

RISKING ALL FOR LOVE**Smoldering and Unrepentant Israel Hosea 6:1—7:16**

“Like Adam, they have broken the covenant— they were unfaithful to me there.” Hosea 6:7

Day 1: Read Hosea 6:1–3.

1. What do you feel as you read these verses—relief? hope? beauty? refreshment? yearning to be done with sin and the misery it causes?
2. Commentaries disagree on what to make of verses 1–3: Is it a shallow repentance, or has Israel really “hit bottom” this time and decisively turned to God? What do you think? Have you yourself ever talked this pious way but not really let go of your darling sins? (Read Jer.3:4–5.)
3. Does God “tear to pieces” (6:1)? Explain. (5:14; Amos 3:6) But what else must be said about some of the disasters in our lives? (Jer. 4:18; 5:25)

Day 2: Read Hosea 6:4–6.

4. Feel the pain in these rhetorical questions. Why is the Lord frustrated with Israel? When did Jesus express similar frustration? (Matt.23:37–38) How are frustration, severity, and love mixed in the Lord’s laments?
5. The imagery is lovely, but to say that someone’s love is “like the morning mist” or “like the early dew” is no compliment. What does it mean? Do you ever see yourself in that description?
6. Why are we fickle covenant children not utterly destroyed for all our unfaithfulness? (Mal. 3:6)
7. There are hundreds of laws in the Old Testament. But what broken “law” concerns God most by far? (vs. 6) How have you sometimes “majored on the minors” and ignored the laws closest to God’s heart? Take a moment to pray that your life would be marked by both “mercy” and “knowledge of God.”

Day 3: Read Hosea 6:7—7:1.

8. “Like father like son.” How is Israel an imitator of Adam in breaking the covenant?

9. A covenant is, basically, a relationship that involves obligation. With that in mind, how is God covenanted to us? (Hos. 2:19–20) How are we covenanted to him? (1 Jn. 3:23)
10. In his indictment, Hosea starts with Gilead in verse 8 (in the territories of Israel east of the Jordan). He then turns in verse 10 to Ephraim (west bank territories), then in verse 11 fingers Judah (southern kingdom), and lastly Samaria in 7:1. How far does the indictment of unfaithfulness reach? (See also Rom. 3:9–18.)

Day 4: Read 7:1–16.

11. Skim these verses and list some of the sins or crimes of Israel. Is this list any different than the sins of all people of all times? (Refer back to Rom. 3:12–18.)
12. Why do you think straying from God always tends to manifest itself in sexual perversion (vss. 4–7; Rom. 1:24ff)? How does this fit with the overall theme of the book of Hosea? (See also Ezek. 16: esp. 8ff; Rev. 21:1–2.)
13. In her sin, what is it that Israel does not realize? (vs. 2)
14. In verses 4–7, note the piling up of imagery of a nation in heat. What are some ways this is evident in our own culture?
15. Back to kings (vs. 7): What is conspicuously absent in their rule?
16. As Delilah sapped Samson's strength, who is sapping Israel's? (vss. 8–9) What does this mean? What or who will sap our strength if we are not careful? What is so insidious about the process? (vs. 9)

Day 5: Read Hosea 7:10–16.

17. There are two things that often look outwardly similar but that are as different as night and day in God's eyes. One is worthless and the other a delight. What are they? (vs. 14a; see also Psalm 50:15.)
18. In spite of all this sin in his people, what does God long to do? (vs. 13b)
19. This chapter ends on a low note, but just turn the verses around and you see the hope held out to us. What could Israel—and we—do, even now, to reverse the spiral of sin? (vs. 14a)