

# HOSEA: A Survey

“Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.”

Hosea 4:1

“Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.”

Hosea 14:9

## **Introduction:**

1. The two texts above introduce our subject and prepare the concluding argument of our holy duty.
2. The book of Hosea is primarily God’s rebukes and warnings against the nation of Israel (ten tribes).
3. Mention is made of Judah (and Benjamin), but the emphasis is against Israel, often called Ephraim.
4. They were guilty of terrible spiritual adultery and sinful debauchery, must like America in 2009.
5. However, we as American Christians should listen carefully and examine our own hearts and lives.
6. Surely the Lord has a controversy against this backslidden nation, and we want to separate from it.
7. If God does not judge America soon and severe, He must apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah?
8. There are national judgments throughout the Bible, but there is forgiveness for Israel or Nineveh!
9. It should be obvious to even casual fools that God is bringing judgment on the earth and America.
10. Nothing happens accidentally, coincidentally, naturally, or statistically without God purposing it.
11. America is foolish, profane, rebellious, and wicked in the face of the greatest national blessings ever.
12. Our desire is to learn God’s view, search our hearts, turn to Him more fully, and avoid the scourge.
13. The N.T. takes O.T. examples and presses our duty to God (I Cor 10:6-12; Hebrews 4:1; 12:28-29).
14. The goal is for wise and prudent men to know and understand the justice and mercy of our great God.
15. It is not written to Philistines or Egyptians, but the two houses of Israel, the church of God of the O.T.
16. The New Testament quotes Hosea (Hosea 1:10; 2:23 cp Rom 9:25-26; Hosea 13:14 cp I Cor 15:55).
17. We will take a survey of the book, studying select verses for an overview before Hosea’s conclusion.

***1:2 The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.***

- A. We believe the statement – God told Hosea to marry a whore and take her whorish children, and he did it (1:3). The passage is far too specific in detail to assume a mere vision.
- B. Most today are obsessed with pretty people giving politically correct presentations, rather than a prophet of God graphically condemning our sins in plain and powerful ways.
- C. What is the lesson? Spiritual adultery of departing from the Lord is as repulsive as marrying a slut and taking her children by whoring. God compares idolatry and worldliness to adultery, whoring, and fornication often. The graphic comparison should get your attention.
- D. The lesson? *God wants you 100% without worldly flirting (Mk 12:30; Rom 12:1-2; Jas 4:4).*

***1:4 And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.***

- A. Jehu did many things initially that pleased God, but he did not continue (II Kings 10:28-32).
- B. Observe how God cut off the family of Jehu with a usurpation like his own (II Kgs 15:8-10).
- C. Shortly after judging Jehu’s family, the Lord cast away Israel (II Kings 15:29; 17:6-18).
- D. The lesson? *God judges hypocrites who condemn others but live in sin (Mat 7:1-5; Rom 2:1).*

***1:7 But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.***

- A. In contrast to the dire warning against Israel, God promised to have mercy upon Judah.
- B. This event was the killing of the Assyrian army by the angel of the Lord (II Kings 19:35).
- C. The lesson? *There is no natural protection from God's judgment (Prov 11:21,4; Psalm 4:8).*

***2:6 Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.***

- A. God can make a hedge to protect us, and God can make a hedge to keep us from further sin.
- B. Restraining grace and restraining providence are great blessings when they keep us from sin.
- C. Most men will not and do not turn from sin until it is found to be hateful, for if they find success without chastening in pursuing sin, they will continue in its course (Psalm 36:2).
- D. God's chastening difficulties are to teach us to believe and obey (Deut 8:3; II Chron 33:12).
- E. Wise men examine their lives to answer adversity and difficulties (Eccl 7:14; Heb 12:11-17).
- F. Wise men learn to pray after the Saviour to be delivered from temptation (Matthew 6:13).
- G. The lesson? *Appreciate and seek God's favor by His putting thorns in your way of sinfulness.*

***2:7 And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.***

- A. God's restraining hedge of thorns did not allow Israel any success in her sin of idolatry (2:6).
- B. The prodigal soon ran out of money and found his life to be quite miserable (Luke 15:13-16).
- C. In this thorny condition, he came to his right mind and remembered home (Luke 15:17-19).
- D. Is your life frustrated, lonely, troubled, and tiring? Examine yourself and turn unto the Lord.
- E. The lesson? *Remember from whence you are fallen and seek it again (Rev 2:5; Ps 51:8).*

***2:14 Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.***

- A. Praise our loving Father in heaven for His kindness at times to entice and move us to Him!
- B. Though He must chasten as a loving Father, He also allures us kindly as a pursuing husband!
- C. The lesson? *Do you appreciate happy conviction and conversion for the grace they truly are!*

***4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.***

- A. Hosea turns his attention to a contributing factor in Israel's judgment – lack of right teaching.
- B. Those men who should have turned Israel to the Lord and repentance had compromised truth.
- C. Pastors today do not preach the truth, because people do not want to hear it (II Tim 4:3-4).
- D. God has terrible judgment in reserve for priests who do not teach His people (Malachi 2:1-9).
- E. The lesson? *We must emphasize preaching God's word without compromise (II Tim 4:1-2).*

**4:7 As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.**

- A. These priests and their children had prospered, but the prosperity led to sinful presumption.
- B. The LORD promised to humiliate these priests for their complicity in the nation's sinfulness.
- C. It is a fact of Bible history and human experience that prosperity often leads to wickedness.
- D. The lesson? *Ministers (and people) must not allow prosperity or success to alter holiness.*

**5:4 They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD.**

- A. Priests, rulers, and the people of Israel would not alter their lifestyle to please their holy God.
- B. God called us to be framed - transformed to Him, not conformed to the world (Rom 12:1-2).
- C. Many are double-minded, loving God and Mammon, which is quite impossible (Matt 6:24).
- D. They love to flirt and enjoy the world, which is the spirit of spiritual adultery (James 4:4).
- E. They do not truly know the Lord – they are belly worshippers (Joshua 24:19; Phil 3:18-19).
- F. The lesson? *True knowledge of God results in a changed life that matches up with scripture.*

**5:6 They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them.**

- A. The priests and rulers might offer many sacrifices, even to the LORD, but He will not hear.
- B. The true God is not interested in sacrifices, but righteousness (Ps 50:7-15; Mic 6:6-8; etc.).
- C. The righteous God has warned of leaving those who will not obey Him (Proverbs 1:24-33).
- D. Hezekiah became puffed up with his fifteen years, so the Lord left him (II Chron 32:25,31).
- E. The lesson? *Seek the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while ... (Is 55:6-7).*

**5:15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.**

- A. When the Lord leaves us, the consequences are terrible, and they are to lead us back to Him.
- B. The inspired psalmist spoke favorably of affliction and its role in his life (Ps 119:67,71,75).
- C. The lesson? *Appreciate affliction. Consider in the day of adversity. Examine heart and life.*

**6:4 O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.**

- A. Morning clouds are driven away by the heat of the sun; dew is as quickly evaporated by it.
- B. The prophet condemned Israel and Judah for their inconsistency and short-lived conversions.
- C. A true disciple – a disciple indeed – is one that continues in godly living (Jn 8:31; Col 1:23).
- D. The lesson? *It takes heart preparation, diligent keeping, and self-examination to continue on.*

**6:5 Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.**

- A. The man of God makes war with his hearers' minds (II Cor 10:4-6; II Tim 4:2; Tit 2:15; etc.).
- B. The fulfillment of God's revealed judgments in their punishment is as clear as shining light.
- C. The lesson? *Desire and seek preaching from God's word that attacks your ideas and lives.*

**6:6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.**

- A. This is the character of God that is the foundation of principles of righteousness for the wise.
- B. David put the first into practice with the shewbread; Jesus did by healing on the Sabbath day.
- C. Saul missed the latter clause, and it cost him the kingdom, for he rebelled (I Samuel 15:22).
- D. The lesson? *Ceremony, ritual, or attendance does not impress God. Mercy and knowledge!*

**7:2 And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face.**

- A. This foolish nation forgot to think about the fact that God knows and remembers our deeds.
- B. Evil men think that God must be like them when they get away with sin (Psalm 50:21-22).
- C. But Jesus Christ sees everything in your life right down into your motives (Heb 4:12-14).
- D. The lesson? *You may hide your secret sins, your sinful heart, from others – but not from God.*

**7:9 Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.**

- A. Enemies were already taking tribute and taking cities and prisoners, but Israel did not get it.
- B. Israel was getting gray hairs, an early sign of decay and approaching death, but did not get it.
- C. We believe we can see God's judgment coming on the earth and on America, so we consider.
- D. The lesson? *Do not foolishly go on day after day without seeing warning signs of judgment.*

**7:12 When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.**

- A. Israel sought for assistance from Egypt and Assyria, but it did not work – judgment came.
- B. They had heard it before, for God faithfully sent prophets (II Kgs 17:6-20; Jer 7:13-15; etc.).
- C. The lesson? *Do you listen to the word of God, for you are being told about your future.*

**8:7 For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.**

- A. Each day you invest in wind ... will God blow with you, or blast against you (Hag 1:1-11)!
- B. God will send a drought against all you do, so there is no yield (Haggai 2:14-19; Mal 3:8-12).
- C. If you get a return or yield on your efforts, it will disappear some other way by His judgment.
- D. The lesson? *A wise man considers how he invests each day in his life, family, business, etc.*

**8:12 I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.**

- A. The law of God is perfect, wonderful, glorious, precious, and has great rewards (Ps 19:7-11).
- B. Many see the Bible an old book that pertains to a different time, people, and way of things.
- C. Surely the ferocious God of the O.T. does not operate that way with people in this new age.
- D. But God has not changed, for Paul declared Him to be a consuming fire today (Heb 12:29).
- E. The lesson? *Do not ignore, neglect, or reject the word of God as not applying directly to you.*

**9:7 *The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.***

- A. When judgment finally came with great calamities, then Israel would finally know their ruin.
- B. No matter what false prophets and spiritual men had said, God would judge them for sins.
- C. God may wait in longsuffering patience a long time, but He will burn against any and all sin!
- D. As God told Ezekiel, they would know a true prophet had been among them (Ezek 30:30-33).
- E. The lesson? *Reject false promises of peace and prosperity – measure by God’s pure word.*

**9:11 *As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.***

- A. Include in your reading of this text the following three verses that explain the great judgment.
- B. God’s judgment would extend to unrepentant children of Israel’s rebels at all stages of life.
- C. Your choices each day determine to a great extent the blessing of God upon your children.
- D. The lesson? *You are not merely being righteous for yourself, but also for your family as well.*

**9:15 *All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolters.***

- A. Gilgal was Israel’s first camp in Canaan and where they rejected Samuel and God for Saul.
- B. God hated them practically for their wickedness, and drove them from the land He had given.
- C. To a wise man, God is perfectly just and righteous for reacting so strongly against revolters.
- D. The lesson? *Reject the false notion that God loves everyone, all the time, no matter what.*

**10:2 *Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.***

- A. Elijah confronted Israel for divided hearts with Ahab – between God and Baal (I Kgs 18:21).
- B. Divided hearts are unacceptable to God, which was Hosea’s message (Matt 6:24; Jas 4:4,8).
- C. The lesson? *You must constantly examine and unite your heart to only one holy passion.*

**10:12 *Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.***

- A. Here is an investment that pays great returns and dividends – invest righteousness for mercy!
- B. Plow the soil of your heart and soul. Break up the rocks and stones. Prepare a tender heart.
- C. When you are convicted of sin and judgment, seek the Lord and wait for His righteous rain!
- D. The lesson? *Your choices every day in heart and life are investments to bring God’s reward.*

**11:9 I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.**

- A. God promised to deal mercifully with the remnant and not utterly destroy them as Sodom.
- B. For our understanding, God uses human terms of a conflict within Himself about judgment.
- C. He described His love in the beginning (11:1-4), and now He describes it in the end (11:8-9).
- D. Do you appreciate the longsuffering of God that should lead you to repentance (II Pet 3:9)?
- E. The lesson? *The Lord is ready to pardon, and though severe, does not judge proportionately.*

**11:12 Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.**

- A. Within twelve tribes of Israel, there was a difference between Israel and Judah at this time.
- B. Within any church or family, there are differences in heart and life that God always rewards.
- C. While Samuel could not well discern Jesse's sons, God saw a great difference. What of you?
- D. The difference in character described here led to God's great blessing described earlier (1:7).
- E. The lesson? *No matter what others are doing around you, God will see and reward properly.*

**12:3 He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God:**

- A. Hosea here took up a controversy against Judah. Most he said thus far was against Israel.
- B. God's past mercies should drive us to repentance and righteousness, if we are wise and just.
- C. The first lesson the prophet brings is election ... God chose to love Jacob and hate Esau!
- D. God further blessed him with power in prayer when wrestling with the angel (Hos 12:4).
- E. God further blessed him by appearing to him at Bethel (Hosea 12:4; Genesis 28:12; 35:9).
- F. The prophet brings a conclusion to these considerations, "Therefore turn thou ..." (12:6).
- G. God further blessed Israel and Judah by using Moses to deliver them from Egypt (12:12-13).
- H. Do you consider the goodness of God in your life from election to the present moment?
- I. The goodness of God ought to lead you to repentance, as the Lord assumes of it (Rom 2:4).
- J. The lesson? *The Lord considers the degree of His favor when measuring your obedience.*

**12:10 I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.**

- A. Though varying from the theme of repentance and judgment, here is a very valuable point.
- B. God's prophets used similitudes when ministering, so we should not require literal meanings.
- C. Scofield and other futurists require a literal sense of prophecies as necessary to their scheme.
- D. The lesson? *Here is a great rule of hermeneutics – interpretation and exposition of scripture.*

**13:6 According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.**

- A. Israel's gracious God gave them the land of Canaan and its goodness, but they forgot Him.
- B. Remember, He gave cities, farms, and wells all prepared ... with a warning (Deut 6:10-12).
- C. It is for this reason that Agur showed us to pray for food convenient for us (Prov 30:7-9).
- D. Here is where America needs to fear the surprise description of Sodom's sins (Ezek 16:49).
- E. The lesson? *Fear prosperity more than poverty, for it often leads to pride and rebellion.*

**13:16 Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.**

- A. Here is God's inspired prophet using graphic language to describe God's wrathful judgment.
- B. Scripture saith, It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31).
- C. Scripture saith in more than one place, Our God is a consuming fire (Deut 4:24; Heb 12:29).
- D. This effeminate generation of so-called Christians says we are too harsh and severe. Hardly!
- E. The lesson? *You have no idea how terrible your life can become for sinning against God.*

**14:2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.**

- A. Here is the nature of true repentance, and it behooves wise men to learn this lesson well.
- B. The true and living God does not ask for our firstborn or mutilation, just verbal repentance.
- C. Of course, words must be sincere and backed up with works (Matt 3:8; 15:8; Acts 26:20).
- D. Take words of confession, turn from a divided heart or wandering, and beg for His mercy!
- E. In this case of Israel, observe that they specifically corrected their misdirected trust (14:3).
- F. Promise Him the offering that is most pleasing, the praise of your lips (Ps 69:30-31; 50:23).
- G. The lesson? *It is so easy for sinning children of God to obtain mercy from God ... do it now!*

**14:4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.**

- A. When considering this text, read the rest of the chapter to fully see His forgiveness (14:5-8).
- B. When Israel, though profane and rebellious, repented (14:1-3), here is God's great response!
- C. He will abundantly pardon infinitely better than we would in the same situation (Is 55:6-9).
- D. The Lord is so gracious and merciful to those who acknowledge their sins (Job 33:27-28).
- E. The lesson? *There is always hope, immediate reward, and great blessings for repentance!*

**14:9 Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.**

- A. Do not be confused - the question marks apply to the first clause of the compound questions.
- B. Wise men will understand these things are excellent; prudent men will know these things.
- C. What things? This chapter and the whole book of God's reasoning with the nation of Israel.
- D. What things? The reminders, reviews, rebukes, threats, warnings, offers, promises, etc., etc.
- E. The message of blessings reviewed, sins identified, and promises offered are most righteous.
- F. The just shall live by faith, walk in God's right ways, and reap blessings of His loving favor.
- G. The rebellious will neglect or mock God's offers, and He will blast and grind them under.
- H. The lesson? *Consider your ways. Be wise and prudent. Hear the warning, and fully repent.*

**Conclusion:**

1. As God used Moses to Israel, Hosea has set life or death before us (Deut 30:19-20; Hosea 14:9).
2. Let us come before God with prayers of repentance and beg for His mercy to graciously receive us.
3. He is very gracious and merciful to those who beg for pure forgiveness on His goodness alone. Glory!
4. His blessings, favor, and reward are right before us, if we will take words and turn to Him fully.

**For Further Study:**

1. The sermon outline, "Spiritual Adultery," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/spiritual-adultery.pdf>.
2. The sermon outline, "The Prophets of God," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/prophets-of-god.pdf>.
3. The sermon outline, "Rude Preachers," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/rude-preachers.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, "Instant Preaching," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/instant-preaching.pdf>.
5. The sermon, "Angel and an Inkhorn," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/an-angel-with-an-inkhorn.pdf>.
6. The sermon outline, "God Hates Compromise," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/compromise.pdf>.
7. The sermon outline, "Vain Religion," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/vain-religion.pdf>.