



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

HOSEA,
JOEL, AMOS

Week 2

Hosea 7

When you are having difficulties and aren't sure what to do, to whom do you go first? Are there some people you avoid when you are struggling?

1. What essential truth about God were many of the people of Israel forgetting (v. 2)?
2. Why did God use the image of an oven to describe Israel (vs. 4-7)? What particular sin did the oven represent?
3. What toll was Israel's sin taking on her (v. 9)?
4. When Israel found herself in danger, to whom did she call on for help (vs. 11-12)? To what animal did God compare them and why?
5. List all the metaphors God used to describe disobedient Israel in this chapter. What do they have in common?

1. What hidden toll can sin take on us?
2. On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your ability to control your anger? Ask a close friend to rate you as well. Was his or her assessment the same as yours? If not, what have you learned?
3. Write down the steps you think God would have you take when you are experiencing a trial.

*In about 30 years, four of Israel's kings—Zechariah, Shallum, Pekahiah and Pekah—were victims of **assassinations** (2Ki 15). Even while the princes of Israel celebrated a special festival in honor of the king, they were plotting his overthrow (Hos 7:5-7). Israel tried to form alliances with other nations, which God compared with mixing flour and oil to form cakes (v. 8). **"Calling to Egypt...turning to Assyria"** (v. 11). Under Menahem, Israel submitted to Assyrian authority. Later, Hoshea sought an alliance with Egypt against Assyria. This act of rebellion led Assyria to destroy Israel's northern kingdom.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Challenging Conventional Wisdom

Hosea 8

OPENING
up to the Word

The best conventional wisdom of the day cannot stand up to God's truth. Can you think of some rule or maxim that was once considered conventional wisdom, but is now laughed at?

DIGGING
into the Word

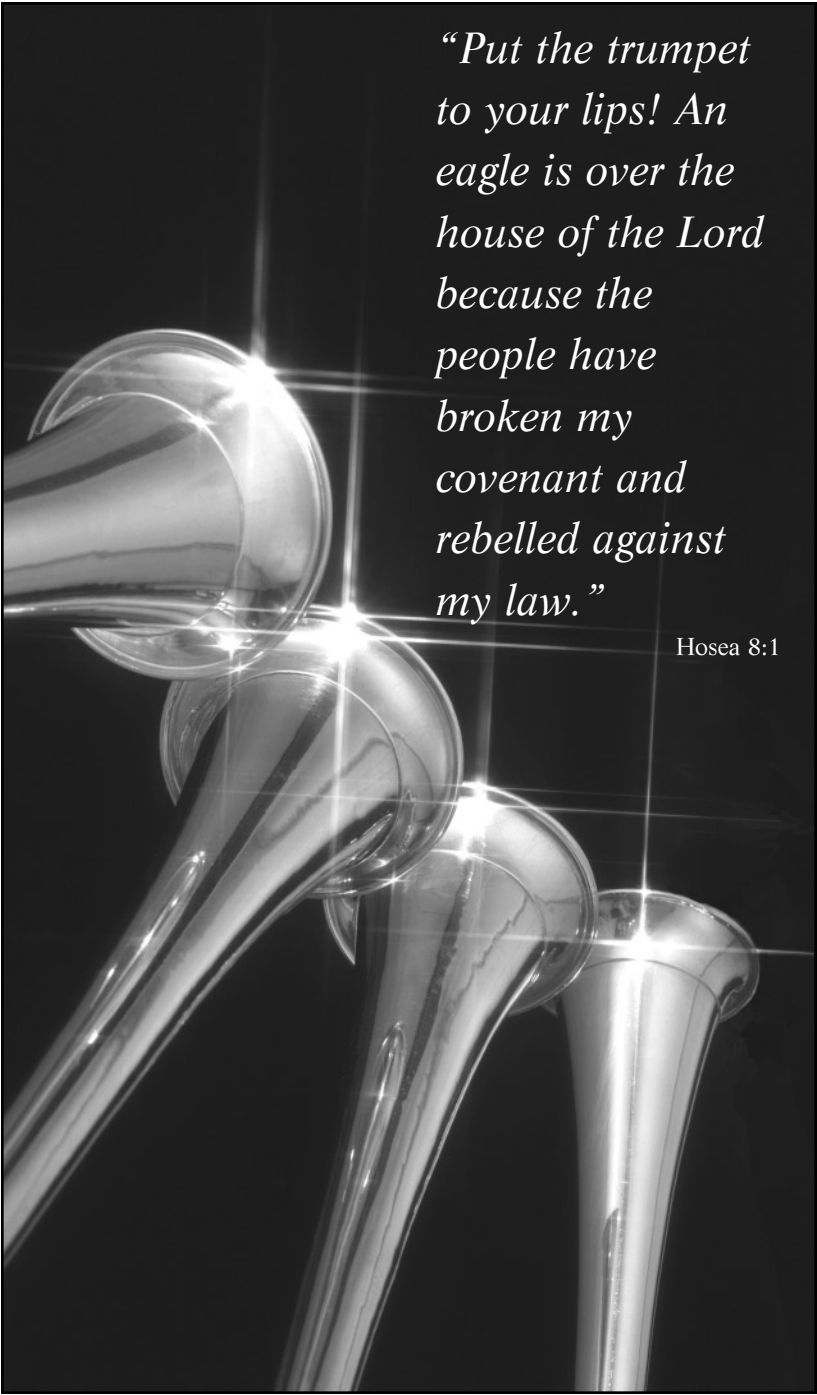
1. Despite the fact that the nation of Israel would call out to God in times of distress, what two things were foundational in their old-covenant relationship with God (vs. 1-2)?
2. What activities did God mention in verse 4 that offended him?
3. What was the *calf-idol* cited in verse 5?
4. Who were the allies Israel was going to hire in verse 10?
5. What had Israel come to think of as "something alien" (v. 12)?
6. What sacrificial gifts (v. 13) was Israel still offering to God with which he was not pleased?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What idols and pursuits might take your focus away from Jesus Christ?
2. Israel exerted great energy in building palaces and fortified cities, only to see their life's work destroyed. Can you name three things God's grace will grant you that will never be destroyed (see Mt 6:19-21)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Archaeologists have uncovered idols in all parts of Israel, and the Bible records that **golden calves** were worshiped at Bethel and Dan. However, excavations in Palestine have revealed **no images of Yahweh**. Images were made only of false gods. Contrary to what the evil king Jeroboam had said in 1 Kings 12:28, God's reply was "This calf—a craftsman has made it; it is not God" (Hos 8:6). The **wind** (v. 7) refers to the emptiness that characterized Israel's worship and foreign policy, the **whirlwind** refers to what her efforts would gain her—nothing but more emptiness.*



*“Put the trumpet
to your lips! An
eagle is over the
house of the Lord
because the
people have
broken my
covenant and
rebelled against
my law.”*

Hosea 8:1

God's Abandoned Garden

Hosea 9

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever tended a garden? What would it look like if you stopped caring for it?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Why would the threshing floor and winepress (v. 2) soon fail Israel?
2. To where would Ephraim (Israel) return (v. 3)?
3. In Israel's days of judgment (v. 7) the prophet would be considered: (a) a valuable asset, (b) an insightful spokesman for God, (c) a fool, (d) a deliverer of Israel.
4. What does the phrase "the days of Gibeah" (v. 9) refer to (see Jdg 19:16-30)? How did Israel's present sin resemble her past sins?
5. What was God's prophetic judgment of the nation of Israel in verse 17? What would the people of Israel become?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How can a recurring and unforsaken sin become a catastrophe in your life?
2. Have you ever attempted to make minor changes in your life, when major changes were really necessary? What was the result, and what did you learn from that experience? To whom does Paul give credit for our ultimate spiritual victory? (Ro 8:37)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The Canaanite religion that Israel was adopting frequently used **threshing floors and winepresses** (v. 2) as locations for fertility rites. Israel was giving credit to Baal and other gods for her bountiful harvests—so God was going to stop sending them. God compares the job of a prophet to that of a **watchman** (v. 8) who was responsible for warning a city of approaching danger. In this case, the true prophets of God (like Hosea) were considered fools. The people treated them with contempt and scorn. This is another reason for God's judgment. **Days of Gibeah** (v. 9) refers to the account (Jdg 19) of the brutal rape and murder of a Levite's concubine by the evil Israelites of Gibeah. That stain on Israel's history was now being equaled by Israel's present state of affairs.*

ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS

Like Hosea's marriage to Gomer, the relationship between Israel and God passed through several stages. Similar stages are mentioned in prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Stage	<i>Jeremiah and Ezekiel</i>	<i>Hosea</i>
Betrothal	<i>Jeremiah 2:2</i> Israel a devoted bride of God.	<i>Hosea 1:2</i> Hosea takes an adulterous wife.
Marriage	<i>Ezekiel 16:8-14</i> God marries and clothes Israel.	<i>Hosea 1:3</i> Hosea marries Gomer.
Adultery	<i>Jeremiah 5:7</i> Israel's sin of idolatry leads to adultery.	<i>Hosea 3:1</i> Hosea is to love Gomer even though she committed adultery.
Restoration	<i>Ezekiel 16:53-63</i> God promises restoration to Israel.	<i>Hosea 3:3-4</i> Gomer alienated herself, but now she is to live with Hosea.

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Hosea 10

OPENING
up to the Word

If your current spiritual life were a garden, would it be: (a) well tended and watered, with occasional weeds, (b) occasionally tended, under-watered, with tall weeds, (c) ignored, with parched earth, dying plants and thriving weeds?

DIGGING
into the Word

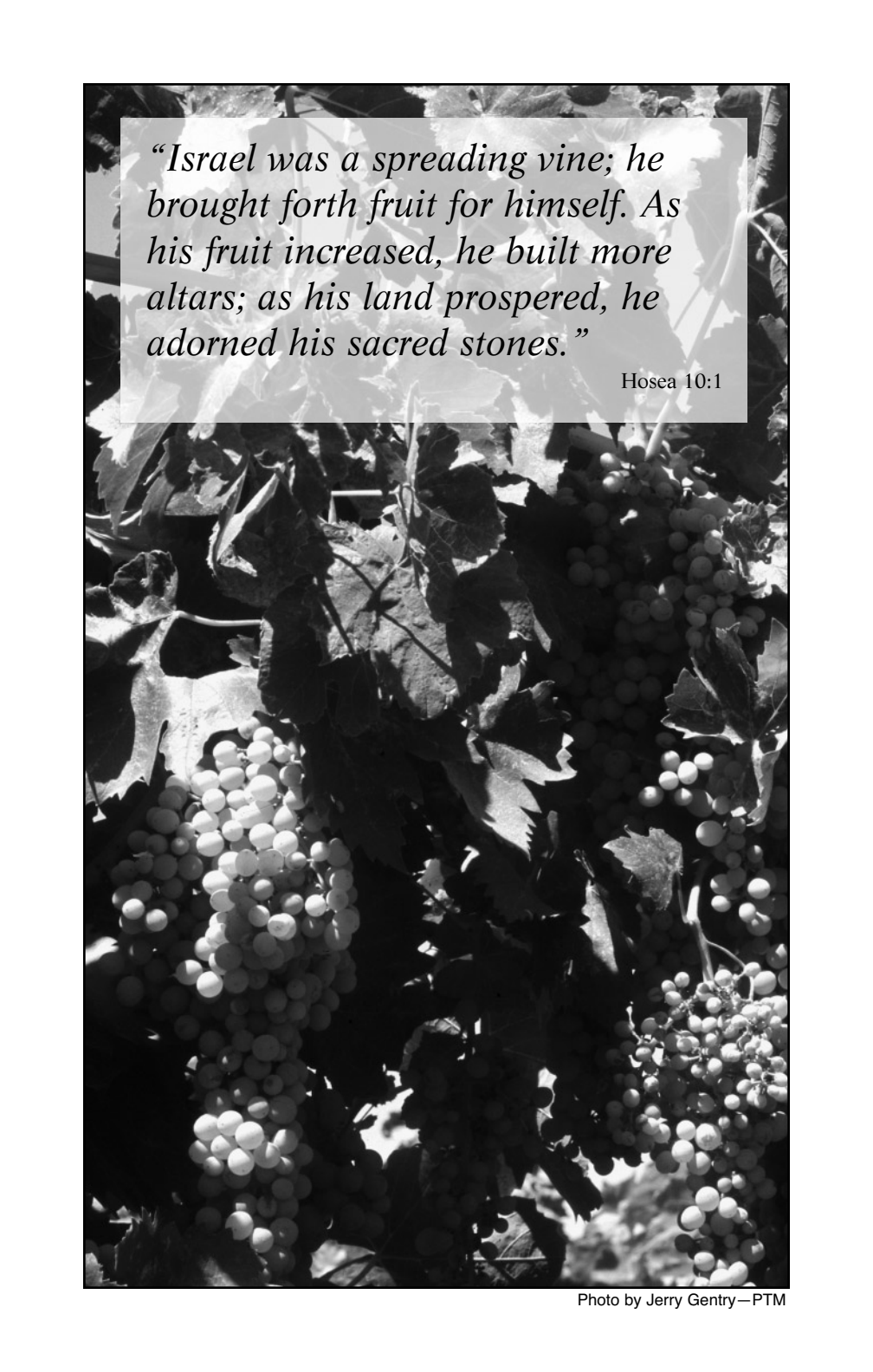
1. Find the plant analogies used in this chapter. How do these contrast with a healthy garden?
2. God planted Israel as a healthy vine. What happened to it (vs. 4, 8, 13)?
3. As God blessed Israel more, what was Israel's response (v. 1)?
4. What would happen to the idols in which Israel was trusting (vs. 5-8)?
5. Despite her idolatry, what does God urge Israel to do in verse 12? What was the "unplowed ground" that Israel needed to break up?

LIVING
out the Word

1. There is an old saying, "what you water grows." What three things are being watered in your life?
2. What weeds in your life threaten the spiritual garden of your heart?
3. Is your heart like unwatered soil? What could be done to make it softer?
4. God accused the Israelites of depending on their own strength and resources to solve their problems instead of turning to him for help. What does spiritual independence from God lead to?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The people of Israel, realizing the trouble about to come on them from Assyria, were worried about their **calf-idols** (v. 5-6). God's judgment was that the idol would become a prisoner of the king of Assyria, who would carry it away as plunder. "**As Shalman devastated Beth Arbel**" (vs. 14-15). Israel's coming judgment was compared to a battle known to Hosea's contemporaries, but uncertain to us. It could refer to Shalmaneser III, the Assyrian ruler who invaded Israel in the 9th century B.C., or possibly Salamam, a Moabite king and a contemporary of Hosea's. The battle was apparently legendary for its atrocities.*



“Israel was a spreading vine; he brought forth fruit for himself. As his fruit increased, he built more altars; as his land prospered, he adorned his sacred stones.”

Hosea 10:1

The Prodigal Son

Hosea 11

OPENING
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Have you or someone you know ever experienced being estranged from a parent or child?

DIGGING
into the Word

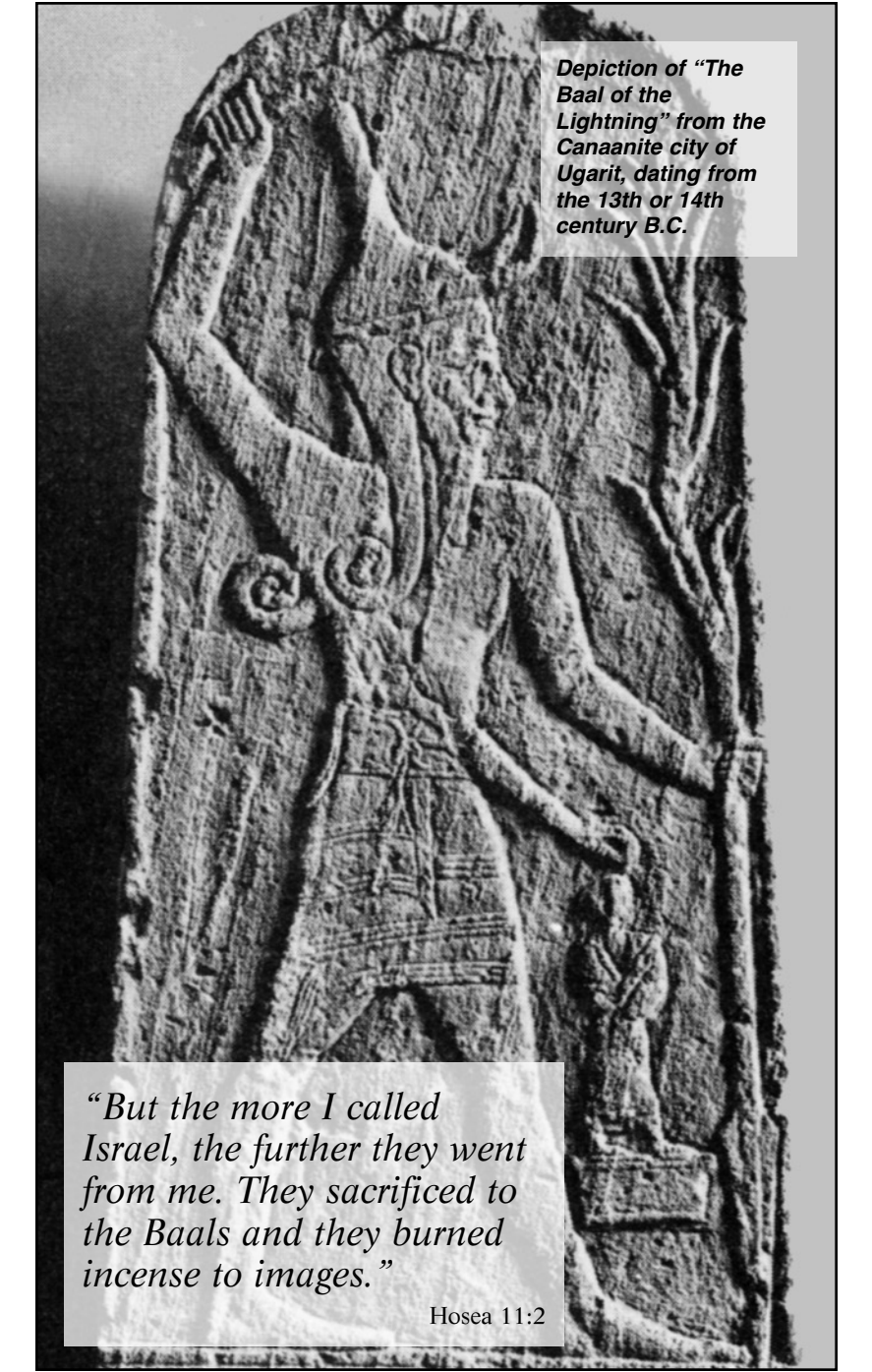
1. What was Israel's response to God, the more he called to them (v. 2)?
2. The issue over which Israel would not change, and thus would receive judgment, is her unwillingness to do what (v. 5)?
3. Who, or what, are Admah and Zeboiim (v. 8)?
4. What is God's promise to Israel in verse 9?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How would you describe your relationship with your heavenly Father? (a) close, (b) casual, (c) strained, (d) distant?
2. Is your memory of your human father good or bad? In what ways is God like your human father, or unlike him?
3. What things did you learn from your human father that you still cherish? What gifts have you received from your heavenly Father that you will always cherish?

WINDOW
on the Word

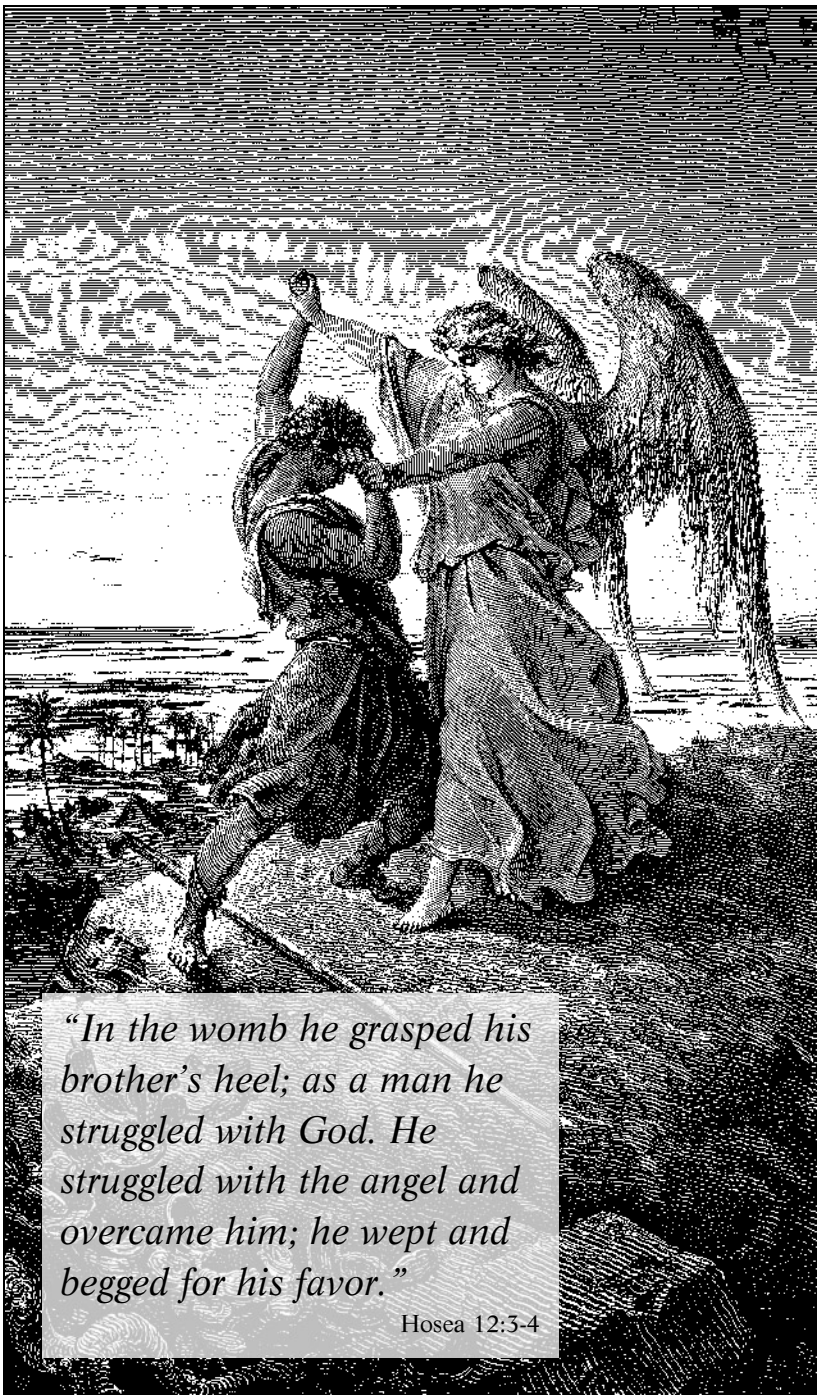
*"I lifted the yoke" (v. 4). Comparing Israel to a work animal, the Lord, like a loving master, led Israel kindly and gently. He even removed her yoke so that she could eat and enjoy her meal with greater ease. Her response to this was that she "refused to repent." **Admah and Zeboiim** (v. 8) were cities annihilated with Sodom and Gomorrah (Ge 10:19; 14:2, 8; Dt 29:23). Despite Israel's sin, God loved her so much he could not bear to destroy her forever like Admah and Zeboiim, though she deserved it.*



*Depiction of “The
Baal of the
Lightning” from the
Canaanite city of
Ugarit, dating from
the 13th or 14th
century B.C.*

*“But the more I called
Israel, the further they went
from me. They sacrificed to
the Baals and they burned
incense to images.”*

Hosea 11:2



“In the womb he grasped his brother’s heel; as a man he struggled with God. He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor.”

Hosea 12:3-4

Inherit the Wind

DAY 13

Hosea 12

Have you ever found yourself starting strong in something, only to finish weak?

1. What does it mean to pursue the East wind (v. 1)?
2. What three things did God beg Israel to do as a nation (v. 6)?
3. Ephraim (Israel) had come to believe that something would hide sin (v. 8). What was that?
4. What made Gilead wicked and its people worthless?

1. Have you ever chased a dream, ambition or desire with all your energy, only to discover that your prized goal had no more value than the wind?
2. An uncontrolled desire for money and luxury can be intoxicating and addictive, leading to spiritual danger (1Ti 6:9-10). What steps do you feel God is leading you to take to help guard against this temptation?

Olive oil (v. 1) was used in a covenant making ceremony and given as a token of allegiance. **“He wept and begged for his favor”** (v. 4). As Jacob, once a deceiver, later struggled to receive the blessings of God through repentance, so Israel needed to mimic Jacob in his changed heart. The Old Testament frequently warned merchants against the practice of using **dishonest scales** (v. 7) that made the buyer think he was getting more than he really was (Lev 19:36; Dt 25:13-16; Pro 11:1; 16:11). Ephraim’s wealth was largely a result of dishonest business practices. God’s judgment of Israel’s sin would be to put them back out in the wilderness to **live in tents again** (v. 9), the way they did during the fall Hebrew festival—only this time more permanently.

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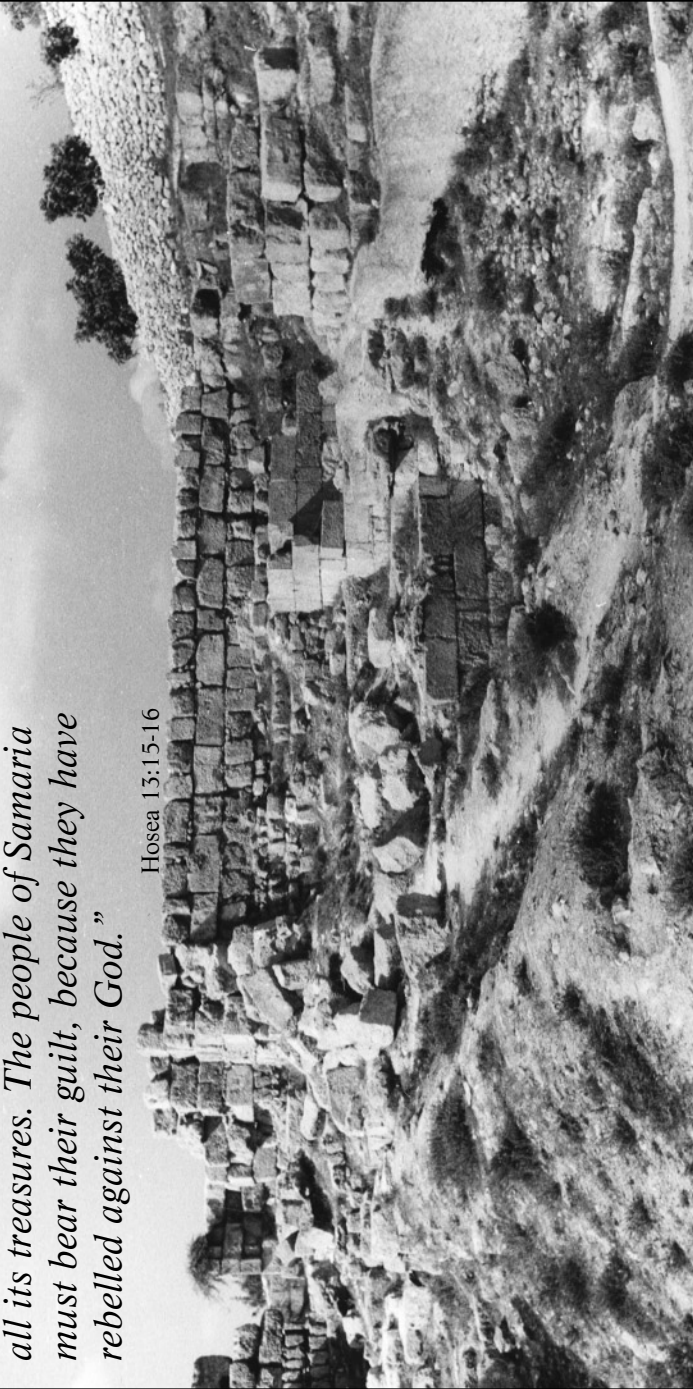
WINDOW

on the Word

“...his spring will fail and his well dry up. His storehouse will be plundered of all its treasures. The people of Samaria must bear their guilt, because they have rebelled against their God.”

Hosea 13:15-16

Ruins of the palace of Omri and Ahab in Samaria.



Idol Hands Are the Devil's Workshop

DAY 14

Hosea 13

Have you ever been really angry at someone you loved because they no longer had an interest in spending time with you? Have you ever loved someone deeply, and then become heartbroken when that person spurned you to love someone else?

1. To what did God liken Israel's future (v. 3)?
2. Something made Israel forget her God and become proud (v. 6). What was it and how could it produce pride?
3. God used animal imagery to describe the sudden violent destruction Israel's unfaithfulness would cause him to allow them to suffer (vs. 7-8). What do all these images have in common?
4. In whom was Israel trusting (v. 10)? Who would ultimately be unable to save her?

1. List three things in your life to which you are extremely devoted. Would someone who knows you well list the same three things? Why, or why not?
2. Verse 5 speaks of God's care for us. Can you name several answers to prayer that you have personally experienced this last year? What do you think God was trying to teach you about himself through these answers to prayer?
3. If strangers were asked to describe your relationship with God, what words would you hope they use? What words would you hope they *not* use?

The phrase "they offer human sacrifice and kiss the calf-idols" (v. 2) could be rendered, "sacrifices of men kiss calves," or "let the sacrificers among men do so by kissing the calf-idols." While the Bible does speak of child sacrifice in connection with the worship of Molech (Lev 18:21; 20:2-5), which was sometimes combined with the worship of Baal, that doesn't appear to be the case here. To kiss an image was to worship it, or honor it (1Ki 19:18). Hosea was highlighting how displeasing and absurd it was for God's people to be kissing idols.

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