

***FPFWC Christian Development***



**Called to God's Work of Justice**  
May 2020

Spring Quarter

*May 30, 2020*

**Lesson #5 – Pursue Love & Justice**

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

*Key Verse - Turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.—Hosea 12:6*

**ICE BREAKERS**

1. How has godly discipline been a blessing in your life?
2. How can you show compassion and loyalty to a troubled friend or family member this week?

**LESSON BACKGROUND**

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, last week's lesson; etc.). 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.

**LESSON COMMENTARY –**

**11:1-2.** The reference to Israel as a youth describes its nonfamilial status during the Egyptian captivity. At the exodus, however, Israel became God's firstborn son/heir (Ex 4:22-23), demonstrating His love (election) of the nation. In Hs 11:1 God is the One who called Israel as sons but in 11:2, Hosea cites Israel's history of resistance to God. He sent them prophets, and **the more they** (the prophets) **called them, the more they** (Israel) **went from them** (the prophets) and pursued false gods (**the Baals**). Thus even though God redeemed Israel from captivity and made them His son, the nation pursued Baals and idols.

Matthew used Hs 11:1 typologically to describe Jesus' childhood retreat to and return from Egypt (Mt 2:14-15). While it could be that Matthew was attempting to identify a simple correspondence between the infancies of Israel and Jesus, there may be more significance to Matthew's use of this passage than simply correspondence. In Nm 23:22-24 (the second Balaam oracle) and 24:5-9 (the third Balaam oracle) Moses established that Israel was a type of the future Messiah, with one point of similarity being that both Israel and her future King would come out of Egypt. Matthew may have cited Hs 11:1, a passage about Israel coming out of Egypt, with the perspective that this is typologically true of the Messiah, a point already established in the Pentateuch. Although Hosea's words refer directly to Israel, the previously established type may have enabled Matthew to cite it legitimately of Jesus the Messiah (cf. Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?* [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010], 99-104).

**11:7-9.** The Hebrew word translated **bent** (*tala*, lit., "to hang upon") indicates determination or pinning one's hopes on something. Hosea described Israel as determined to remain disobedient. Therefore when the nation called out to God (the **One on high**), He would not respond. But ignoring and surrendering Israel was not easy for the Lord, for as a compassionate father His **heart** remained with His wayward children. Even though God does not actually question His own decision-making, here Hosea used human terms to describe God's emotions in continuing to love Israel. The cities of **Admah** and **Zeboiim** were neighbors of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gn 14:2, 8) and represent human depravity.

Although Israel's sin made the nation deserving of complete destruction in the manner of Sodom and Gomorrah, God chose not to repeat (**again**) the corporate death sentence exacted at Sodom. God's righteousness demands that sin be punished, but in His **compassions** God can choose to limit the extent of his **anger** and **wrath**.

**11:10-11.** God's compassion will be displayed in the return of His people from exile in **Assyria**, an event typologically resembling God's rescue of Israel from **Egypt** during the exodus. At that time Israel will follow (**walk after**) God in humility (**trembling like birds and doves**) as He leads them out of captivity with the ferocity of a **lion**. Hosea's prophecy of Israel's return from exile is thought by some to have been fulfilled through the events reported in Ezra and Nehemiah.

However, others see three reasons indicating that this refers to Israel's eschatological restoration. First, Hosea speaks of a return from the **west**, south (**Egypt**), and the north (**Assyria**), indicating an international regathering to the land of Israel, not just from Assyria. Second, since the prophet sees a permanent settlement in the land (**I will settle them in their houses**) he is not likely speaking of the return from captivity, which did not result in permanent settlement. Third, the nation's humble (**trembling**) **walk after the LORD** indicates a spiritual transformation that did not take place at the return from captivity but will be true in the last days (cf. 3:4-5). Hence, these verses presumably refer to God's restoration of Israel in the last days, when the nation trusts in Jesus as their Messiah and they become God's faithful people in the millennial kingdom (see Hs 3:4-5 and comments there).

**11:12-12:1.** Israel's deception is mentioned several times in the book (7:3; 10:13). The precise nature of Israel's **lies** is not specified, but they are probably related to the nation's waywardness and idolatry. Such covenant infidelity was characteristic of Israel's behavior and contrasted with God's faithfulness. Israel was also further charged with shepherding the **wind**, an impossibility, which illustrates Israel's foolishness. No one can corral the wind, and efforts to do so are pointless. Israel's folly is also compared to pursuing the **east wind**, which would normally be avoided because of the desert's severe dry heat. Such folly is exhibited in Israel's treaties with and tributes to **Assyria** and **Egypt**, both of whom would turn on Israel.

**12:2-6. Judah** was also charged with sin (cf. 11:12), for which Hosea declared that the people would be punished. Hosea then recited several incidences in the life of the patriarch **Jacob** to draw a comparison with Judah: Jacob's grabbing of Esau's **heel** at birth (Gn 25:26); Jacob's wrestling with the **angel** at Peniel (Gn 32:28); Jacob's weeping at his reunion with Esau (Gn 33:4); Jacob's encountering God at **Bethel** (Gn 28:11-22). These allusions to the shortcomings and eventual blessings of Jacob are recalled to show how the Israelites could also overcome their disobedience and receive God's blessing if only they would repent, keep the covenant, and patiently hope in God.

**12:7-9.** The sin of Israel was also apparent in the nation's attaining of possessions. Like an oppressive **merchant**, some in Israel had acquired **wealth** through immoral and unjust means. Furthermore those immoral persons believed themselves to be without **iniquity**. Therefore the God who rescued them from **Egypt** and gave them the promised land was prepared to reverse the exodus by sending them back to the wilderness to **live in tents**, as they did during the Feast of Booths (Lv 23:33-43).

**12:10-11.** Though God's judgment in v. 9 seems quite harsh, Hosea reminded Israel that for some time God had been warning the nation of His coming retribution. These warnings had come through **the prophets**—including Hosea—even if mediated through strange **visions** and **parables**. The esoteric nature of prophecy was then exhibited through Hosea's reindictment of **Gilead** and **Gilgal**, two cities apparently well known for sin (see the comments on 6:8; 9:6) and destined for destruction.

**12:12-14.** Hosea introduced two more examples from Israel's early history to illustrate how the nation must now proceed: **Jacob** shepherding for two terms in exchange for a **wife** (or wives) in **Aram** (Gn 27:43-29:30); Moses (**a prophet**) shepherding **Israel** out of **Egypt** through the exodus. The brevity of the accounts, together with the inexact and inexplicit nature of their parallels, causes Hosea's purpose for including the narratives difficult to discern. The point to be illustrated is probably that, just as both Jacob and Moses labored to possess and protect a precious person/people in troubled times, so God was presently using **a prophet** (Hosea) to shepherd Israel during a turbulent period in the nation's history. The Israelites had therefore better heed the prophet's warnings! In significant contrast to those earlier events, however, God had no immediate plans to remove His people from either their current or impending hardships. Instead, God would **leave His bloodguilt on** Israel, for they had **provoked Him to bitter anger**.

**Lesson Nugget** – The hardest place to get into is hell. You will have to fight against God all the way to get there. God is doing everything possible to keep you from going there. And His heart is breaking for those who choose that path. (Hosea 11:8)

*Sources: Moody Bible Commentary; Wiersbe Bible Commentary; The Word For Today Bible; and Standard Sunday School lesson.*