

RISKING ALL FOR LOVE

Israel's Tender Father Pleads

Hosea 11:1—12:14

“How can I give you up, Ephraim?” Hosea 11:8

Day 1: Read Hosea 11:1–4.

1. Is the LORD reminiscing? What time and events of history is he remembering in verses 1–4? (Exodus 12:31–42; 16:4)
2. The gospel writer Matthew picks up Hosea 11:1 and says of the Christ child, “Out of Egypt I called my son” (Matt. 2:15). To what event in Jesus’ life is he referring? If God is here identifying Israel with his precious Son, what do you suppose are his feelings for Israel?
3. Describe the irony and perverseness of sin as noted in verse 2.
4. Find five metaphors in verses 3 and 4 describing what God did for his people in history.

Day 2: Read Hosea 11:5–7.

5. Secular histories may cite various reasons why the nation of Israel was conquered by Assyria and other nations, but what reason does God give? (vs. 5)
6. How does verse 7 indicate that Israel’s sin against God is more serious than an accidental slippage?
7. Why will God “by no means exalt” Israel, “even if they call to the Most High” (vs. 7b)? Doesn’t God always help those who call to him? How is this a caution to you? (Is. 29:13)

Day 3: Hosea 11:8–11.

8. God can bear it no longer. His ancient love for Israel overcomes his anger. Which words in verses 8 and 9 show this? Are you surprised to learn (Hos. 6:4; 11:1, 8–9) how emotional God is toward his people? Toward you?

9. The lion tore to pieces in Hosea 5:14, but here the lion roars for another purpose. What will be the effect of his roaring this time? (vss. 10ff)

Day 4: Hosea 11:12—12:6.

10. But in the meantime Ephraim “feeds on the wind” (12:1). What kind of life does that metaphor suggest to you?
11. What’s so wrong with making treaties with Assyria and Egypt (vs. 1)?
12. To abandon God is not to choose a solitary path but to plunge into relationship with another lover, as Israel has done with Assyria and Egypt. Who do your “lovers” tend to be, and what do you want from them? (Have they ever delivered?)
13. The nation of Israel has always been “a piece of work,” since Jacob grasped Esau’s heel (vs. 3). But, then again, Jacob at least was a man who persisted in seeking God’s favor (vss. 4ff). What does God want Israel to persist in to restore relationship? List three things from verse 6.

Day 5: Read Hosea 12:6–14.

14. What is the self-deception of the wealthy, and what does God again remind a prosperous Israel of? (vss. 8–9)
15. How did God speak to our Old Testament fathers through the prophets? (vs. 10) How does he speak to us now? (Heb. 1:1–2)
16. Gilead represents Israel’s social wrongs, while Gilgal represents her cultic idolatry (vs. 11). For both of these she is being judged. What are the social sins and the idolatries for which people of our own times will be judged, in your opinion?
17. What must we, like Israel, do to escape judgment and to approach God? (vs. 6)

18. How are we able to continually return to God? (1 John 1:7–9)