



Hosea 11

Disappointment of a parent

Prophet- definition from *A Concise Dictionary of Theology*

- ▶ “Someone inspired by the Spirit of God to speak and/or act in a certain way. Interpreting past and present events and announcing coming events, the OT prophets spoke from a deep knowledge of God, preached fidelity to the covenant and opposed a mere external observance of the law. Called by God, they delivered God’s word to the people.”
- ▶ “Jesus claimed that he was “more than” the prophetic, royal and sacred persons and places of the OT. (Matt 12:15-21 The NT repeatedly notes how the OT expectations were fulfilled in Jesus.”

Prophets speak to specific persons at specific times and places.

- ▶ But their words still have meaning for us today.
- ▶ The OT is the only scripture that Jesus and his disciples had.
- ▶ The first book of the New Testament was not written until 50 AD, almost 20 years after Jesus' death.

- ▶ Which of the New Testament books was the first to be written?
- ▶ Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians.



Context of Hosea vs Context of the Gospels

Hosea's Prophecy

~750 -722 BC

Israel is a divided kingdom

Politics interfere with proper worship

Worship is syncretized with Baal worship

Punishment for sins comes in this life.

Threat of conquest from Assyria

Gospels

Jesus' life 4BC- 32AD - Gospels written between 60 -85 AD

Israel is an occupied nation

There is a strict observance of Torah

People are stoned for blasphemy of any sort. Jews avoid table fellowship or association with Gentiles.

Some believe in judgment, heaven and hell after death.

Hope for a messiah to free political Israel

Hosea Prophecy vs Jesus' Prophecy

- ▶ Hosea - war, deportation, depopulation because of idolatry.
- ▶ Hosea- fall of Israel (10:8) The high places of Aven will be destroyed, the sin of Israel; thorns and thistles will overgrow their altars. Then they will cry out to the mountains, “Cover us!” and to the hills, “Fall upon us!”
- ▶ Jesus- judgment at end of time based on love of God and love of neighbor. (Matthew 25) Life after death and promise of heaven.
- ▶ Jesus- Prophecy of fall of Jerusalem - Lk 23 “the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.’ ³⁰ At that time people will say to the mountains, ‘Fall upon us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ ³¹ for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?”

Hosea and Jesus

- ▶ Hosea's prophecy of a return to Israel -
- ▶ (11:11) Out of Egypt they shall come trembling, like birds, like doves, from the land of Assyria; and **I will resettle them in their homes, oracle of the LORD.**
- ▶ Jesus- Promise of everlasting life- (Lk:23) ⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³ He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, **today you will be with me in Paradise.**"
- ▶ Jn 14: 2-3 ² In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that **where I am you also may be.**

Last week

Hosea 9



Israel was “planted” by the LORD and was full of potential. Indeed she thrived. The more prosperous she became, the more time was spent on “updating” the places of worship.

These places had become “altars of sin” complete with golden calves and sacred poles. The people mourn for Baal in the myths about his death, a death he overcomes.

What Israel, Judah and Ephraim need to **sow is justice and righteousness** rather than war and wickedness.

Ultimately the Lord will punish. The shrines will be destroyed. There will be war. The king will vanish and even women and children will suffer and die.

Hosea 11:1-4

- ▶ Hosea moves from condemnation for idolatry to a nostalgic look back to the early days of Israel. God is the loving parent.
- ▶ Israel is God's son here, Jacob, *not* the vineyard of chapter 10.
- ▶ As in earlier chapters, Hosea moves back and forth from justice (what is due) to compassion.

Hosea 11:1-2



Israel here refers to Jacob and all his descendants.

- ▶ When Israel was a child I loved him, out of Egypt I called my son.

- ▶ ² The more I called them, the farther they went from me, sacrificing to the Baals and burning incense to idols.



This repeats the themes of previous chapters; God's love and Israel's ingratitude.

Hosea 11:3-4



▶ Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, who took them in my arms; but they did not know that I cared for them.



The LORD is speaking here. “It was I” and not Baal. Using “Ephraim” here now indicates a reference to the Northern tribes in the post-Exodus period. I “cared for them” = *healed* them or *saved* them..

▶⁴ I drew them with human cords, with bands of love; I fostered them like those who raise an infant to their cheeks; I bent down to feed them.



Rather than the cruel ‘yokes’ of slavery, the LORD guides them with bands of love; a gentle Father who bends down to feed them.

Hosea 11:5-6



He shall return to the land of Egypt`,
Assyria shall be his king,
because they have refused to repent.



This is not a judgment... Here Hosea is noting what is just. Sin and slavery are synonymous. Choosing sin rather than repentance is like choosing to return to Egypt and slavery. This time Assyria's king will be in control.

⁶ The sword shall rage in his cities:
it shall destroy his diviners,
and devour them because of their schemings.



Hosea is commenting here on impending disasters. Shalmaneser V had taken King Hoshea prisoner. (~727 BC) Political disaster will follow Israel's refusal to return to the LORD.



VS 6 is a difficult verse to translate.

VS 6 Varied translations

- ▶ A sword will flash in their cities,
*it will **destroy the bars of their city gates**,
and will devour them in their fortresses.* NET
- ▶ The sword shall rage in his cities:
it shall destroy his diviners,
and devour them because of their schemings. NABRE
- ▶ A sword will flash in their cities;
it will devour their false prophets NIV
and put an end to their plans.

Hosea 11:7



- ▶ My people have their mind set on **apostasy**; though they call on God in unison, he shall not raise them up.

Apostasy- is a denial or abandonment of faith or denial of revealed truths.

In **Judaism**, **apostasy** refers to the rejection of **Judaism** and possible defection to another **religion** by a Jew. The term **apostasy** is derived from an Ancient Greek word meaning "rebellious"

Even war did not change the attitude of the people. YHWH still calls them "my people". His love for Israel has not diminished, but it is an unrequited love. **The cries and laments of the people do not include repentance or a return to YHWH alone.**

Hosea 11:8

- ▶ How could I give you up, Ephraim, or deliver you up, Israel? How could I treat you as Admah, or make you like Zeboiim?
- ▶ My heart is overwhelmed, my pity is stirred.



Israel is not totally lost. IN Admah and Zeboiim as in Sodom and Gomorrah, all life and all possibility of renewed life were taken away.

YHWH here, seems to struggle with justice (what is due the idolaters) and mercy.

Deuteronomy 29:21-26

- ▶ **Punishment for Idolatry.** ²¹ Future generations, your descendants who will rise up after you, as well as the foreigners who will come here from distant lands, when they see the calamities of this land and the ills the LORD has inflicted upon it— ²² all its soil burned out by sulphur and salt, unsown and unfruitful, without a blade of grass, like the catastrophe of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in his furious wrath— ²³ they and all the nations will ask, “Why has the LORD dealt thus with this land? Why this great outburst of wrath?” ²⁴ And they will say, “Because they abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their ancestors, which he had made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, ²⁵ and they went and served other gods and bowed down to them, gods whom they did not know and whom he had not apportioned to them. ²⁶ So the anger of the LORD flared up against this land and brought on it every curse written in this book.

Hosea 11:9

- ▶ **I will not give vent to my blazing anger,
I will not destroy Ephraim again;
For I am God and not a man,
the Holy One present among you;
I will not come in wrath.**



The Lord, unlike humankind, does not seek revenge or act out of anger... but neither will he allow the guilty idolaters to go without punishment. Punishment will not be canceled, but restrained.

Exodus 34:6-7 The Lord speaks to Moses

- ▶ ⁶ So the LORD passed before him and proclaimed: The LORD, the LORD, a God gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love and fidelity, ⁷ continuing his love for a thousand generations, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin; **yet not declaring the guilty guiltless, but bringing punishment** for their parents' wickedness on children and children's children to the third and fourth generation!

Hosea 11:10-11



- ▶ They shall follow the LORD,
who roars like a lion;
When he roars,
his children shall come frightened from the west,

¹¹ Out of Egypt they shall come trembling, like birds,
like doves, from the land of Assyria;
And I will resettle them in their homes,
oracle of the LORD.

“The roar of a lion” is used in Amos for an oracle of the Lord. Here, the Father is calling in a voice that cannot be ignored. This time they will follow the Lord.

There is no indication as to when this would happen. But the Lord will call his children home from exile to resettle the land.

Summary

- ▶ Biblical scholars seem to agree that the language is particularly difficult to translate in this section of Hosea. Many, including the *Jerome Biblical Commentary* do not even attempt to interpret some of these verses because of the language issues.
- ▶ However, Hosea 11 reveals a loving Father who had made a covenant with his chosen people. In Israel/Ephraim, in the 8th century BC the covenant had been broken. While generations of his children will be subject to war, deportation and exile, the Lord will bring them back again. The prophesy says they will come back trembling, but **they will follow the Lord.**



Let us pray Psalm 103:1-8

- ▶ Bless the LORD, my soul;
all my being, bless his holy name!
- ² Bless the LORD, my soul;
and do not forget all his gifts,
- ³ Who pardons all your sins,
and heals all your ills,
- ⁴ Who redeems your life from the pit,
and crowns you with mercy and compassion,
- ⁵ Who fills your days with good things,
so your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- ▶ ⁶ The LORD does righteous deeds,
brings justice to all the oppressed.
- ⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
to the Israelites his deeds.
- ⁸ Merciful and gracious is the LORD,
slow to anger, abounding in mercy.