawsuit in which the Lord brought charges against Israel (the *rib* oracle) and concluded by announcing its doom.

Verses 12-16

A. Judgment for unfaithfulness 11:12-13:16

Hosea again established Israel's guilt and predicted her punishment. Israel's unfaithfulness to God receives special emphasis (cf. ch3).

Verse 1

Describing Ephraim feeding on wind pictures the nation pursuing vain efforts that do not satisfy (cf. Hosea 8:7; Hosea 13:15). Reference to the east wind suggests the hot desert wind that no one in his right mind would pursue. Ephraim also multiplied lies and violence, evidences of internal social injustice (cf. Hosea 4:2; Hosea 7:1). She made covenants (treaties) with Assyria and Egypt rather than trusting in God (cf. Hosea 5:13; Hosea 7:8; Hosea 7:11; Hosea 8:8-9; 2 Kings 17:3-4; 2 Kings 18:21; Isaiah 30:7). Carrying oil to Egypt probably pictures Ephraim fulfilling a covenant obligation to her treaty partner.

Verse 2

The Lord also had a charge (Heb. *rib*, cf. Hosea 2:2) to bring against Judah and promised to punish Jacob in harmony with his sins. "Jacob" may represent the Northern Kingdom here in contrast to Judah, the Southern Kingdom, or "Jacob" may represent both kingdoms since both descended from him (cf. Hosea 10:11).

"Israel is not a "chip off the old block" but a nation *unlike* its eponymous ancestor, in that it refuses to acknowledge Yahweh as its sole God." [Note: Stuart, p190.]

Verse 3

The Lord described the ancestor of these kingdoms further. Jacob grasped his brother's heel while he was still in the womb of his mother Rebekah (Genesis 25:26). This was a preview of the grasping character that marked him all his life (cf. Genesis 27:35-36). In later life he also continued to contend with God. These references to the early and later life of Jacob picture him as being a contentious person all his life. [Note: See Harper, p379; and Chisholm, "Hosea," p1404.] Other interpreters thought Hosea used this characteristic of Jacob as a positive example for his hearers and readers. [Note: Keil, 1:146; Stuart, p197; and Wood, "Hosea," p216.] They took it as an indication of Jacob's desire to obtain the promised blessings.

A lesson from Jacob's life (12:3-6)

The Lord proceeded to teach His people the need to repent by reminding them of the experience of their forefather Jacob.

Verse 4

One important instance of Jacob contending with God was when he wrestled with the angel at Peniel and prevailed over him by weeping and pleading with him to bless him (Genesis 32:22-32). This event was a turning point in Jacob's life because he finally realized that he could not succeed simply by manipulation and trickery. He recognized His need for God's help and turned to Him in desperation. It was the occasion of Jacob's repentance. God had prepared Jacob for this event by allowing him to experience several years of conflict with his uncle Laban (cf. Genesis 31:42).

Another significant event in Jacob's life was when he returned to Bethel, where God had appeared to him in a dream years earlier (Genesis 28:10-22). This return to Bethel, and the act of worship Jacob performed there, were in obedience to God's word to him to go there and fulfill his former vow (Genesis 35:1-14). This too was an act of submissive obedience and resulted in God changing Jacob's name to Israel (prince with God) again, blessing him, and renewing the Abrahamic Covenant with him.

It is ironic that the place where Jacob got right with God was Bethel since Bethel was the place where the Israelites had gotten wrong with Him by worshipping idols. Jacob's return to God at Bethel provided a good example for the Israelites to get right with Him there too.

Verse 5

Yahweh, the almighty God of armies, even Yahweh, spoke to all the Israelites when He spoke to Jacob at Bethel. He did this in that He intended the Israelites to learn from the experience of the patriarch.

Verse 6

The lesson was that, like Jacob, the Israelites should return to their covenant God. They should practice loyal love and justice in dealing with one another rather than being like the old Jacob. And they should commit to waiting in faith for God to act for them rather than seizing control of the situation, as Jacob so often had done.

Verse 7-8

A merchant who used dishonest scales loved to oppress his customers. Similarly Israel's oppression of others was traceable to pride in her riches. Much of Israel's dealings with the nations involved trading that deceit had contaminated. The Israelites considered their wealth a blessing from God that they interpreted as due to their cleverness and His approval of their lifestyle. Really it was due to His grace in spite of their sins.

Verses 7-11

The pride of Israel that needed humbling (12:7-11)

Verse 9

Yahweh reminded His people that He had been their God since before the Exodus. He was able to make them revert to a humble wilderness lifestyle again, which their yearly feast of Booths (Tabernacles) reminded them about (cf. Leviticus 23:33-43). This is clearly an allusion to the coming captivity of Israel.

Verse 10

The Lord also reminded them that He had spoken to them through prophets many times (cf. Hosea 9:7; Hosea 11:2). He had given the prophets visions, and they had taught their lessons to the Israelites. Nevertheless in spite of so many exhortations to return to the Lord the people had not responded.

Verse 11

What was going on in Gilead was an example of Israel's depravity (cf. Hosea 6:8-9). In Gilgal, too, worthless Israelites were sacrificing bulls, expensive offerings, on numerous altars that they had built there. The use of Gilead, on the west side of the Jordan, and Gilgal, on the east side, did not just represent the whole nation. It also provided a rhetorical parallelism since the two names sound similar (assonance). The number of the pagan altars at Gilgal was as great as the piles of stones that the farmers gathered beside their furrows. These altars would become simply piles of stones. There is a play on the name "Gilgal," which sounds like the Hebrew word *gallim*, meaning "pile of stones."

The land that Israel occupied had very stony ground, and when farmers plowed they often hit stones that they had to remove from the fields. Evidently they would pile these stones beside their furrows.

Verse 12

The Lord reminded the Israelites again of their humble origins. Jacob was a refugee who migrated to the land of Aram. There he had to work to pay for a wife, and he did so by tending sheep, a very humble occupation (cf. Deuteronomy 26:5).

Verses 12-14

Another lesson from Israel's history (12:12-14)

Verse 13

Later the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt and kept them alive during their wilderness wanderings by using a prophet, Moses (cf. Deuteronomy 18:18). The Israelites, as well as Jacob, had experienced hardship while in a foreign land. By implication they should not, therefore, have despised the prophets that Yahweh had sent them since Moses (cf. v10). Furthermore, they should remember that they could return to these conditions if they were not careful.

Verse 14

In spite of these mercies the Israelites had provoked the Lord to bitter anger with their idolatry (cf. Deuteronomy 4:25; Deuteronomy 9:18; Deuteronomy 31:29; Deuteronomy 32:16; Deuteronomy 32:21; Judges 2:12; 1 Kings 14:9; 1 Kings 14:15). Consequently He would not remove the guilt of their sins by forgiving them but would pay them back with punishment and shame. This was the sentence of their divine judge.

(Adapted from URL: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/hosea-11.html>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

All too frequently we feel the sneaky satisfaction of having gotten away with something. And our choices often convey to others that we are the most important people in our lives. We feel secure because of what we own or who we know; when trouble comes, we try to solve our own problems by way of people and stuff. Suddenly Israel looks as familiar as our reflection in the mirror. It's time to leave those things behind and trust in God. It's time to show through our actions that we follow God only.

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

Unfailing Love - The Book of Hosea is a testament to God's love for Israel, a people bent on doing wrong and seemingly incapable of making the right choices. The heavenly Father wooed them, compelling them to come into the safety of His loving arms. God spoke through the prophet Hosea to remind Israel of how over 500 years before He went to great lengths to deliver them from Egypt. However, they eventually rejected Him, bowing down to idols instead. They maintained rituals, but with no genuine relationship. Their affections and attention were elsewhere. God longed in His heart to love and be close to them, and He is loyal to His covenants. However, as a loving Father, He is obligated to correct and chasten His children, and that is not a pleasurable experience. God takes no pleasure in disciplining His children, but He knows it's necessary.

Unfulfilling Gods - Hosea reminded them that worshiping idols is like feeding on the wind; it is useless, empty. And rather than trust in God, Israel often made alliances and deals with surrounding countries for protection instead. Believing in these false gods was telling themselves a lie. Hosea used Jacob as an example. In his early years, he manipulated, made double deals, and tricked people. These mischievous activities dominated his lifestyle. But in the end, Jacob surrendered to God's will, pleading for a blessing. Hosea told Israel to do the same. God is always willing to help a backslider find his or her way home. Hosea's message was difficult for people to hear because of their prosperity at the time. But God showed the people their wrongdoing would lead to internal decay and eventually they would be homeless again and enslaved.

Loving Them Anyhow - The entire Book of Hosea communicates God's compassion for those who are disobedient to Him. God loves all His children and wants them to stay close to Him. He will persevere in His chasing after them, but they in turn must turn to Him.