

Tapes For Growing Christians

Study Guide for
HOSEA

Growing Christians Ministries
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lesson 1

The Lord Directs the Prophet Hosea to Marry a Woman Who Would Become a Prostitute Hosea 1:1-11

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. Israel turned away from God's love in the past.
2. Israel will turn back to God's love in the future.

practical application

1. Where are you in reference to God's love?

questions

1. Hosea is the first of the Minor Prophets in our Bibles. Can you name the twelve Minor Prophets?
2. Can you name the four Major Prophets?
3. Were the Minor Prophets less spiritual than the Major Prophets? What is meant by a "Minor Prophet"?
4. Where was Hosea's ministry primarily directed?
5. What is another name for Israel? Why was it called this?
6. Why would the Lord ask Hosea to take a wife of harlotry?

answers

1. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.
2. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel.
3. No, they were not less spiritual. The distinction has to do with the size of their books. The Minor Prophets are shorter books than the Major Prophets.
4. To the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
5. Ephraim, because it was the largest and most prominent tribe in the Northern Kingdom.
6. God asked this of Hosea to give an object lesson to His people Israel. Hosea's marriage to Gomer is an illustration of God's marriage to His people Israel. As Gomer turned away from Hosea's love and committed physical adultery, so Israel turned away from God's love and committed spiritual adultery by getting involved with gods of foreign nations.

discuss / consider

1. Read Hosea 1:3-9. Under God's direction, Hosea named all three children. Review the names of the three children and discuss their meaning in light of the overall illustration of the relationship between God and His people Israel.
2. Read Hosea 1:10-11. In a coming day, Israel will turn back to the Lord. What are some signs that we see today as a foretaste of what is to come?

challenge

1. Do you know God's love? Or have you turned away from God's love? Where are you right now in reference to God's love? Read and meditate on Romans 5:8 to understand God's demonstration of love for you.

memorize

"The Lord said to Hosea, "Go take yourself a wife of harlotry...for the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the Lord" - Hosea 1:2

"Call his name Jezreel...call her name Lo-Ruhamah...call his name Lo-Ammi. " - Hosea 1:4-9

"In the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people, there it shall be said to them, You are sons of the living God." - Hosea 1:10

lesson 2

A Vivid Description of the Judgment God Would Have to Bring on the People and Land of Israel because of the Nation's Spiritual Adultery Hosea 2:1-13

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. The nation of Israel would be disciplined and punished.
2. The land of Israel would be devastated and forsaken.

practical application

1. Analyze your obstacles.

questions

1. Why would God ask Hosea to marry a woman who would become a prostitute?
2. With whom did Israel commit spiritual adultery?
3. Who was Baal and what was he supposed to be able to control?
4. What is the difference between Baal (Hosea 2:8) and the Baals (Hosea 2:13)?
5. Where were the Baals located?
6. What would God have to do because of Israel's idolatry and immorality?

answers

1. Because God was going to use Gomer, Hosea's wife, as an object lesson of Israel's spiritual adultery.
2. With the foreign gods of the nations surrounding Israel.
3. Baal was the Canaanite deity that supposedly controlled the weather and the fertility of the land. If this god was appeased, then the Canaanites believed there would be agricultural and economic prosperity.
4. The Baals were local manifestations of the one Canaanite deity, Baal.
5. Local images and shrines to the Baals were scattered throughout the land.
6. God would have to judge the idolatry and spiritual adultery of His people.

discuss / consider

1. Review Hosea 2:1-9. Just as the husband-wife relationship between Hosea and Gomer had been severed by adultery, so the honeymoon was over between God and Israel. God would have to discipline and punish His wayward people. Israel was giving credit to the foreign gods for meeting her basic needs. How terrible it was to give credit to false gods instead of the one true God who gave Israel her food and wealth. Aren't many of God's people today involved in the same sin? The more God blesses them with material prosperity, the more they want and they get involved with things that take them away from the Lord. Is this true of you?

2. Because of Israel's idolatry, not only would the people suffer the consequences, but the land would suffer as well. The Assyrian Empire conquered the land of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the 8th Century B.C., not too many years after Hosea's prophecies. Because of the deep population of the land then, the grain fields and the vineyards were reduced to an overgrown forest or thicket. The productivity of the land came to an end in line with what God's law had said. God's law said that if the people did not follow Him, then there would be no rain and no blessing. This all came about as Hosea had predicted, despite Baal and his fertility powers!

challenge

1. God used obstacles to redirect Paul's ministry just as He used obstacles to confront the Jewish people over the years to redirect them and to bring them back to Himself. See 1 Thessalonians 2:18, Romans 15:22 and Acts 16:6-10. Are you facing obstacles in your life right now? Analyze them. Maybe they are put there by Satan to hinder you in your walk with the Lord. Or maybe they are put there by the Lord Himself in order to discipline you or redirect your present path. Maybe God is opening new doors of ministry for you. Analyze your obstacles.

memorize

"Bring charges against your mother (Israel)...for she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband! Let her put away her harlotries and her adulteries..." - Hosea 2:2

"I will not have mercy on her children, for they are the children of harlotry, for their mother has played the harlot...She said, 'I will go after my lovers, who gave me my bread and my water.'" - Hosea 2:4-5

"I will hedge up your way with thorns, and wall her in, so that she cannot find her paths." - Hosea 2:6

"She did not know that I (God) gave her grain, new wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold— which they prepared for Baal" - Hosea 2:8

"She went after her lovers; but Me she forgot," says the Lord." - Hosea 2:13

lesson 3

The Good News of the Future Restoration of Israel, Both the Spiritual Restoration of Her People and the Physical Restoration of Her Land Hosea 2:14-23

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. The nation of Israel will be forgiven and restored.
2. The land of Israel will be safe and blessed.

practical application

1. Your Valley of Achor can become a door of hope.

questions

1. How does Hosea's marriage to Gomer illustrate God's relationship to Israel?
2. How did Israel commit spiritual adultery?
3. Hosea's message to Israel contained both bad news and good news. What was it?
4. How is the good news illustrated in Hosea's marriage?
5. What is the theme of the book of Hosea?

answers

1. God told Hosea to marry Gomer, who became a prostitute. Just as she turned away from Hosea's love and care, so Israel turned away from God's love and care for them.
2. By turning away from the Lord and by chasing after the foreign gods and the sinful practices of the foreign religions.
3. The bad news was that the judgment prophecies would literally be fulfilled when the Assyrian Empire conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The good news is that there will be a future restoration of Israel, a spiritual restoration of her people, and a physical restoration of her land.
4. Hosea was directed by God to go and buy his wife back from the prostitute slave market, and continue to love her. This is a picture of God's love for His wayward people.
5. God's Redeeming Love.

discuss / consider

1. The idea in the use of the word "betrothed" is the sense of a new beginning. The sin of Israel's spiritual adultery is forgiven and they will return to the honeymoon days. Remember, the promise of forgiveness in this passage was given to Israel, not to the Church of today. Israel had forsaken the Lord and had broken the covenant. Thus this promise of forgiveness and restoration was made to the Jewish people and will be kept with them in the future.

However, the promise in Hosea 2:23 can be applied and extended to all believers, as it is in the New Testament in Romans 9:25-26 and 1 Peter 2:10. This does not mean that we take the promise away from Israel, but we have the same promise of forgiveness and restoration if we return and obey the Lord.

2. What a difference there is from the devastation of the land we read about in the first half of Chapter 2 and in Hosea 2:18, "In that day..." God will send material blessings on the land of Israel in a coming day. See Deuteronomy 30:9, God's promise of blessing on the land. We see some of this happening now. Think of what it will be like in "that day"!

challenge

1. Read Hosea 2:14-15 (Joshua 7 gives the background). This is a beautiful picture of the Lord's loving relationship to His people. The wilderness is no longer a desert place, but a place of comfort because the Lord is there. Are you facing any deserts right now? The desert may be a blessing in disguise. God loves to bless us in the very area in which we have failed. What is your Valley of Achor, where God is dealing with you? Remember, your Valley of Achor can become a door of hope.

memorize

"I will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her." - Hosea 2:14

"...the Valley of Achor is a door of hope." - Hosea 2:15

"In that day I will make a covenant...I will betroth you to Me forever...in righteousness and justice; in lovingkindness and mercy...I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord." - Hosea 2:18-20

"I will say to those people who were not My people, "You are My people!" And they shall say, "You are my God!" - Hosea 2:23

lesson 4

Hosea Is Directed by the Lord to Take Gomer Back as His Wife, Even though She Has Committed Adultery Hosea 3:1-5

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. The present status of Israel is predicted in Hosea 3:4.
2. The future salvation of Israel is predicted in Hosea 3:5.

practical application

1. Don't spiritualize Israel to the Church.

questions

1. Why did God direct Hosea to take back Gomer as his wife?
2. What is the theme of the book of Hosea?
3. This theme is seen in Hosea's prophecies. How else is it seen here?
4. What fact shows how low Gomer had sunk morally?
5. What is the significance of "raisin cakes" in Hosea 3:1?

answers

1. To illustrate God's redeeming love for Israel.
2. God's Redeeming Love.
3. In the life of Hosea.
4. It cost Hosea only 1.5 homers of barley and 15 shekels of silver to buy Gomer back from the prostitute slave market. That was only half the price of a female slave, and barley was not worth much.
5. Raisin cakes were offerings made to the foreign gods.

discuss / consider

1. The present status of Israel, as predicted in Hosea 3:4 is that there is no king, no priesthood and no idolatry. There has been no idolatry in Israel since the Babylonian captivity. There has been no sacrifice or priesthood in Israel since 70 A.D. There has been no king in Israel since Christ was rejected as king. God has been dealing with Israel in disciplinary love throughout this time. Through the centuries, all the hard times that the Jewish people have experienced is part of this process.
2. Israel is now returning to her land, and she is a nation once again. However, what we see today is only the beginning of what will take place in the future. Although there are Christian Jews today, the nation has not yet turned back to the Lord as it will in the future. Not only will Israel turn back to the love of the one true God of their fathers, but they will turn to their Messiah, the One they once rejected. What a great time it will be when Israel turns to the Lord.

Consider your state before the Lord. Have you turned to the Lord and trusted the Jesus Christ for salvation? "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2) Let the future prediction of Israel's salvation motivate you to make sure of your personal salvation now.

challenge

1. Israel is not the Church of the Old Testament. The Church began at Pentecost, and the Church in the New Testament is not some kind of New Israel. Keep the Church and Israel distinct, or you will have interpretation problems. The promises and prophecies concerning the return of Israel and the blessings to come will be fulfilled. These prophetic promises were made with Israel and will be fulfilled with Israel.
2. Having made the distinction between Israel and the Church concerning specific prophecies to Israel, many of God's promised blessings can be applied and extended to the Church. Just be sure that you rightly divide the word of truth. See 2 Timothy 2:15

memorize

"The Lord said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is committing adultery, just like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans." - Hosea 3:1

"I bought her for myself and said, "You shall stay with me and not play the harlot." - Hosea 3:2-3

"...the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar." - Hosea 3:4

"Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days." - Hosea 3:5

lesson 5

God's Message of Judgment Against the Ancient Northern Kingdom of Israel Hosea 4:1-19

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.
2. God's people suffer because of idolatry.

practical application

1. Don't think that God has a double standard.

questions

1. Gomer had sunk to the level of becoming a prostitute slave. What did God tell Hosea to do about her?
2. What did this mean concerning God's relationship with Israel?
3. Will there be a spiritual revival of the Jewish people?
4. Read Hosea 4:1-2. List the sins that follow a lack of knowledge of God.
5. Read Hosea 4:3. What is affected here by man's sin?
6. Who is the "mother" in Hosea 4:5?

answers

1. God directed Hosea to go and buy her back from her pitiful condition, and after many days to reestablish his love relationship with her.
2. Israel is pictured as married to the Lord. They were God's special people, but Israel had departed from the Lord and had committed spiritual adultery with the foreign gods. For these sins, Israel would be judged, but God still loves the Jewish people and He will bring them back to Himself.
3. Yes, a spiritual revival is in their future. They will receive their Messiah, Whom they once rejected.
4. Swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery, breaking all restraints, and shedding blood.
5. The land and everything in it. Ecological and environmental problems stem from man's sin.
6. "Mother" is Israel.

discuss / consider

1. God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. The prophets and priests in Israel were not communicating the word of God or the law of the Lord to the people. As a result, the nation was in a self-destruct mode because they had rejected knowledge and they had forgotten the law of the Lord. Many sins follow this lack of knowledge, and even ecological and environmental problems result from man's sin.

God said, "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me..." (Hosea 4:6). Israel was to be a kingdom of priests before the Lord, but they lost that privilege because they rejected the knowledge of God's word.

The same is true today. America is a so-called Christian country, but how well does the average American know the Bible? How well does the average teenager know the moral principles of Scripture? How well does the average child of our country know the way of salvation? The people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Consider the denial of God in America's schools and courts and even in some churches. Personalize this - How well do you know your Bible?

2. Sacrifices were being offered not to the Lord, but to idols. See Hosea 4:12, 17. True worship of the Lord was focused in the temple down south in Jerusalem, but the people in the Northern Kingdom of Israel were offering sacrifices on any mountaintop. Israel had set up her own priesthood in the north, but they were not in the line of Aaron and they were as corrupt as the people. What was true in Israel then is true in Israel today. God's people suffer because of idolatry. There are idols all around us. Is the Lord number one in every area of your life? If not some idol has taken the place of the Lord and has control in that area of your life. Rid your life of idols.

challenge

1. Some of the people in Hosea's day thought that God should punish the women for immorality and not the men. See Hosea 4:14. God does not have a double standard. All will be punished.

memorize

"Hear the word of the Lord...for the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land; there is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land." - Hosea 4:1

"The people break all restraint. Therefore, the land will mourn." - Hosea 4:2-3

"The priest and prophet and people will stumble." - Hosea 4:4-5

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me." - Hosea 4:6

"My people ask counsel from their idols and they have played the harlot before their God." - Hosea 4:12

lesson 6

Further Excerpts from Hosea's Sermons Directed Against the Idolatry and Immorality of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (but there is a note of hope at the end of the chapter) Hosea 5:1-15

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. There is a limit to God's patience.
2. There is a suddenness to God's judgment.

practical application

1. Thank the Lord for His appointed afflictions.

questions

1. The prophet Hosea had a long ministry. About how long did he preach and prophesy?
2. To which kingdom was Hosea's ministry primarily directed?
3. What was the condition of this kingdom during Hosea's ministry?
4. How did King Jeroboam I contribute to these conditions?
5. What was Hosea's call from God?
6. Refer to Hosea 5:10. What is the significance of the landmark?

answers

1. At least forty years.
2. To the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
3. Under King Jeroboam II, times were good economically, but the nation was morally and spiritually bankrupt.
4. Jeroboam I, the first king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel set up his own system of worship by establishing two golden calf shrines, one at Dan and one at Bethel.
5. Israel continued to be involved in idolatry and gross immorality. For this, they would be judged and punished. Hosea was one of the prophets called by God to announce this judgment on the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
6. Boundaries in the ancient land of Israel, and even today are marked by stones or piles of stones. At night, when no one was looking they could be moved in order to steal property. This evil practice is applied here in a figurative way to the leaders of Judah. They were moving the boundaries that distinguished right from wrong.

discuss / consider

1. Refer to Hosea 5:6. Israel had passed the limits of God's patience, and He withdrew Himself from them. They had set up idolatrous shrines throughout the land and the people were ensnared in pagan idolatry.

There is a limit to God's patience, then and today. Have you ever thought that you could toy with God and do your own thing, and then finally decide to turn to the Lord on your terms and on your time schedule? Don't count on it. There's a hardening process that sets in and there is a limit to God's patience. As Israel could not hide from God, so you cannot hide from God. Your life is an open book before God. If there's something between you and God, settle it now.

2. See Hosea 5:8-14. The attack of a lion is different from the attack of a moth. The attack of a moth is slow and progressive. Already that kind of decay and destruction was going on in Israel. But the attack of a lion is sudden and when you least expect it. This came about, right on schedule, right in line with Hosea's prophecies when the armies of Assyria attacked and overran Israel. Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel fell in 722 B.C.

"He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Proverbs 29:1). If you are without Christ, you will be judged and perhaps suddenly. It is appointed for man to die once, and then the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Receive Christ before it's too late.

challenge

1. "In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me." (Hosea 5:15) In this verse there is both the present status and the future salvation of Israel. The sad news is that today, Israel still has not returned to the Lord as a nation, and the Lord still is withdrawn from them. The good news is that the nation of Israel will turn back to the Lord in the future. This will be because of their afflictions, both now and in the coming Tribulation Period.

God can use afflictions to turn people in the right direction. Are you undergoing afflictions right now that you don't understand? Maybe the Lord is trying to get your attention so that He can save you, or begin to bless you. Turn to the Lord today, or turn back to Him today and thank Him for your afflictions. Check out Psalm 119:67, 71.

memorize

"Hear this...take heed...give ear...for yours is the judgment because you have been a snare..." - Hosea 5:1

"They do not direct their deeds toward turning to their God, for the spirit of harlotry is in their midst, and they do not know the Lord...they stumble in their iniquity." - Hosea 5:4-5

"They shall go to seek the Lord, but they will not find Him; He has withdrawn Himself from them." - Hosea 5:6

lesson 7

The Good News Concerning Israel's Future and the Sad News Concerning Israel's Condition at the Time of Hosea Hosea 6:1-11

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. God desires to heal rather than to hurt.
2. God delights in loyalty rather than sacrifice.

practical application

1. Let us press on to know the Lord.

questions

1. What is the theme of the book of Hosea?
2. How is the theme seen in the book of Hosea?
3. Who did Hosea prophesy to? When?
4. What was the condition of this kingdom during Hosea's time?
5. God had Hosea buy his wife back from her condition as a prostitute slave, and then reestablish his relationship with her. What did this illustrate?

answers

1. God's redeeming and steadfast love.
2. Both in Hosea's prophetic messages and in his life.
3. In the 8th Century B.C. to the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
4. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was strong militarily and quite prosperous economically, but it was morally weak and corrupt. The kingdom was not only guilty of social injustice, but had committed spiritual adultery. Israel had turned away from God to worship false gods.
5. God's relationship with His people Israel.

discuss / consider

1. God had to hurt Israel by disciplining them. They were torn and hurt, but still alive, and in their affliction they would acknowledge their sin against God. Then they would seek God's face. What is true of God's relationship with Israel is true of His relationship with individuals. God would much rather heal than hurt. But sometimes He must hurt us for our own good to keep us from sin, to keep us from hurting others, to turn us around, or even bring us to the place of receiving Christ as Savior. When you are hurting, you can experience God's healing from sin when you turn to Him.
2. Israel's faithfulness was like a morning cloud, early dew, or mist. That is, it was very short-lived. The prophets had clearly pronounced judgment, but the people continued only to go through the motions of religion. God delights in loyalty rather than sacrifice. When loyalty to the Lord is lacking, all kinds of sins follow. Are you loyal to the Lord, or do you just go through the motions of worship? Are you loyal to the Lord when it comes to videos or TV programs that you watch? Are you loyal to the Lord when temptation comes? Are you loyal to the Lord when you are alone and no one is watching and no one knows what you are doing? Are you loyal to the Lord behind an outward show of godliness?

challenge

1. Let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord. Let us press on to know the Lord. Is this your desire? How well do you know the Lord? Do you know Him as Savior? If not, you can begin that relationship right now by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. Believers – how well do you know the Lord? Are you getting to know Him better every day? You can, but it's not automatic. You must read and study His word, and spend time in prayer and conversation with Him. Where are you in your relationship with the Lord?

memorize

"Come, and let us return to the Lord; for He has torn, but He will heal us..." - Hosea 6:1

"Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord." - Hosea 6:3

"Your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, and like the early dew it goes away." - Hosea 6:4

"I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." - Hosea 6:6

"O Judah, a harvest is appointed for you, when I return the captives of My people." - Hosea 6:11

lesson 8

Further Excerpts of Hosea's Prophecies of Judgment Against the Northern Kingdom of Israel Hosea 7:1-16

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. God keeps a record of man's evil deeds.
2. God takes account of man's ignorant ways.

practical application

1. Is it possible we are unspiritual and don't realize it?

questions

1. Name the number of kings in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. How many were bad and how many were good kings? Name the number of kings in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. How many were bad and how many were good kings?
2. Why is the Northern Kingdom often referred to as Ephraim?
3. "Ephraim is a cake unturned" (Hosea 7:8). Explain.
4. "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without sense" (Hosea 7:11). Explain.
5. "Israel is like a treacherous bow" (Hosea 7:16). Explain.

answers

1. Northern Kingdom: 19– all bad. Southern Kingdom: 20– 12 bad, 8 good.
2. Because Ephraim was the most prominent tribe in the kingdom.
3. This type of cake is more like a pancake than a birthday cake. When it is cooked on only one side (unturned), it has no structure; it can't support itself. Ephraim (Israel) had no moral structure. She was weak and unstable, like a cake unturned.
4. Ephraim had no moral compass. Rather than flying straight and returning to the Lord, she was flitting between Assyria and Egypt looking for help, but she couldn't find any. Instead, she would be trapped and brought down. Because they looked for help in the wrong place, like a silly dove, Assyria would conquer Israel and Egypt would mock them.
5. Such a bow is crooked, untrue, and undependable. It would miss the mark every time. Israel was undependable and missing the mark of God's standard.

discuss / consider

1. All of Israel's sins were known by God. Nothing was hidden. All of her fraud and robbery of the poor and other social injustices were known by God. All of their political lies were obvious to God. God knew all about the sexual sins in Israel. All their assassination plots were open before the Lord. And notice that God not only saw their acts and deeds, but He saw the motives as well.

The same is true today. God sees and knows every evil act and every evil deed and every thought and lust of every person. There is no such thing as a cover-up with God. Everything is an open book before God. He sees it all. He keeps a record of man's deeds.

There is only one solution that covers sin— it is the blood of Christ. That's not a cover-up of sin; it's a removal of sin. When you, as a sinner, put your faith in Christ as Savior (your sin-bearer), then your sin is removed as far as east is from the west. (Psalm 103:12). God remembers your sin no more (Hebrews 10:17). But apart from salvation in Christ, God keeps a record of your evil deeds.

2. Israel was ignorant because they were fools. God gave them every chance to turn around and come back to Him, but they would not. God wanted to heal them, but they would not let Him. God said, "I would have redeemed them, but they would not..." (Hosea 7:13) How foolish and ignorant they were to turn away from a free offer of redemption and salvation, yet many turn away from God's free offer of salvation in Christ today.

Even when God had strengthened Israel militarily and made them prosperous, they never thanked the Lord, or even recognized that their strength and prosperity was from the Lord. Instead, in their idolatry they devised evil against the Lord and gave credit to the gods of wood and stone. Is this true today?

challenge

1. "...his strength is devoured, but he does not know it..." (Hosea 7:9). Israel was unspiritual and didn't realize it. They thought they were doing OK morally and spiritually, but they were wrong. They were unaware of their sad moral and spiritual condition. Is it possible that you are unspiritual and don't realize it? We all need a reality check. How much time do you spend in prayer each day? That is one of many checks.

memorize

"When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered...they do not consider in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness." - Hosea 7:1-2

"All their kings have fallen. None among them calls upon Me." - Hosea 7:7

"Woe to them, for they have fled from Me! Destruction to them, because they have transgressed against Me! Though I redeemed them...they did not cry out to Me with their heart." - Hosea 7:13-14

"Though I disciplined and strengthened them, yet they devise evil against Me; they return, but not to the Most High." - Hosea 7:15-16

lesson 9

A Continuation of Hosea's Judgment Prophecies Against the Northern Kingdom of Israel Hosea 8:1-14

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. God rejects all forms of idolatry.
2. God judges all forms of idolatry.

practical application

1. Are you investing in wind?

questions

1. What happened to the United Kingdom of Israel in 931 B.C.?
2. In relation to this event, where and when did the prophet Hosea minister?
3. Which king was in power during Hosea's ministry?
4. How does Hosea 8:4 give us a clue about the type of kings in the north?
5. How did God show His grace to the Northern Kingdom of Israel?
6. How long did Hosea prophecy?
7. When there was no response to God's grace, what happened?

answers

1. The United Kingdom split into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
2. Hosea's ministry was focused on the Northern Kingdom of Israel more than 150 years after this division.
3. King Jeroboam II. He was one of the twenty kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. All of them were evil kings.

4. "They set up kings, but not by Me." The kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel were not from the tribe of Judah, and they were not in the line of David. God never intended a split in the United Kingdom, and He certainly did not approve of it, or of this new line of kings.

5. God, in His grace, still considered the Northern Kingdom of Israel as His people. God included them in His house (Hosea 8:1), and He sent His prophets to them.

6. At least forty years.

7. God would have to discipline Israel to bring them back to Himself. Israel would be overrun by the Assyrian armies (Hosea 8:1). Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C., right in line with Hosea's prophecy.

discuss / consider

1. Israel transgressed God's covenant and rebelled against His law because of idolatry. Samaria's golden calf would not only be rejected by God, but it would be broken into pieces.

Anything taking priority over God in a life is idolatry. Read Hosea 8:4. What are you doing with your silver and gold? Are you using it for God's glory or are you making golden calves? The material things that we treasure so much in this life are man-made, like idols, and are not of God. God rejects all forms of idolatry.

2. Idolatry is not only the worship of false gods. It is also the false worship of the true God. God said that there was to be only one altar in Israel, at the temple in Jerusalem. But in the Northern Kingdom of Israel many altars had been set up. The people went through the motions and proceeded in any way they chose by using wrong altars and even disregarding God's law concerning the offering of sacrifices. As a result, they would return to Egypt, the condition of slavery from which they had once been delivered.

The bottom line for all idolatry is forgetting your Maker (Hosea 8:14). America is filled with various forms of idolatry. Wherever God is not acknowledged as Creator and Maker, there is idolatry to one degree or another. Whether it be building structures that dishonor God and glorify man, or whether it be building theories or concepts that leave God out, God will judge all forms of idolatry. Are you acknowledging God as Maker?

challenge

1. "They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind." Hosea 8:7. "In the figure of sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind, there are two laws in view – the law of the harvest and the law of multiplication. According to the law of the harvest you reap what you sow. If you sow wheat, you reap wheat; if you sow weeds, you reap weeds; if you sow wind, you reap wind. The law of the harvest operates in the spiritual and moral realms as well as the physical. The people of Israel had invested their time and resources and energies into that which would bring no eternal benefits." Quoted from Dr. David R. Reid, Devotions for Growing Christians.

The folly and futility of their self-centered idolatrous way of life is succinctly captured in the figure of sowing wind. Are you sowing wind? How are you investing your time and resources and energies? Are you sowing in terms of your eternal well-being?

memorize

"Israel set up kings, but not by Me...they made idols for themselves." - Hosea 8:4

"They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind." - Hosea 8:7

"I have written for Ephraim the great things of My law, but they were considered a strange thing." - Hosea 8:12

"Israel has forgotten his Maker." - Hosea 8:14

lesson 10

The Judgments of God that Would Come Upon His People Israel Hosea 9:1-17

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. Wayward believers are defiling and disruptive.
2. Wayward believers are fruitless and aimless.

practical application

1. Don't be surprised if you are labeled a fool.

questions

1. Give a brief outline of the prophecy of Hosea:
 - a. Chapters 1-3–
 - b. Chapters 4-14–
2. How did God use Hosea's marriage to Gomer?
3. About how long was Hosea's ministry?
4. What does this length of time tell you about God?
5. Describe the threshing floors in Hosea 9:1-2.
6. How was Israel using these high places?
7. Ephraim is another name for what?
8. In Hosea 9:3, Israel is referred to as the Lord's land. Why?

answers

1.
 - a. Unfaithful wife
 - b. Unfaithful people
2. As an object lesson for the nation of Israel. Israel was considered the wife of the Lord, but she had committed spiritual adultery by turning away from the Lord to foreign gods and pagan religions.

3. About forty years.
4. That He is patient and longsuffering toward Israel.
5. They were high places throughout the land of Israel where the wind could blow away the chaff of the threshed grain.
6. They were using them for idolatry, even using the threshing floors for literal fornication, which was part of the fertility rituals of Baal worship.
7. Israel, because Ephraim was the largest and most prominent tribe in the Northern Kingdom.
8. That area of the world has a special place in God's plans and program. It is still the Lord's land.

discuss / consider

1. Read Hosea 9:4. Under the Old Testament law, the bread of mourners could not be given to the priests because mourners of the dead had possibly touched someone who had died. The bread therefore was defiled and unclean and defiled anyone who ate it, and it was not accepted at the house of the Lord. The Lord said the same was true of the sacrifices of His wayward people.

The obvious application for today is that you can't be involved in a life of sin and expect your worship and praise to be accepted by the Lord. These are defiled sacrifices, and defiled sacrifices can affect others. They can affect others as they see your hypocritical life. See 1 Corinthians 11:27-29. Unconfessed sin has a defiling effect on ourselves, on others, and on our so-called worship of the Lord. Examine yourself.

Remember that wayward believers are not only defiling, but they are also disruptive, causing problems for the work of the Lord.

2. Israel was God's chosen people, and they were to bear spiritual fruit. God saw them as grapes in the wilderness and first fruits on the fig tree, but they were taken in by idolatry and immorality. Gilgal, where Israel had crossed the Jordan and set up the stones of testimony, became an idolatrous shrine. Therefore, Ephraim (Israel), whose name means fruitful, would be fruitless, both spiritually and physically as a result of the Assyrian takeover. Not only would wayward Israel be fruitless, but they would be aimless as well. They would be driven from God's house, and they would be wanderers among the nations. What a description of the present state of Israel.

Many wayward believers today are fruitless and aimless, wandering in the wilderness of Christian experience and bearing little fruit for the Lord. They are unproductive and living without purpose. They murmur and complain and do their own thing. Check out the fruit you are bearing and the purposefulness of your life.

challenge

1. Israel was so far down spiritually and morally, that the true prophet of God was considered crazy. This is where our culture is today. The Christian on fire for the Lord is laughed at, mocked and thought to be crazy. Don't be surprised if this happens to you if you are standing up for the Lord.

memorize

"Israel, you have played the harlot against your God." - Hosea 9:1

"Their sacrifices shall not be pleasing to the Lord." - Hosea 9:4

"The days of punishment and recompense have come. The prophet is a fool. The spiritual man is insane." - Hosea 9:7

"I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness...as the firstfruits on the fig tree...but they separated themselves to the shame of Baal Peor, and became an abomination like the thing they loved." - Hosea 9:10

"I will drive them from My house...they shall be wanderers among the nations." - Hosea 9:15, 17

lesson 11

Further Consequences that Result when God's People are Wayward Hosea 10:1-15

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. Wayward believers continue to go downhill.
2. Wayward believers eat the fruit of lies.

practical application

1. Break up your fallow ground for it is time to seek the Lord.

questions

1. To whom was Hosea's ministry primarily directed? When? Under which king?
2. Why is the Northern Kingdom referred to as Ephraim?
3. When the united monarchy divided after the reign of King Solomon, who became the first king of the Northern Kingdom, and what special rebellion against God did he commit?
4. How did Hosea use a play on words in Hosea 10:5?
5. The last king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel would be cut off like a twig on the water. See Hosea 10:7. Explain.

answers

1. Hosea's ministry was primarily directed to the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the 8th Century B.C., when King Jeroboam II was on the throne.
2. Because Ephraim was the largest and most powerful tribe of the Northern Kingdom.
3. Jeroboam I set up two idolatrous golden calf shrines in his kingdom. Thus the people were kept from worshiping at the true temple of God in Jerusalem in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
4. Hosea changed the name Bethel, meaning house of God to Beth Aven, meaning house of wickedness, because of the idolatrous calf shrine.
5. A twig thrown into a fast moving stream of water rapidly gets carried away. That's the way it would be with the king.

discuss / consider

1. As God's people, Israel was to bring forth spiritual fruit for the Lord. Instead, they brought forth fruit for themselves. The more materially prosperous Israel became, the more they increased and adorned their idols. Israel's word as a nation could no longer be trusted. Israel had gone so far down morally and spiritually that when the Assyrians took away the calf idol at Bethel, the people and priests would actually mourn for their lost idol. But God could not let them escape His discipline.

What about us? Are we spending more time and money to adorn idols in our lives? As God's people, can our word be trusted? Would we mourn for a lost idol? In God's own time and way, He did and will discipline His people.

2. Israel was eating the fruit of lies, because they trusted in themselves and not in the Lord. She had sown wickedness and would reap injustice. She had believed lies and would eat the fruit of lies.

"Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he reap." (Galatians 6:7). God's moral principle is without exception. Our culture right now is eating the fruit of lies. Which lies are prevalent in our culture? Are you eating of the fruit of any of these lies?

challenge

1. Refer to Hosea 10:12. Here is God's gracious call to repentance and promise of blessing right in the midst of a message of judgment. Breaking up the fallow ground applies to both the unbeliever and the believer. If you are not a Christian, how long are you going to wait? See 2 Corinthians 6:2. Why wait? The Lord loved you enough to die for you and pay the penalty for your sin. Break your hard heart and respond to His gracious invitation to come to Him for salvation. Unfortunately, many Christians have hard and bitter hearts. Have you, as a believer, lost your first love? Are you just doing your own thing and trusting in yourself? Have you lost your joy? Let the plow of God's word break up your hard heart. God's word and worship are the solution to this problem.

memorize

"Israel empties his vine; he brings forth fruit for himself." - Hosea 10:1

"Their heart is divided." - Hosea 10:2

"The inhabitants of Samaria fear because of the calf of Beth Aven, for its people mourn for it." - Hosea 10:5

"Sow for yourselves; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord." - Hosea 10:12

"You have eaten the fruit of lies, because you trusted in your own way." - Hosea 10:13

lesson 12

A Summary of God's Past, Present and Future Dealings with His People Israel Hosea 11:1-12

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. God was gentle with His called out people.
2. God is disciplining His willful people.
3. God will regather His scattered people.

practical application

1. Allow for the fuller meaning of scripture.

questions

1. When was the United Kingdom of Israel formed? Who were its rulers?
2. What happened to the United Kingdom after the reign of the last king?
3. Where did the prophet Hosea live? Where was the focus of his ministry?
4. What was the spiritual state of the kingdoms during Hosea's time?
5. What was the problem concerning worship in the true temple of God?
6. What accommodations were made for the migrating northerners?
7. How many tribes were represented in the South?
8. Why is this last issue important today?

answers

1. About 1051 B.C. Three kings who ruled were Saul, David, and Solomon. Each of these kings had a forty year reign.
2. It divided into two kingdoms– the Northern Kingdom of Israel (also called Ephraim) and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The capital of the north was Samaria and the capital of the south was Jerusalem.
3. He lived in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and his ministry was directed primarily to that kingdom. However, his ministry did extend down to the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

4. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had already totally departed from the Lord by the time of Hosea's ministry in the 8th Century B.C. However, the Southern Kingdom of Judah still had a sizeable godly remnant that was following the Lord and participating in worship of the Lord at His temple in Jerusalem.

5. The true temple of God was located in Jerusalem in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. After the United Kingdom divided, godly believers from the north migrated south in order to continue to worship the Lord at His temple in Jerusalem. See 2 Chronicles 11:16.

6. The godly from the north continued to migrate south periodically, especially during times of revival in the South. King Hezekiah expanded the city of Jerusalem to accommodate those from the northern ten tribes that made their way south.

7. All twelve tribes of Israel, which included those from the northern ten tribes and the southern two tribes.

8. It means that the Jews who later went into captivity in Babylon and returned seventy years later, represented all twelve tribes of Israel. It further means that the Jews today represent all twelve tribes, not just the tribes of the south (Judah and Benjamin). In other words, there are no lost tribes in Israel.

discuss / consider

1. Refer to Hosea 11:1-4. What a beautiful picture of the tenderness and patience of the Lord in dealing with His people Israel. But Israel did not respond in love to the Lord. Rather, they went and sacrificed to the Baal idols. What is your response to God's gentle and gracious care? The Lord Jesus Christ died for your sins, and God is drawing you to Himself with gentle cords of love.

Why not respond to His gentle love today? Admit that you are a sinner in need of the Savior. Receive Christ today and become a called-out one, a child of God. If you are a Christian, how often do you thank the Lord for His gentle care? Let's not fail here as Israel failed. Respond to your Lord God in love.

2. God would have to punish and discipline His people because of their willful and rebellious ways. Because of their backsliding and hypocrisy, Israel would suffer under the Assyrian sword. Israel is still willful and trusting in itself. They still refuse to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, so they are still under God's discipline.

God will always discipline His willful children, and that applies to believers today. Why? Because God loves His people and He disciplines those He loves. See Hebrews 12:6. Are you under God's discipline right now? Thank Him for His discipline to bring you to Himself.

3. There is good news! Israel will return to the Lord in the future. God will regather them. God's heart of love for His people is seen in Hosea 11:8. God's heart of love is seen toward us with His promises of eternal salvation for those who believe. Are you a believer? Will you be with Jesus in heaven?

challenge

1. Allow for the fuller meaning of scripture. This is a principle for interpreting scripture, and it is very important to know for practical application. Be careful not to read into scriptures meanings from your own imagination.

memorize

"When Israel was a child, I loved him...I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms; but they did not know that I healed them." - Hosea 11:1-2

"I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love..." - Hosea 1:4

"Because of their own counsels, My people are bent on backsliding from Him." - Hosea 11:6-7

"How can I give you up, Ephraim? My heart churns within Me." - Hosea 11:8

lesson 13

God Rebukes His Wayward People Israel by Comparing Them and Contrasting Them with the Patriarch Jacob Hosea 12:1-14

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. God's people should follow Jacob's good points.
2. God's people should not follow Jacob's bad points.

practical application

1. Let's not feed on wind.

questions

1. Explain Hosea 12:1, "Ephraim feeds on the wind."
2. Explain Hosea 12:1, "Ephraim pursues the east wind."
3. Israel made peace treaties and traded with foreign powers in her pursuit of the wind. Which powers?
4. How did Israel's foreign policy backfire?
5. Had Israel been warned about her coming demise?

answers

1. Israel is pictured as feeding on wind. Wind does not satisfy your hunger or nourish your body. There is no sustenance nor are there any nutrients in wind. The people of Israel were feeding their souls with all the things of the “good life” and feeding their spirits with the words of false prophets. There was plenty of material prosperity on the outside, but the heart of the nation was morally and spiritually bankrupt. Instead of turning back to the Lord to satisfy their spiritual hunger, Israel continued to feed on the wind. They stuffed themselves with the allurements and attractions of the surrounding pagan nations and filled themselves with the all-too-appealing words of the false prophets, but they ended up empty and starved.

2. The east wind is the terrible and dreaded Sirocco which blows from the desert east of Palestine. It comes with scorching and devastating heat. Instead of trying to escape or seek protection, Israel is pictured as actually chasing this destructive wind. How? Israel was double-dealing with the great foreign powers of that day. Playing both ends against the middle for security was as foolish as chasing the Sirocco for tranquility.

3. Israel made a peace treaty with Assyria, but at the same time exported oil to Egypt, a serious archrival.

4. It wasn't long before Assyria swept in like the east wind and thoroughly wiped out the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

5. Yes, she had been warned by God through His prophets. In Hosea, for example, God used visions, symbols and parables (Hosea's marriage to Gomer).

discuss / consider

1. Jacob was not the most godly person. He had stolen the birthright and blessing from Esau, and he had a lot of rough edges. Jacob, however, had an appreciation for spiritual things. Israel, by contrast, never learned some of the lessons, especially about worship. Jacob was brought to tears, but the nation Israel never came to tears. Jacob had a Bethel experience, where he walked and talked with the Lord. Israel never had a Bethel experience. Jacob worshiped God at Bethel. Israel set up an idolatrous golden calf shrine at Bethel. Like Jacob, we all have rough edges and need to learn lessons in the school of God. Remember Jacob's good points, like returning to Bethel to worship the Lord. Where is your Bethel? How long have you worshiped at the golden calf shrine? Return to Bethel.

2. God brought Israel out of Egypt and preserved them by His grace. But Israel did not respond with love, thanksgiving, and right living. Instead, they corrupted mercy and justice. They did not give God credit for their material wealth, but took credit for themselves. They were blind to their sins, and they set up idols. They provoked the Lord to anger. We have a choice. God's people should not follow Jacob's bad points, or we will reap sorrowful consequences. Go through the list in the preceding paragraph and ask about your response to God's preserving grace in your life. Are you giving credit to God for all He has given to you, or are you taking credit for yourself? How are you using what God has given to you? Are you blind to your sins? What idols are taking the place of God in your life?

challenge

1. Are you feeding on wind? See Hosea 12:1. There's a lot of wind food around today. What are you munching on? Think of the considerable time and energy we can waste on our houses, hobbies, entertainment, and even our careers. How much of this is wind? Feeding on wind will keep you at a distance from Christ, whether you are an unbeliever or a believer. Eat from the solid food of the word of God.

memorize

“Ephraim feeds on the wind, and pursues the east wind” - Hosea 12:1

“In his strength, Jacob struggled with God. Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; he wept and sought favor from Him. He found Him in Bethel, and there He spoke to us.” - Hosea 12:3-4

“By the help of your God, return; observe mercy and justice, and wait on your God.” - Hosea 12:6

“I have become rich...found wealth for myself; in all my labors they shall find in me no sin.” - Hosea 12:8

“Idols are vanity...indeed their altars shall be heaps in the furrows of the field.” - Hosea 12:11

lesson 14

**God Is Righteous in His Judgment of Sinful People
Hosea 13:1-16**

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. God is righteous in His judgment.
2. God is resolute in His judgment.

practical application

1. Do you know the one true Savior?

questions

1. "Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!" (Hosea 13:2) What does this mean?
2. What did Hosea preach and for how long?
3. Why did God later remove the Northern Kingdom of Israel?
4. Who did God use to punish Israel?

answers

1. The calves refer to the two golden calf idolatrous shrines that existed in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. King Jeroboam I had set up these calf idols in the 10th Century B.C. when the Northern Kingdom of Israel had separated and become independent from the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The Northern Kingdom continued to go downhill morally and spiritually. They were worshipping idols instead of going to Jerusalem to worship at the true house of God.
2. Hosea's messages warned Israel of the coming judgment. He preached for over forty years.
3. Because Israel left all the commandments of God, made idols and served Baal. See 2 Kings 17:16-17.
4. The Assyrian Empire.

discuss / consider

1. Because of Israel's sin, God said that He would have to judge them. They would become like a disappearing morning cloud, or evaporating dew, or vanishing smoke. They would be like chaff blown away by the wind. This is a description of the treatment that Israel would receive from the Lord. Israel started out with great potential in the Northern Kingdom, but she turned to idolatry and died spiritually. They sinned more and more, and in response to God's leading and care, Israel's heart was exalted and they forgot the Lord. God's fairness in justice is often questioned, but He has the big picture, and He is righteous in His judgment.

Unfortunately, some believers today have followed the same path. The Lord has blessed, but they have become exalted and proud and have forgotten the Lord. Could this be true of you? Do you ever question God's fairness in justice? Remember, He has the big picture, whereas you have only a very small view of what is going on, both in the world and in your life. Trust God's righteous judgment.

2. God is resolute (determined) in His judgment. Judgment came to Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, in 722 B.C. The Assyrians came like Sirocco, the scorching east wind from the desert that dries up all in its path. So much for Ephraim's fruitfulness and fountain. Just as God was resolute in His judgment of Israel, so is He today. Judgment will come when sin is ignored.

3. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. "O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction!" (Hosea 13:14; 1 Corinthians 15:55). Israel was doomed, and the judgment of God was sure. This is a prediction of Israel's future national resurrection after her judgment. The portion quoted by Paul is positive in that the believer who has trusted in the saving grace of Christ will have victory over death because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Do you have victory over death?

challenge

1. "There is no Savior besides Me." (Hosea 13:4) God is righteous in His judgment and He is resolute in His judgment, but there is a way of salvation from God's judgment on sin. However, there is only one way of salvation, and it is God's way. God's way is through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, because he died for our sins. "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Do you know the one true Savior?

memorize

"Ephraim spoke, trembling, he exalted himself in Israel...he offended through Baal worship, and died. Now they sin more and more, and have made for themselves molded images, all of it the work of craftsmen. It is said of them, 'They kiss the calves!' "
- Hosea 13:1-2

"They shall be like the morning cloud, and like the dew that passes away, like chaff blown off from a threshing floor and like smoke from a chimney. " - Hosea 13:3

"Yet I am the Lord your God...and you shall know no God but Me; for there is no Savior besides Me. " - Hosea 13:4

"They were filled and their heart was exalted; therefore they forgot Me. " - Hosea 13:6

"I will ransom them from the power of the grace; I will redeem them from death, "O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction!" " - Hosea 13:14

lesson 15

**The Good News of Israel's Future Restoration when They Finally Repent and Follow
God's Way of Return
Hosea 14:1-9**

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. There is a divine path to God's blessing in the present.
2. There is a divine program for God's blessing in the future.

practical application

1. Do you agree that the ways of the Lord are right?

questions

1. Chapter 14 is a wonderful conclusion to the prophecy of Hosea. Why?
2. How does this occur?
3. In whom did Israel trust?
4. How soon are the "last days"?
5. How was Hosea an object lesson to the people of Israel?
6. How did Hosea and Gomer illustrate Israel's redemption?
7. Is this redemption story an allegory of the church today?

answers

1. It ends on a high note with the restoration of God's people Israel.
2. Israel finally repents of her sinful ways and returns to the Lord, and He graciously restores them.
3. She trusted in foreign powers for help, or in her own military forces for security, or in her own technology and strength for deliverance. But finally, Israel will trust in the Lord alone.
4. We don't know, but we may be on the threshold of these last days even now.
5. In his own life Hosea was an object lesson or an illustration of the relationship between God and His people Israel.
6. Hosea bought his wife back from prostitute slavery and she was restored to a love relationship with her husband. In the same way, the price of Israel's redemption has already been paid for by her Messiah, and God will restore His people Israel to Himself.
7. No. Romans 11 assures us that this great prospect for Israel in the future is not to be allegorized to the church today. Israel is Israel. God's promises to Israel are still valid and will be fulfilled.

discuss / consider

1. Refer to Hosea 14:1-3. In these three verses there are three steps to getting right with the Lord. This is possible because the price of redemption has been paid. Step 1) repentance, 2) confession, and 3) trust. Israel has come to the end of herself; she is no longer trusting in her own strength or some other source for security; she is trusting in the Lord alone for her salvation.

This is God's way for salvation and restoration. Have you taken those three steps for salvation? If you are not a believer, trust Him now. If you are a backsliding believer, take these three steps. Do you want the divine path to God's blessing? Here it is: repent, confess, trust.

2. God has a wonderful program for Israel in the future. In Hosea 14:4-8, the blessings are described for the restored nation of Israel during the millennial kingdom of Christ here on this earth. It is a description of Israel's future fruitfulness and strength and beauty. "Your fruit is found in Me." (Hosea 14:8). The key for having a fruitful and productive and meaningful life, for Israel and for us, is found in the Lord alone. We can't do it ourselves. It's only when we draw strength and direction from the Lord that we can be fruitful and have a productive and meaningful life. Abiding in the Lord will be the means of blessing for Israel in the future. Abiding in the Lord is the only means for blessing in our lives in the days ahead. Read John 15:1-5. Are you abiding in Him?

challenge

1. "The ways of the Lord are right." (Hosea 14:9) Have you ever questioned God's ways? "He works all things according to the counsel of His will." (Ephesians 1:11) We may not understand God's ways and His timing, but we bow to His wisdom as He sees the big picture. See Isaiah 55:8-11 and Romans 11:33. Stand in awe of the Lord's ways.

memorize

"O Israel, return to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity... return to the Lord." - Hosea 14:1

"Say to Him, 'Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously, for we will offer the sacrifices of our lips.'" - Hosea 14:2

"I will be like the dew to Israel." - Hosea 14:5

"Your fruit is found in Me." - Hosea 14:8

"Who is wise? Let him understand these things. Who is prudent? Let him know them. For the ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them." - Hosea 14:9