

## **Dr. John Oswalt, Hosea, Session 2, Hosea 2-3**

### **Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

#### **1. Abstract of Oswalt, Hosea, Session 2, Hosea 2-3, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. John Oswalt's lecture** analyzes Hosea chapters 2 and 3, focusing on God's unwavering love for Israel despite its infidelity. He interprets the text as a parable of God's relationship with his people, highlighting the consequences of idolatry and the ultimate restoration offered by God. Oswalt discusses textual interpretations, particularly the ordering of verses and the significance of poetic parallelism in Hebrew. He uses the parable to explore themes of trust, reliance on God, and the nature of God's mercy and steadfast love. The lecture also touches on the historical and cultural context of ancient Canaanite religion, comparing it to the worship of Yahweh.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Oswalt, Session 2 – Double click icon to play in Windows  
media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and  
click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Minor  
Prophets → Hosea).**



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### 3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, Hosea, Session 2, Hosea 2-3

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided transcript of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on Hosea 2-3:

#### Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Hosea 2-3

##### Overview:

This lecture by Dr. John Oswalt focuses on the complex and powerful message of Hosea chapters 2 and 3, highlighting God's unwavering love for Israel despite their infidelity and idolatry. Oswalt explores the imagery of marriage and adultery, the nature of idolatry, the consequences of disobedience, and ultimately, God's redemptive plan. He emphasizes the book's central theme of God's unchanging love and mercy, even in the face of repeated betrayal.

##### Key Themes and Ideas:

#### 1. God's Unchanging Love and Mercy (Inclusio):

- Oswalt emphasizes that the core message of Hosea is God's unchanging love. This is underscored by the bookending of chapter two: verses 1 and 23. The chapter begins with the promise of being called "children of the living God" and concludes with the restoration of relationship "You are my people...you are my God." This "inclusio" or envelope structure frames all the harsh things in between with God's loving intent. As Oswalt puts it, it reflects God's nature: "His property is always to have mercy."
- The inclusion of 1:10-11 as 2:1 highlights the continuity of God's promise and the transition from prose to poetry, indicating a shift in tone to describe God's emotional response.

#### 1. The Marriage Metaphor and Israel's Adultery:

- Hosea's life is presented as a "life parable" for Israel's relationship with God. Israel is likened to an adulterous wife (the mother), who has been unfaithful to her husband, Yahweh. The current generation (the children) are reflecting their mother's unfaithfulness.
- "Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, I am not her husband." (Hosea 2:2) - This passage illustrates the broken covenant and relationship between God and Israel.

- Israel's unfaithfulness is primarily expressed through idolatry, seeking fulfillment and provision from other gods, specifically the Canaanite deities.

#### 1. **The Nature of Idolatry:**

- Oswalt emphasizes that idolatry is not merely the worship of statues, but "the attempt to gain control over the forces of the psycho-socio-physical cosmos so as to provide for my needs for myself." It is about seeking to manipulate forces (or "gods") for self-gratification rather than trusting God's provision.
- "She has not acknowledged...that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine, the oil and who lavished on her the silver and gold she gave to Baal." (Hosea 2:8) - This quote underscores Israel's failure to recognize God as the source of their blessings, which led them to idol worship.
- He connects this to the initial lie in the Garden of Eden, where humanity decided to determine their own needs instead of trusting God's plan. "I have needs, and God is not going to meet them. So, I will have to meet them for myself."

#### 1. **Consequences of Infidelity and Idolatry:**

- God's punishment for Israel's unfaithfulness is the deprivation of the very things they sought from idols: fertile land, abundant crops, and prosperity. "Otherwise, I'll strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born." (Hosea 2:3)
- This highlights the futility of seeking fulfillment outside of a relationship with God, that true prosperity comes from God and nowhere else.
- Oswalt connects this to the New Testament story of Peter returning to fishing; despite Peter's skill as a fisherman, Peter will always come up empty until he shifts his focus.

#### 1. **The Canaanite Pantheon:**

- Oswalt provides a detailed overview of the Canaanite pantheon: El (the distant, powerless king), Asherah (the queen of heaven, goddess of fertility), Baal (the executive prince, god of atmosphere), and Anat (the goddess of passion and destruction).
- This sheds light on the specific gods Israel turned to and highlights the pervasive nature of pagan worship in their culture.
- Oswalt emphasizes the "it works" aspect of paganism, which contrasts with trusting in Yahweh. "The religion that Abraham left is the same religion Paul was

confronting 2,000 years later. Change the names. It's the same understanding of reality."

- The royal counselor, Kothar-wa-Hasis, represents how paganism employs magic and manipulation. In contrast to the single and powerful nature of God's word.

#### 1. **God's Redemptive Plan: Allurement, Wilderness, and Restoration:**

- Despite the judgment, God's ultimate intention is not to destroy Israel but to restore them. He will "allure her... lead her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her." (Hosea 2:14)
- The wilderness is not meant as a punishment, but as a place of intimacy and renewal with God, mirroring the time in the desert after the Exodus. The "valley of trouble" will become a "door of hope."
- God's character is shown through His response: He will seek out His adulterous wife. He will buy her back. "I will betroth you to myself forever...in rightness...in steadfast love...in tenderness...in faithfulness" (Hosea 2:19-20)
- The emphasis is on knowing God intimately rather than just performing religious rituals and also on a return to covenant and true love.

#### 1. **The Significance of the Exile:**

- The impending exile to Babylon is not presented as a final destruction but as a necessary consequence of Israel's actions.
- The exile will cause Israel to lose all the things they sought from the false gods. The stripping of their physical well-being, stripping them of their cultural and religious practices.
- Oswalt argues that the exile became a transformative period where the people rediscovered God's love and faithfulness. "There she will respond as in the days of her youth as in the day she came up out of Egypt." (Hosea 2:15)
- The experience of the exile, as described by Hosea, prepared them for a new era of renewed relationship.

#### 1. **Hosea 3 and Redemption:**

- Chapter 3 continues to display God's love, as Hosea buys back his wife, despite her unfaithfulness.

- This reflects the ultimate redemption through Christ, who buys us back from sin. The image is telescopic, with both the exile and the work of Christ in view.
- The Davidic king is a future promise in this chapter, and represents the hope of future salvation.
- Oswalt says, "The exile won't be the end of Israel. In some ways, it'll be the rebirth of Israel. Because God will allure them, and lead them into the wilderness. And speak tenderly, literally to her heart."

#### **Practical Implications:**

- **Self-Examination:** Oswalt prompts his audience to examine their own lives and ask if they are guilty of seeking fulfillment in ways that are contrary to God's will.
- **Trust in God's Provision:** The lecture encourages reliance on God's provision rather than trying to manipulate situations or seek satisfaction through idols.
- **Understanding God's Character:** The study of Hosea reveals God's unwavering love and redemptive intentions, even in the face of our unfaithfulness. "You will know Yahweh...As my character is reproduced in you." (Hosea 2:20)
- **Recognizing God's Work:** Even if you run up against a wall, understand that God may be trying to draw you nearer. This is a pastoral role.
- **The Importance of Knowing Reality:** Paganism is the rejection of reality, and the denial of God's authority. This results in an inability to know God's plan for your life.
- **Finding Hope in the Wilderness:** The wilderness is not a place of punishment but an opportunity for genuine repentance, intimacy with God, and the hope of restoration.

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Oswalt's lecture provides a rich exploration of Hosea 2-3, illuminating the complexities of God's love, the destructive nature of idolatry, and the hope of redemption. The lecture encourages listeners to see their own lives within the context of this ancient text and to find comfort and challenge in the message of God's unwavering love. The overarching theme is the continuity of God's love for His people despite repeated betrayals and His unwavering promise of restoration.

## 4. Study Guide: Oswalt, Hosea, Session 2, Hosea 2-3

### Hosea Study Guide: Chapters 2-3

#### Quiz

1. How does Oswalt explain the difference between the Hebrew and Septuagint arrangements of Hosea 1:10-11 and 2:1?
  - The Hebrew text includes 1:10-11 in Chapter 2, while the Septuagint puts it at the end of Chapter 1. Oswalt notes 1:10-11 is prose while 2:1 is poetry, which is one reason the Septuagint separated the verses.
1. What is "inclusio" or "envelope" as used in Hosea 2, and how does Oswalt argue that it supports the theme of God's unchanging love?
  - "Inclusio" or "envelope" is when a passage is bookended with similar ideas. In Hosea 2, the beginning and end of the chapter frame the chapter with the idea of God's love for Israel, which underscores His unchanging love amid the dark themes.
1. In Hosea 2, who is the "mother" and who are the "children," according to Oswalt's interpretation of the parable?
  - Oswalt interprets the "mother" as the nation of Israel, and the "children" as the current generation of Israelites reflecting the mother's unfaithfulness to God.
1. What does Oswalt say is the true nature of idolatry, and how is it different from simply worshiping statues?
  - Oswalt explains that idolatry is the attempt to control the cosmos to meet one's own needs, not the worship of statues. The worship of statues is a symptom of the true underlying problem, not the problem itself.
1. According to Oswalt, what is the significance of God stripping the land bare as a punishment?
  - Stripping the land bare was punishment in kind. Israel sought prosperity from idols, so God deprives them of it. It reflects that their prosperity was found in the wrong place and credited to the wrong source.
1. What are the three "therefores" in Hosea 2, and what do they signal according to Oswalt?

- The three "therefores" are in verses 6, 9, and 14. They signal the effect of a prior cause, which is Israel's unfaithfulness.
1. What is the difference between El and Baal in the Canaanite pantheon, according to Oswalt?
    - El was the king of the gods, a powerless, beneficent god of the heavens. Baal was the executive god of the atmosphere who executes the actions.
  1. Why does God command the Israelites to stop using the word "Baal" in relation to their husbands?
    - God instructs the Israelites to stop using "Baal" for their husbands because the term was becoming too closely associated with the pagan god. He replaces it with a more common term, "my man," to break the connection.
  1. How does Oswalt interpret God's statement "I will allure her"? What does it show about God's character?
    - Oswalt interprets "I will allure her" as evidence of God's unchanging love and character. Instead of punishing her as she deserves, God will seek a tender reunion.
  1. In Hosea 3, what does Oswalt believe the buying back of Gomer and the Israelites symbolizes?
    - Oswalt believes buying Gomer back represents the exile, and ultimately, Christ buying us back from our sins. The exile represents a time when God leads Israel back to Himself.



## Essay Questions

1. Explore the metaphor of marriage and adultery as it is used in Hosea 2. How does this metaphor illuminate the relationship between God and Israel, and what does it reveal about the nature of their covenant?
2. Discuss Oswalt's concept of idolatry. How does he distinguish it from mere statue worship, and how does he believe it manifests in modern society?
3. Examine the themes of judgment and restoration in Hosea 2. How do the "therefores" contribute to this dual emphasis, and how does God's character display itself amidst both judgment and restoration?
4. Analyze the significance of exile as portrayed in Hosea 2-3. How does Oswalt understand this period of hardship, and how does he relate it to both historical Israel and the modern believer?
5. Compare and contrast the Canaanite pantheon with the concept of Yahweh. How does Oswalt's explanation of the Canaanite gods enhance one's understanding of Israel's unfaithfulness in Hosea?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Inclusio (Envelope):** A literary device where a passage is bookended with similar ideas or statements to emphasize the main point, which is placed in the middle.
- **Parallelism:** A characteristic of Hebrew poetry where two or more lines repeat or build on a thought, often with variation or intensification.
- **Idolatry:** The attempt to gain control over the forces of the cosmos to meet one's own needs rather than trusting God; in Hosea, this is portrayed by going to pagan gods for material blessings.
- **Covenant:** A sacred agreement between God and his people, often described as a marriage in Hosea, where both parties have responsibilities.
- **Baal:** A title that represents the pagan Canaanite god of storms and fertility, often associated with prosperity.
- **Asherah:** The wife of El in the Canaanite pantheon and the goddess of fertility and abundance.
- **El:** The name of the Canaanite king of the gods, the god of the heavens.
- **Mishpat:** A Hebrew word that means God's pattern for life and righteous justice, which includes doing unto others as you would have them do to you.
- **Hesed:** Hebrew word for steadfast love. An act of compassion, love, and tenderness.
- **Emunah:** Hebrew word for truth, faithfulness, and steadfastness.
- **Racham:** The Hebrew noun for "womb," suggesting tenderness and nurturing care.
- **Exile:** The period of Israel's captivity in Babylon, used as a metaphor for spiritual separation from God in Hosea.
- **Jezreel:** A city, a place, and a name which means "God sows."

## 5. FAQs on Oswalt, Hosea, Session 2, Hosea 2-3, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ on Hosea Chapters 2-3

- **Why does the placement of Hosea 1:10-11 vary between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint (Greek) translation?** The Hebrew text includes 1:10-11 as part of chapter 2, while the Septuagint (followed by many English translations) places it at the end of chapter 1. This difference stems from the fact that 1:10-11 are prose, whereas 2:1 begins the poetic structure characteristic of the rest of chapter 2. Additionally, the Septuagint's placement bookends chapter 2 with an emphasis on God's enduring love and future restoration for His people, using an inclusio (or envelope) literary device.
- **Who is the "mother" referred to in Hosea 2, and who are the children?** The "mother" is a symbolic representation of the nation of Israel, depicted as unfaithful to God, who is viewed as her husband in the covenant relationship. The "children" represent the individual members of the present generation of Israelites, who are inheriting and reflecting the unfaithfulness of the nation as a whole. This concept can also be applied to the church, where the institution can be seen as apostate while individual members grapple with their faith.
- **What is idolatry according to Hosea, and how does it relate to Israel's actions?** Idolatry, as presented in Hosea, is not merely the worship of statues but the attempt to control the forces of the world to meet one's own needs, rather than trusting God to provide. Israel sought other gods (Baal and others) for material needs like food, water, and clothing, failing to recognize that these gifts ultimately came from Yahweh. This act of seeking control and rejecting trust in God is seen as a form of adultery, breaking their covenant with him.
- **What is the significance of God's punishment of stripping Israel bare and making the land a desert?** God's stripping of the land and its resources reflects the consequences of Israel's misplaced trust and idolatry. By relying on the false gods of the Canaanite pantheon to secure their needs, they were punished by having those same provisions withheld. This act highlighted that true prosperity does not come from manipulating the world or worshipping its elements but comes from trusting in Yahweh's provision.

- **What is the Canaanite pantheon and how does it relate to Israel's unfaithfulness?** The Canaanite pantheon included El (the distant, powerless king), Asherah (the queen of heaven and goddess of fertility), Baal (the active, executive god of the atmosphere), Anat (the goddess of passion) and Kothar and Hasis, (royal counselors who provide magic). Israel's attraction to these gods and goddesses represented a desire for control, physical satisfaction and fertility, leading them away from their covenant with Yahweh. This syncretism and mixing of pagan worship into Yahwism was seen as an adulterous act.
- **Despite Israel's unfaithfulness, what is God's reaction and plan for restoration?** Despite Israel's infidelity, God's reaction is not one of complete abandonment but of unwavering love and a desire for restoration. He will lure Israel back to Him, into the "wilderness," which will be a place of renewal. God's intention is not to destroy but to purify and return to a relationship of trust and love through speaking tenderly to her heart. He will betroth them to Himself again not in terms of legalistic righteousness but in the context of loving rightness.
- **What does Hosea mean by saying God will "allure her" and "lead her into the wilderness"?** God's allurement and leading Israel into the wilderness is a process of taking her away from the distractions of false gods and the empty pursuits of control. This wilderness represents a return to a place of dependence and trust in God, similar to the time of the Exodus from Egypt where He demonstrated his love and power. It is a place of renewal and where Israel is led back to love. This also alludes to a future, post-exile period of renewed relationship with Yahweh.
- **What does the purchase of Gomer in chapter 3 represent and how does this tie in to themes presented in chapter 2?** Hosea's purchase of Gomer, for a reduced slave price, symbolizes God's willingness to redeem Israel despite their unfaithfulness. It represents a new start, not from a position of freedom, but from a position of subservience. The command to her not to be a prostitute or have relations with another parallels God's expectation of Israel's exclusive commitment to Him. Similarly, Israel would live in exile for many days before returning to God and their Davidic king which demonstrates that even when it appears God is abandoning them, He is, in fact, preparing them to return and to be renewed.